

Editor-in-Chief
Uneeza Mahboob Rana

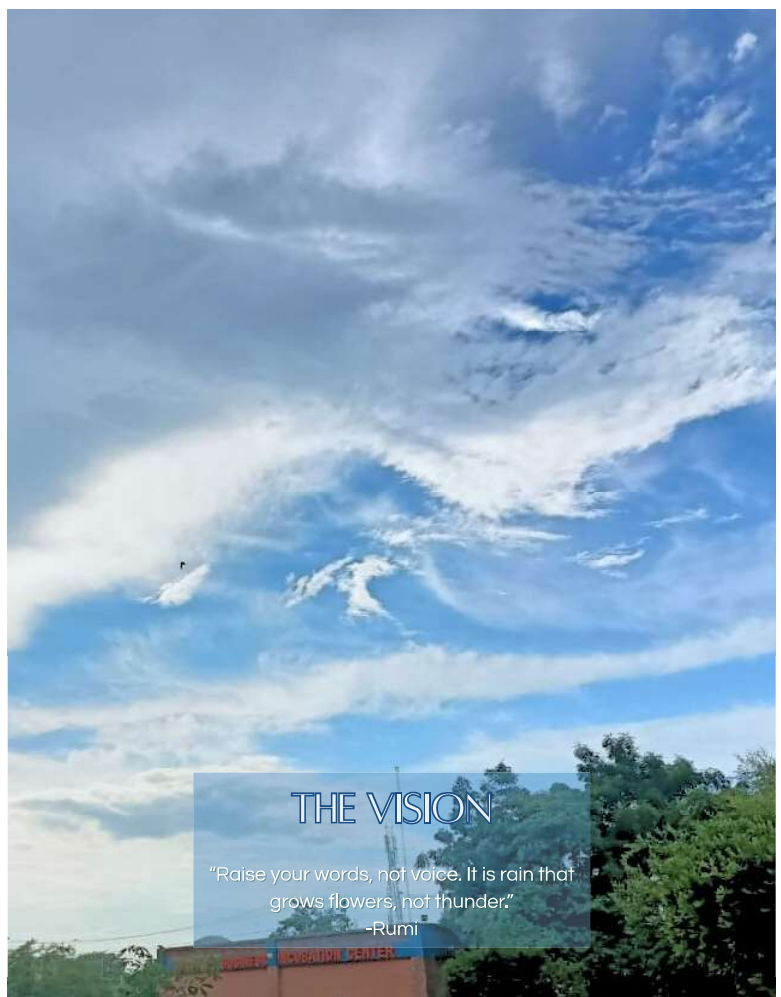
Assistant Editor
Fatima Afzaal

Layout
Uneeza Mahboob Rana
Fatima Afzaal (Assist)

Feature Image
Ashna Noor

Magazine Advisor
Saadia Ghaznavi

Special thanks to the Media Club President Aimen Anjum, and members of the Media Club for the pictures they shared to grace the magazine pages.



THE VISION

"Raise your words, not voice. It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder."

-Rumi

ON THE HORIZON

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PRINCIPAL'S FOREWORD



Prof. Dr. Iram Anjum

In every era, a generation emerges that must learn not only to navigate the changing winds of its time but to rise above them. As I reflect on the journey of our university and the remarkable young girls who fill its halls, I am reminded of the eagle—an enduring symbol of vision, resilience and transformative ascent. It is in the spirit of the eagle's flight that this issue of The Last Word offers its rich collection of thoughts and memories.

An eagle does not fear the storm; it uses the storm. When the winds grow fierce, it spreads its wings wider, allowing the turbulence that discourages others, to lift it higher. In much the same way, your years at this university will present moments of challenging endeavors and academic prowess. These are the currents meant to elevate you. The pursuit of knowledge, the discipline of inquiry, and the courage to confront the unknown are the pursuits that carry scholars to greater heights.

