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# The Doon School

# WEEKLY

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## Stepping Up Service

*Ramakrishna Pappu reports on the social service projects on the anvil*

Over the last two weekends MCJ, AKC, AKS, Surya Narayan Deo and I visited a number of villages, scouting around for prospective places for social service. On the first leg of this reconnaissance only one village, Shuklapur, was selected. Not only is Shuklapur well set in the rural heartland amidst lush green vegetation, but important factors such as safety, accommodation, and logistics also fitted the bill perfectly. It didn't come as a surprise when, within seconds, AKC 'bagged' the village for IB. Shuklapur will be developed from scratch; the main objectives being the construction of research and housing facilities for HESCO, the organisation we have been working with.

On the second Saturday, we visited Dhandapur, Jattonwalla and Ramgarh. This was mainly to decide the work to be done by the ATs after their ICSE examinations get over. Dhandapur, a village in which we had previously worked, needs a bit of touching up – primarily in the renovation of the school building. Jattonwalla, a small hamlet of ten families, is desperately in need of some proper toilet facilities. Moved by their pleas and seeing their condition, we decided to build the required toilets for various huts in the village. Ramgarh was a different story altogether. The school building is still to be plastered, but the residents of Ramgarh felt that they would be able to finish the project without external aid. We were quite satisfied, and felt that in empowering them, our contribution to Ramgarh's development has borne fruit. Our trip also included a brief detour to Fatehpur to check on the progress of the community centre. The Fatehpur connection will go on for some time, at least in the near future. The huts of the villagers are in dire need of renovation. This will be the next project in Fatehpur.

It was truly a learning and enlightening experience where the nuances of village and rural life became so much more comprehensible. Social work, being an integral part of our education and philosophy at Doon, comprises much more than the evident physical effort put in. The main purpose of social work is not only to give what we can to the underprivileged, but also to gain a lot more by way of awareness and experience. With the advent of IB and our fellow Round Square Schools assisting us in our endeavours, one can foresee an appreciable increase in the activities and participation on this front. As Rick de Marions says, "Kings and cabbages go back to compost, but good deeds stay forever."

## Fanning the Flames

*Shoumitra Srivastava on cricket mania*

It has just been a few days since the cricket World Cup started, but the excitement is already at a crescendo. Gibbs' six sixes in a row, Ireland's triumph over Pakistan, India's loss to Bangladesh followed by a smashing victory over Bermuda are all events which have infected the entire nation with cricket fever. But something which stirred me the most, until now, was not Gibbs' fireworks display on the field, nor the underdog's victory over Pakistan but the aftermath of India's loss to Bangladesh.

The news of the lost match spread like a forest fire through the whole nation, infuriating fans. The loss to a comparatively weaker team was simply not acceptable to them, causing them to erupt like a volcano and display their revulsion for the team in the lanes and alleys of the country. The newspapers were splashed with shots of annoyed fans burning pictures of the players whom they had counted upon for the victory of their team, shouting out slogans of hatred. Fans of the star player Dhoni were so upset by his performance in the match that they demolished his house, which was still under construction. A few dedicated 'fans' were so unhappy that they started speculating that Bangladesh's victory was a result of match-fixing.

In my opinion this display of hatred and vandalism proved the fickle-minded mentality of the Indian fans. The day team India wins a match or a player performs exceptionally well, the team or the player is given much undue hype, while, if the team fails to perform well in a match, it is subjected to sarcastic comments and denunciatory articles. This attitude not only reflects the uncertainty of the Indian fans but also demoralizes the team. These eruptions take place with dismaying regularity, leading one to believe that these so-called fans have neither a knowledge of or genuine interest in the sport. Way back in 1971, Ajit Wadekar's Bombay apartment came under attack when he failed to deliver the goods to the fans' satisfaction.

Cricket, like any other game, is one of patience, skill and hard work. As in any other game, one team has to lose for another to win. Losing is inevitable, so what if it is to a weak team? As for Bangladesh, hats off to their incredible performance; and as for India, they have made up for that loss after a spectacular victory over Bermuda. In the end, I would like to say that let us not spoil the essence of the game with mindless reactions. After all, isn't cricket a gentleman's sport?