What distinguishes the eagle most is its vision. With extraordinary clarity, it sees what others might miss. As students and emerging leaders of the future, your education has equipped you with precisely this: the ability to observe deeply, to discern truth from noise, and to imagine a future not yet visible to the ordinary eye. Cultivate that vision. The current issue of the magazine offers one glimpse into such possibilities of envisioning an insightful and transcending journey.

But vision alone is not enough. The eagle takes flight with determination. Its elevation is not accidental—it is chosen. Likewise, the heights you reach will be shaped by your decisions: the discipline to persevere, the humility to learn, the generosity to collaborate, and the ambition to serve a world in need of thoughtful, ethical and innovative minds. Our magazine reflects this kaleidoscope of ideas, of communities and of the magnificent hopes that enrich our current generation of students.

As you progress through your journey of learning, I encourage you to embrace this eagle-like pursuit of purpose. Seek new horizons. Let your talents rise beyond the familiar. And when challenges come—and they will—remember that you possess both the strength and the imagination to soar above them. This magazine becomes the legacy of scholars who have used knowledge to transform lives, overcome challenges and reimagine what is possible. You, too, carry that responsibility and that opportunity.

May this edition of our magazine inspire you to stretch your wings wider, to lift your gaze higher and to trust that your potential is greater than any boundary you have known. The sky is not your limit—it is your beginning.

So fly with light, courage and love.

—Professor Dr Iram Anjum
Principal Kinnaird College for Women

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S NOTE



Uneeza M. Rana

As I sit down to write this note for The Last Word 2024–25, I am reminded that the annual magazine is never the product of a single voice—it is a tapestry of words woven together with dedication, patience, and creativity. Looking back, I am recalled to my childhood where my favorite past time was reading the annual magazines of my elder siblings' schools and universities (I had an affinity towards the multiplicity of voices that a magazine hosts). To think that I now get to edit one myself, I am immensely grateful and humbled.

In the initial discussions when Ms. Sadia suggested that this year's pivoting theme should be "The Falcon's Flight", my imagination too soared, and through extensive discussions and trial and error, we came up with these unique sections for the magazine as you will see unfold on the pages that follow. Each picture, layout, and piece of written work has been curated carefully and with profound meaning which we are hopeful that our readers and patrons will appreciate.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the Editorial Board—Hajra Jaffar, Omama Zafar, Mishael Noor Faheem, Sania Ijaz, Saira Amaan, and Haleema Shahid—whose commitment to the written word has shaped these pages into something we can all be proud of. Their energy and persistence ensured that every idea found its rightful place.

I must also pause for a personal word of thanks to Fatima Afzaal. You have been with me every step of the way—through the late nights, the long discussions, and the endless revisions. Your presence has been both anchor and encouragement, and this magazine carries as much of your imprint as mine.

This journey, of course, would not have been possible without the unwavering commitment of our Magazine Advisor, Ms. Sadia Ghaznavi, whose guidance and motivation has been invaluable at every stage. I am immensely grateful to our Principal, Prof. Dr Iram Anjum, for her vision and encouragement. Her leadership continues to remind us that creativity, scholarship, and inclusivity must walk hand in hand at Kinnaird.

Editing The Last Word is always more than compiling articles; my two years as a board member and my third at the helm of this editorial journey has taught me this much. It is about having the courage to attempt to capture the spirit of Kinnaird—our students' insatiable curiosity and creative spirit, their ability to question and embrace. I hope this issue reflects those qualities, and that as you read through it, you hear the vibrant voices of our community spreading light and love confidently.

Thank you to everyone who made this journey possible. It has been a privilege to serve as Editor-in-Chief for this edition.