## REGULARS

### DEBATING JUNIORS

The results of the recently held **Inter-House Junior English Debate** are as follows:

**1st:** Tata (Arjun Singh Badal, Vikram Kejriwal)

**2nd:** Oberoi (Vivek Santayana, Shekhar Bishnoi)

**3rd:** Jaipur (Bharat Ganju, Arnav Sahu)

**4th:** Kashmir (Shoumitra Srivastava, Dhruv Sirohi)

**5th:** Hyderabad (Ashray Batra, Jayant Mukhopadhyaya)

The following are the individual positions:

**Best Speaker:** Vivek Santayana

**2nd Best Speaker:** Arnav Sahu

Congratulations!

### DRAMA WORKSHOP

**Karam Puri** (ex-655KB'95) of the Actors' Project is in school to conduct a workshop on drama. We wish him a rewarding experience back in his old school.

## Unquotable Quotes

*I am the absolute.*

**VKL**, the almighty.

*They come to me; where I go to?*

**NTC** is lost.

*It is a mysterious house full of mysteries.*

**Vaibhav Bahadur**, we are scared!

*I want a cheesy McCheesy Hamburger.*

**Deeptanshu Thakur** is loving it.

*All the both of us will go to the Headmaster.*

**SDA** prepares his army.

*I hitted my knee against this.*

**Vidit Narain** facing injuries.

*I swear I didn't said that.*

**Vidit Narain** justifies.



## doonspeak

Team India at the World Cup...

Have displayed a rather sad performance - **Sachin Uppal**

Mera Bharat Mahaan! - **Narinder Kapur**

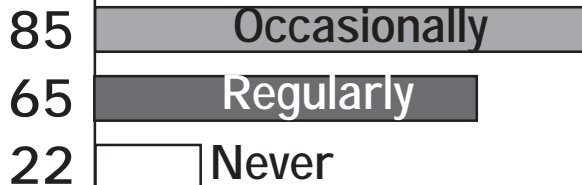
Indian cricketers are like fine actors. They always underplay. - **Armand Khambatta**

The game's not over yet. - **Yashvardhan Jain**



## Opinion Poll

How often do you use foul language?



*172 students participated in the poll*

**Next Week's Question:** Is hysteria over sports understandable?

## Road to Nowhere

*Eshaan Tiwary*

Knocking on the door,  
Banging on the windows,  
Glass tinkles, shards fall,  
Blood, bruises and beating heart;  
Swinging, the door,  
Whistling, the wind,  
Screeching, the wheels,  
Wheezing, the cough.  
He walks on,  
Leaving behind a history,  
A chequered past;  
Bright lights and narrow alleys,  
Pockets picked and purses snatched,  
Riches and rags,  
Road to nowhere, straight ahead.

\*\*\*

## In the City of Temples

*Shikhar Singh*

In the city of temples,  
The sunrise was marked by  
The chanting of hymns,  
Praising He who created this Earth,  
The one who brought prosperity,  
When life was devoted to the cause of well-being,  
Education and *vidya* were never disrespected,  
And all the virtues of truth were ever-encompassing.

The day passed, with saints preaching  
The Holy text, the heroes and legends of the past.  
They occasionally encountered troubled families,  
Searching for answers in the darkness of religion.  
In the lightless world of right and wrong, good or bad,  
Pure or evil, conformist or reformist.

At night, the scholars gazed at the dark sky,  
Calculating, interpreting and foreseeing  
The future of this apparently sinful world,  
Making me wonder, who is He?  
And what are his communication tools,  
With the scholarly?

## CAREER CALL

The careers notice board will focus on **Aeronautical Engineering** this week. All those interested in knowing more about this field should look up the board.



कई बार मेरे मन में प्रश्न उठता है कि क्या पुरतकें अनुभव का स्थान ले सकती हैं?

अनुभव क्या है? कोई जीव जब कोई काम सीखता है या जानता है और फिर बाद में उसकी वह जानकारी या सीख किसी और सन्दर्भ में काम आती है, वह उसका अनुभव कहलाता है। एक आदमी जो फुटबाल का बहुत बड़ा खिलाड़ी है, शुरुआत में तो उसने भी बाल को पैर से धकेलना, उसे उछालना आदि ही सीखा होगा। यही पैर मारना, बाल को आगे बढ़ाना आदि ही उसका अनुभव है और उस ही अनुभव के कारण वह उस मुकाम तक पहुंचा होगा जिसमें वह आज है।

ज़रा सोचिए, मनुष्य खुद देखकर या महसूसकर जो अनुभव और ज्ञान प्राप्त करता है, वैसा ज्ञान किताब से कहाँ प्राप्त हो सकता है। यह जरूरी तो नहीं कि किसी दूसरे लेखक का अनुभव किसी आपका अनुभव बन जाये। वलिये मान लिया कि किसी लेखक का अनुभव कई इंसानों के अनुभव से मेल खाता है, परंतु यह तो कतई जरूरी नहीं है कि किताब उसके अनुभव की जगह ले। इसका सबसे बड़ा कारण है कि किताबें तो सीमित होती हैं। उनमें लिखी बातें सीमित होती हैं, परंतु इंसान का अनुभव सीमित नहीं होता। वह तो असीमित हुआ करता है। उसे जितना चाहे बढ़ाया जा सकता है। कई बार देखा गया है कि लेखक अपने अनुभवों को चमत्कार पैदा करने लिए उनके विवरण में थोड़ी बनावट भी डाल लेते हैं और जो किसी भी स्थिति में अनुभव की जगह नहीं ले सकती। एक और बात यह भी है कि सारी पुरतकें अनुभव के बारे में नहीं होती, वे तो बस कहानियाँ अर्थात् कल्पना आदि भी होती हैं।

यह तो स्पष्ट ही है कि मनुष्य जितना खुद पढ़ कर सीखता है उससे ज्यादा वह अपने अनुभव से सीख जाता है, लेकिन यह कहना भी पूरी तरह गलत होगा कि किताब से कोई कुछ भी नहीं सीख सकता। कम से कम अपने कार्य से जुड़ी सामान्य जानकारी आदि तो प्राप्त ही कर सकता है। दुनिया में कुछ काम ऐसे भी होते हैं जिन्हें मनुष्य मात्र अनुभव के आधार पर पूरा नहीं कर सकता। हाल ही में एक पिक्चर सिनेमाघरों में लगी थी - 'अकेला'। यह एक लड़के की कहानी थी जो किसी कारण से 18 सालों तक अपने घर में बन्द था। उसने अपना पूरा बचपन और जवानी के शुरु के वर्ष वहीं काटे थे, परंतु जब वह अन्य लोगों से मिलता है तो उनमें से सबसे ज्यादा अनुभवी व विद्वान मालूम पड़ता है। कैसे? किताबों के कारण! इन 18 सालों में वह हज़ारों किताबें पढ़ता है। उसने अपना सारा अनुभव किताबों के माध्यम से ही प्राप्त किया होता है। मेरे विचार में असली जीवन में भी इस तरह की घटनाएँ किसी न किसी रूप में घटती ही रहती हैं। इसलिए इसे केवल एक मनघड़त घटना कहकर भूल जाना भी ठीक नहीं होगा।

अब आप अपना ही उदाहरण ले लीजिये। बताइये कि अगर आपने किसी देश के बारे में पढ़ कर जानकारी प्राप्त की तो आप को कितनी जानकारी मिली और कितनी आप को याद रही। लेकिन अगर आप उस ही देश में खुद जायें और अपनी आँखों से सब अनुभव करें तो आपको कितनी अधिक जानकारी मिलती है और वह जानकारी आपकी स्मृति में भी हमेशा हमेशा के लिए अंकित हो जाती है। बात घूम फिर कर वहीं आ गयी है कि किताबों में तो जानकारी सीमित होती है, परंतु अपना अनुभव सीमित नहीं होता। इन बातों से तो लगता है कि पुरतकें अनुभव का स्थान नहीं ले सकती, पर इतना साफ है कि हम जो किताबें पढ़ते हैं उनमें हम लेखक का अनुभव पढ़ते हैं जिसमें हम अपने अनुभव जोड़कर उसे और अधिक प्रभावी बना सकते हैं।