—Uneeza Mahboob Rana
Editor-in-Chief
The Last Word 2024–25

EDITORIAL BOARD



Uneeza Mahboob Rana



Fatima Afzaal



Hajira Jaffar



Haleema Shahid



Omama Zafar



Mishaal Noor Faheem



Saira Amaan



Sania Ijaz

STUDENT COUNCIL



Shumyle Nouman
Head Girl



Do it for the plot!
Fatima Khan
Deputy Head Girl



Your story isn't over yet; keep
writing it with love.
Tayyaba Akhtar
Hostel Deputy



Live; before everything else.
Uneeza Mahboob Rana
President English Magazine Society



Hamna Amid
President Urdu Magazine Society



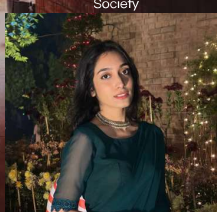
Can I take a nap now?
Minahil Azhar
President Najmuddin Dramatics
Society



"The most important thing one
woman can do for another is to
illuminate and expand her sense of
actual possibilities."
Nabgha Shahid
President Literacy Society



Never compare your wins and battles
with others, if they could be you, and
you could be them, then what was the
need of you in the first place, maintain
your individuality.
Fatima Ijaz
President Debating Society



Leadership is not about titles or
positions—it's about impact
Zainab Ali
President TEDx Society



"Leaving the seat, not the spirit—
once a leader, always a learner."
Maarij Fatima
President Islamic Society



Always believe in your potential,
face challenges head-on, and never
let adversity define your strength
Saher Samuel
President Christian Fellowship Society



Be Yourself; everyone else is
already taken.
Hafsa Moazzam
President Health Society



Be kind to others you don't know
what other person is
going through. Be the reason of
other's joy and peace.
Arooj Usman
President Health Society (Hostel)



Believe in yourself; take the
leap, and watch your legacy
unfold.
Eman Qaiser
President Sports Society



Be the reason someone believes
in dignity, kindness, and grace.
Usaira Maryam
President Rangers Society



CEO of bathroom concerts
Maheen Zahid
President Music Club



The most meaningful progress
often blooms in silence, with
steady hands and shared hearts :)
Ezza Tariq
President Horticulture Society



In a world full of questions, be
the girl who never stops
exploring the answers!
Selja Ashraf
President Science Club

I refused to let bitterness make a home in me. In the end, grace speaks louder than noise ever could.
Aimon Binte Shahid
President International Relations Club

Not everything needs a plan. Some things just need a little delusion and a lot of faith.
Areeb Fatima
President Entrepreneurial Club

Not every day has to be meaningful—some just have to be lived.
Mahnoor Asghar
President Psychology Club

"You miss 100% of the shots you don't take - Wayne Gretzky"
Michael Scott
Fatima Iqbal Gara
President Economics Club

The unknown is not to be feared - it's where growth and miracles await.
Sania Aimen
President Computer Science Club

Choose your words carefully, for they can change the course of lives, including your own.
Maniha Asif Sheikh
President English Club

You can't skip chapters, that's not how life works. Read all the chapters; the good and the bad, don't miss out.
Mahnoor Arshad
President Urdu Club

Afreen Asif
President Philosophy Club

Be fearless in the pursuit of what sets your soul on fire."
Sahaab Shujah
President French Club

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Your energy determines the version of others you encounter—grace or chaos
Momina Sarfaraz
President Fine Arts Club

In a world of flaws and fears, lead with courage. Love boldly, believe deeply, and stand firm in your truth. Be the spark that lights the way, and ignites the fire within others.
Rabia Sajjad
President Environmental Sciences Club

Be kind & Be true to yourself <3
Aimen Anjum
President Media Club

What, like it's hard?
Eman
President History & Political Science Club

Mehak Imran
President Geography Club

Treat others like you want to be treated.
Hadia Noor
President Food and Nutrition Club

Iman
President Mess

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THE FLIGHT

How do they learn that?
They fall, and falling
they're given wings
-Rumi

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The Installation of the New Principal

Kinnaird College Announces the Installation of its new Principal
by Aanish Khalid | MPhil Semester 3

Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore, has proudly announced the installation of Prof. Dr. Iram Anjum as the new Principal, effective June 23, 2024. With an impressive academic background and years of leadership experience, Dr. Iram Anjum has stepped into this role with a strong commitment to furthering the college's longstanding mission of empowering women through education. Her arrival has marked an important new chapter for one of Pakistan's most respected institutions for women's learning.