अंत में मैं बस यही कहना चाहूँगा-

दुनिया है तो अनुभव है,  
अनुभव है तो ज्ञान है,  
ज्ञान है तो मान है,  
मान ही तो अभिमान है,  
अभिमान है तो इंसान है।

आज सुबह एक आदमी  
ज़मीन पर पड़े सूखे पत्तों को  
झाड़ू से एक किनारे कर रहा था  
कि उसकी बज़रें रंगहीन फ़र्श पर पड़ीं  
और एक पीले धब्बे पर रुक गयीं।  
दूर से देखा तो उसे लगा, कुछ धूल इकट्ठा है,  
पर गौर से देखने पर पाया कि वो धूल नहीं  
धूप का एक टुकड़ा था।  
फ़र्श पर बची टायलें लगी हैं,  
काफ़ी महंगी वाली,  
कोटा स्टोन है शायद,  
दीवार पर भी सफ़ेद वूब की पुताई हो गई है,  
पुराने विज्ञान दबा दिये गये हैं,  
शायद जिससे वूब को बहने से रोका जा सके,  
काले पत्थर की एक रेखा  
दीवार के किनारे धामे है -  
अब ये इमारत बिलकुल अशुभिक हो गयी है।  
पावी तो यहाँ से अब लूट ही रहता है,  
और धूप... वो तो पास फ़टकती ही नहीं  
फिर इस छंदे से विहल्य  
टुकड़े की मजाल कैसे हो गयी?  
वह व्यक्ति अचानक रुका  
और भी जेब, और भी उत्साह, और भी ताकत से,  
उसपर झाड़ू लगावे लगा।  
अब वह कई इमारत में कर्मचारी है-  
यह लम्बी सीकों वाली झाड़ू  
आस उसी के लिये बनी है  
और जितना बड़ा झाड़ू का डंडा,  
उतनी ही बड़ी नाक है,  
वह पुराने बीचे दर्जे के कर्मचारियों के साथ  
झड़ा भी नहीं हो सकता,  
कितनी आरामदायक झाड़ू-  
मगर अभी तो यह कम्बख़त धूप ही नहीं हट रही  
सारा मज़ा बेकार कर दिया झाड़ू लगावे का,  
और ज़्यादा आक्रामकता से वार किया,  
इस बार नहीं छूटेगी  
जब से आया हूँ  
तब से पहली बार आई है  
बहुत दुस्साहसी हो गयी है धूप .....  
मगर थक गये, पसीना छूट गया,  
झाड़ू की कुछ सीकें भी टूट गयी  
पर ये धूप  
इसने तो पहली बार में ही झकझोर कर रख दिया -  
और अब छोड़ो... कौन देखता है  
एक छोटा टुकड़ा ही तो है  
बादल आयेंगे,  
खुद-ब-खुद चला जायेगा  
पर क्या बादल आयेंगे?  
आखिर उनके बरसाये पावी को,  
उबसे झड़ी पत्तियों को,  
बहकर आयें मूसों को भी तो पिछली बार  
कितनी बेरहमी से मार-मार कर हटाया था-  
क्या अब बादल आयेंगे?