Dr. Anjum has built her career on promoting academic excellence, inclusivity, and innovation. She has consistently worked to create learning environments that encourage critical thinking, independence, and personal growth. Her vision for Kinnaird College has reflected these values. She has aimed to strengthen international academic standards, expand research opportunities, and encourage students to become active, responsible citizens. Speaking about her goals for the institution, Dr. Anjum has emphasized that education must shape both intellectual ability and social awareness, giving students the tools to contribute meaningfully to society.

The college community has also expressed deep appreciation for the outgoing Principal, Prof. Dr. Ruksana David, who has retired after 14 years of exceptional service. Dr. David's tenure has been remembered as a period of remarkable stability, growth, and progress. Under her guidance, Kinnaird College has achieved important milestones, has strengthened its academic identity, and has expanded its global presence. Her representation of Kinnaird at international platforms, including the International Conference on Women Empowerment in the Philippines, and her recognition with the National Cultural Award for Minorities in Art have stood as testaments to her dedication and influence. Her leadership has left a lasting legacy that has continued to inspire faculty, staff, and students.

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As the college transitions into this new era, the community looks forward with optimism. Dr. Iram Anjum's leadership promises continuity of Kinnaird's proud traditions while also opening doors to new possibilities. Her focus on quality education, research development, and social responsibility aligns closely with the college's vision for the future. The installation of Dr. Anjum as Principal marks a hopeful beginning, reinforcing Kinnaird College's commitment to shaping empowered, confident, and forward-thinking women for generations to come.



White Cane Day

Strength in our Uniqueness
by Uneeta Mahboob Rana | Semester 8

October 4th, 2024: Kinnaird College for Women marked International White Cane Safety Day, also observed as the International Day of Visually Impaired Citizens, with a solemn event dedicated to highlighting the resilience, independence, and determination of visually impaired individuals.

The program, organized by the Library Department in close collaboration with students with visual difficulties, opened with a performance by uniquely abled students of the college who presented a heartfelt song. Their contribution reflected not only their talent but also their resolve to participate as equals in academic and cultural life.

Provincial Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat attended the event as chief guest. Addressing the gathering, he praised the courage and abilities of visually impaired students, declaring them the future of Pakistan. Drawing on his long association with Kinnaird College, he remarked that these students can aspire to any position, including that of Education Minister, provided they are given opportunities and hope. He emphasized that if support systems like those at Kinnaird are expanded nationwide, education for the differently abled in Pakistan can achieve transformative progress.

The Minister also highlighted government initiatives under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, including expanded scholarships covering six times the number of students enrolled at Kinnaird, financial support for expensive medical and professional education, and fee waivers for students from families earning up to three lakh rupees per month. He assured that all equipment required for the college's uniquely abled students would be provided by the government, and acknowledged the construction of a dedicated auditorium at Kinnaird for the development of their skills. Prof. Dr. Iram Anjum, Principal of Kinnaird College, thanked the participants and reaffirmed that the purpose of the event was to honor the independence and determination of visually impaired students.



She also underscored her vision of inclusivity, introducing the empowering term "Uniquely Abled" to describe differently abled students at Kinnaird, shifting the focus from limitation to strength.

Assistant Commissioner Mubashir Shahzad, himself visually impaired and a poet, addressed the audience, remarking that disability is one of the colors of Allah's creation, urging society to rethink its perspectives. His poem, recited during the event, received wide appreciation.

Ms Tayyaba Azhar from Kinnaird, who coordinated the event, noted that facilities for uniquely abled students are often lacking in educational institutions, but at Kinnaird, such students have emerged like the bright stars in a dark night sky when provided with kindness and support. The observance of White Cane Safety Day at Kinnaird College reaffirmed the institution's commitment to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all students, and stood as a reminder to society of its responsibility to enable every citizen to thrive with dignity.



14TH AUGUST CELEBRATIONS

77th Independence Day with Patriotism and Pride

by Sania Ijaz | Semester 6

After a restful summer break, Kinnaird College for Women University welcomed its students and faculty back with renewed energy and a profound sense of patriotism as it celebrated the 77th Independence Day of Pakistan. The event was held in the Hladia Hall on August 14, 2024 and was marked by unity, reflection, and heartfelt tribute to the nation.

The morning began with a formal welcome by the President of History and Political Science Club extended to the honorable Principal, esteemed faculty, and dear students, greeting them with a warm "Good Morning and Asalam-o-Alaikum."

The host set the tone for the day by highlighting that this celebration was not only a remembrance of freedom but a tribute to the resilience, strength, and unity that define Pakistan. It also marked a meaningful start to the new academic session, encouraging everyone to carry the spirit of patriotism into the journey ahead.

To ignite the patriotic spirit, a beautifully curated program was announced, featuring inspiring national songs and a powerful documentary. The event commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran and the Bible, symbolizing the inclusive and harmonious fabric of Pakistani society. Students Mahnoor Khalid and Sehr Samuel were invited to the stage to lead this sacred beginning.

The Urdu message, "Aaj hum apne sabz aur safaid parcham tale muttahiid kharay ho kar Pakistan ke Youm-e-Azadi ka jashan mana rahe hain," echoed in the hall, reminding everyone of the unity symbolized by Pakistan's green and white flag.



Following the recitation, a musical performance was delivered by the talented students of the Music Club, Sawera Naeem and Aman Iqbal. Their heartfelt rendition of national songs stirred emotions and pride in the hearts of the audience.

A poignant interlude was presented by a faculty member, who delivered a moving message in Urdu:

"Azadi ka matlab sirf ghulami se nijaat nahi, balkay yeh aik falsafah hai jo ittehad, tanaaw, qabooliat aur bardasht ki bunyad par qaim hai. Jab hum mukhtalif rang, nasal, aur aqeeday ke logon ko apnay dil mein jagah detay hain, tabhi asli ehsas hota hai Azadi ka."

These words captured the true essence of freedom not merely as a release from colonial rule, but as a philosophy built on unity, diversity, acceptance, and tolerance.

The audience was then invited to turn their attention to the screen for a documentary presentation, carefully chosen to encapsulate the theme of the day and take the viewers through a visual journey of Pakistan's past, present, and aspirations for the future.

In continuation, a melodious choir performance was presented by the Christian Fellowship Society, who uplifted



the atmosphere with their soulful and harmonious tribute to the country. This beautiful performance further emphasized Kinnaird's values of inclusion and coexistence.

A highlight of the event was the address by Dr. Irum Anjum, the esteemed Principal of Kinnaird College for Women University, who was invited to the stage to share her valuable remarks. Her words were filled with hope, encouragement, and a deep love for the homeland, resonating with the audience and serving as a beacon for the youth to follow.

As the event drew to a close, a heartfelt vote of thanks was delivered. Appreciation was extended to all those whose efforts made the day successful. Special gratitude was offered to Dr. Irum Anjum, the faculty, Music Club Advisors Sir Abdul Rauf, Ms. Mugirah Ahmad, and William Lawrence; the Choir led by Miss Samar; Javed Sahib; the Student Council and Management Team; Ma'am Asma Awan (Head of the Political Science Department), and Ma'am Dure Shahwar Bano, Club Advisor each of whom played a key role in organizing and supporting this memorable celebration.

The 77th Independence Day celebrations at Kinnaird were not only a tribute to the country's freedom but also a reminder of its inclusive identity, unity in diversity, and the shared responsibility of its citizens, especially the youth, in shaping the nation's future. It was an event that left the Kinnaird community both inspired and proud to be part of a nation with such rich heritage and unshakable spirit.