# Parting Thoughts

*Akaash Maheshwari reflects on an interesting aspect of human behaviour*

I have always dreamt of being printed in the *Weekly*. I have tried time and again, but in vain. The closest I have come to living my dream has been a couple of *Letters to the Editor* and a report on an Inter-House competition. But, as Alfred Doolittle would put it, it is ventilating my thoughts that adds ginger to my taste rather than suggesting and reporting (I haven't yet got over *Pygmalion*, now have I?). This one last time, though, I wish to feature in the *Weekly* with something that I have been battling with for quite some time now. Triggered by a discussion with my Housemaster during a tutorial meeting, exactly a year ago, I starting scrutinising all that I know, have felt and seen for an answer. I do not intend to make a subtle proposition for I am convinced that what I will share is the truth. When you read this, I want your mind to be objective and free from the burden of the conventional. Read ahead, hear my voice and rejoice with me in this little eureka of mine and feel what I feel. I am confident about what I am going to tell you because I discovered that there are others who have felt the same and some of them were recently mentioned in a *New York Times* article on why we need God (most of these people are psychologists and believe in the adaptive nature of the mind).

There exists no God! Do not take me for a Devil worshipper for I am equally convinced that there exists no Devil. You see, God (and thus the Devil; I believe they complement each other) was an interesting creation of some gifted and brilliant human minds. They were the smart people who understood human behaviour intimately (Freud would have found them good company). They understood that human beings were designed to follow. They understood that within us is an animal, a sheep that needs herding. By the naturally just phenomenon of natural selection, some out of the crowd of us were gifted with the ability of being sheepdogs. You see them all around you: Gandhi, Hitler, Mussolini, and Churchill and, for God's own sake, Jesus Christ.

This argument is based on observation and intuition. These 'selected' human beings have worked for, strangely enough, our common interest. Yes, even Hitler. When some captain of the House does a good thing for it, it is at the cost of some other House. When the patriarch of the family does something for it, it is at the cost of society. When a nation does something for its own sake, it is at the cost of the rest of the world. When mankind progresses, the rest of the living world bears its costs. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Somebody's gain is another's loss. There hardly exists a win-win situation. Selfishness is thus a perspective, so don't think too much about it. Hitler wanted prosperity for Germany and his own race. He did good for his people (they stuck with him for so long) at the cost of the rest of the world (hence World War II). Coming back to the point, the 'selected' few devised systems that cost us our own creativity and freedom. They understood that while human responses in an environment are limited, they are nevertheless too many, and found a solution to this problem in conformity and isolation (we are social animals, aren't we?). Think about religion: Victorian prudery, Indian prudery, the conventional, and you will see what I see.

Man has always been impressed, or shall we say awed, by the unknown and inexplicable. The earliest signs of this were, of course, Nature worship or Druidism. The unknown inspires awe and submission (often fear as well) – prerequisites of good governance. Though some psychologists do not agree that religion evolved to make people behave in a certain way, it has, however, served its purpose. Richard Sosis noted that while secular and religious rituals both promote cooperation, it is religious ones that generate greater belief and commitment because they are based on emotional commitment and belief rather than on proof and logic. Psychologists suggest that our brains are built to accept and presume the presence of agents (like God) even when logic points in quite another direction. Secondly, our mind has "evolved a capacity to impose a narrative, complete with chronology and cause-and-effect logic, on whatever it encounters, no matter how apparently random, thus looking for explanations for why things happen to us" as Justin Barret, a psychologist put it. Thirdly, we are born with an inherent ability to believe in immaterial souls and the unknown. And when we grow up in various cultures we are fed specifics (Santa Claus and, God again!). Psychologists, according to the *New York Times* article, have shown that we attend to things that are weird but not weird enough to be rejected. Fourthly, in times of intense emotions and personal crisis, an all-powerful can provide answers (particularly when facing death) implicating, thus, the creation of God and His many religions.

For a sworn atheist like me, it is a hard life. Every now and then I am tempted to fall into the trap of believing when there is nothing to believe in. I, like the anthropologist Scott Atran will buy rationalism over spiritualism. However, I have the 'scientific temper' that our Constitution has sought to fuel in me, and which it nearly extinguished. I will remain open to the possibility of an all-powerful, humanly emotional, deific, vigorous, omnipresent, illimitable godly God(s), denying its presence till I adequately feel, see or hear him.

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