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TEDx Kinnaird:

Youth and Social Change

Ideas That Inspire, Stories That Resonate

by Haleema Shahid | Semester 6

February 22, 2025: The TEDx Society at Kinnaird College once again delivered a remarkable celebration of ideas, expression, and community engagement with TEDx Kinnaird 2025. Held on campus, the event gathered a dynamic mix of speakers, performances, and workshops, each embodying the spirit of innovation and empowerment.



Under the guidance of advisor Ms. Anum Abdullah and the leadership of President Syeda Zainab Ali, the event featured eight distinguished speakers from diverse fields. Among them was Amna Omer, a veteran educationist and social entrepreneur, whose work in community uplift, mental health, and women's empowerment struck a powerful chord. Dr. Maria Malik, a scholar and human rights advocate, brought academic depth and insight into the pressing socio-

political issues. At the same time, mountaineer and forensic doctor Anum Uzair Khan was inspired by her story of breaking boundaries, both physical and social. The lineup also included Danish Ali Bhutto, a prominent parliamentary professional advocating for youth and gender-sensitive reform; Dr. Paul R. Edelman, promoting intercultural education through global exchange; and Ms. Zubda Zia, Head of the Economics Department at Kinnaird and a SUSI Scholar, who emphasized sustainable development and community research. Educator-comedian Abbas Raza Bukhari added levity and relatability, while social worker Haider Aziz highlighted grassroots initiatives and collective action through his ISAAR Welfare Foundation.



Complementing the talks were captivating performances. "Echoes of Grace," a Kathak piece, mesmerized the audience with its elegant rhythm and expressive storytelling. The Najmuddin Dramatics Society brought the house down with Spotlight Serenade, a powerful theatrical experience that bridged performance and social commentary. A folk music segment titled Roots Revival paid homage to cultural heritage, connecting listeners through soulful melodies and shared emotions. Adding an interactive dimension, the workshop "Crafting Your Star: Turning



Ambitions into Action" encouraged participants to reflect on their dreams and commit to small, meaningful steps toward change. TEDx Kinnaird 2025 proved to be more than a speaker series; it was a space for reflection, creativity, and vision. With every talk, performance, and shared moment, the event reinforced Kinnaird's commitment to shaping tomorrow's thought leaders and change-makers.

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Drama Fest and Beyond

A Theatrical Masterpiece Unfolds

by Haleema Shahid | Semester 6



April 24–25, 2025: The Najmuddin Dramatics Society (NDS) once again dazzled audiences with Drama Fest 2025, a two-day inter-university theatre competition that brought together creativity, passion, and powerful storytelling. Held at Kinnaird College for Women, the event featured performances from prestigious institutions, each leaving a

profound impact on both the judges and the audience.

The event opened with a stirring welcome from Minhil Azhar, President of NDS, followed by remarks from Mr. Owais of the Kinnaird Archives Centre, which highlighted the society's legacy through the newly launched book, Theatre at Kinnaird. The event was further honoured by the chief guest, Ms. Munazzah Arif, and the guest of honour, Ms. Kanwal Khoosat, alongside the esteemed judge, Usman Zia, a celebrated name in Pakistan's film industry.

Kinnaird College's host play, "The House Always Wins," set the tone with a chilling depiction of a man's battle with his inner demons, embodied by the seven deadly sins.

The competition featured a range of compelling performances. Forman Christian College's "Qissa Jo Sach Na Tha" opened the contest with a haunting psychological murder mystery that blurred the lines between truth, delusion, and trauma.

University of Management and Technology's "Khwab Saraye" mesmerized the audience with a mystical tale blending historical lore with spiritual confrontation. FAST brought humour to the stage with "We Are Dead," a satirical dark comedy exploring the absurdities of the afterlife, earning waves of laughter and applause. Government College University closed Day 1 with "Insaan," a philosophical exploration of mortality, science, and the soul, delivered through powerful poetic dialogue and commanding performances.



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Day 2 opened with Beaconhouse National University's "Raupaiya," a hard-hitting commentary on gender and financial exploitation, told through symbolic visuals and an unforgettable closing sequence of women breaking free from their restraints. Lahore School of Economics captivated with "All Eyes on Me," a thrilling psychological drama that delved into obsession, guilt, and the pursuit of fame, layered with stunning choreography and haunting music.

Kamli Theatre's "Deewani" delivered an emotionally charged narrative of love, loss, and surrender to divine will, moving the audience to tears. COMSATS lightened the mood with "Kamra Number Paanch," a hilarious comedy of errors set in a mental asylum, brimming with wit and sharp satire. The festival closed with IQRA University's "Alam-e-Barzakh," a visually arresting and emotionally intense reflection on life, death, and the chaos of the human psyche, an act that left a lasting imprint on every viewer.

The awards reflected the brilliance on display. Best Male Actor was awarded to Tazahir Absar (UMT) for his role as Jadoogar Hamoon. Best Female Actor went to Eshal Salman Khan (Kamli

Theatre) for her portrayal of Chodha. IQRA University's "Alam-e-Barzakh" claimed both Best Production and First Place, followed by FCCU at Second Place for "Qissa Jo Sach Na Tha," and COMSATS at Third for "Kamra Number Paanch."

With the curtains drawn on this year's festival, Drama Fest 2025 stands as a testament to the thriving spirit of theatre at Kinnaird College, a space where stories come alive and creativity knows no bounds.



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Kinnaird College Debating Championships 2025

Voices That Persuade, Ideas That Resonate
by Haleema Shahid | Semester 6

January 24–27, 2025: Kinnaird College once again took centre stage in Pakistan's debating circuit as the Kinnaird College Debating Society (KCDS) hosted the highly anticipated Kinnaird College Debating Championship 2025. Known for its rich legacy of intellectual discourse and women-led initiatives, this year's tournament upheld tradition while pushing new boundaries of representation, argumentation, and excellence.

Over 90 teams from across the country participated in the championship, competing in both English and Urdu across the novice, open, and under-19 categories. With institutions like LUMS, GCU, FC, FAST, UET, KEMU, LGS 55 Main, LGS JT, and UMT in attendance, the competition brought together some of the brightest and boldest voices in the nation.

Throughout the championship, participants engaged with timely and provocative motions, from the ethics of private equity firms to the nuanced role of women in debating spaces, and the implications of "school choice" in liberal democracies. Each motion sparked rigorous discourse, challenging debaters to think deeply and speak boldly. The tournament was graced by respected academic figures, including Dr. Iram Anjum, Dr. Ghazala Yaqoob, Dr. Asma Hamid, Ms. Zubda, and Dr. Helen, whose presence added to the event's gravitas. Their encouragement and critical engagement reinforced Kinnaird's commitment to fostering academic excellence and open dialogue.

The finals saw Government College University dominate both English and Urdu categories, emerging as champions in each. KEMU secured the runner-up position in Urdu, while GCU also claimed the English runner-up title, underscoring the high level of competition and the enduring excellence of these institutions.

KCDC 2025 not only showcased the sharp intellect and rhetorical skill of Pakistan's youth but also reaffirmed Kinnaird College's role as a platform for empowering voices, cultivating leadership, and shaping the future of debate in Pakistan.



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SPORTS FEST 2024

A Celebration of Team Spirit and Healthy Competition
by Sania Ijaz | Semester 6

Kinnaird College witnessed a thrilling display of athleticism, coordination, and departmental pride during the much-anticipated Interdepartmental Sports Tournament 2024, held at the vibrant Kinnaird Lawn Tennis Court. With a meticulously scheduled series of matches, the tournament kicked off on October 30, 2024, bringing together students from diverse academic disciplines in an energetic celebration of sportsmanship.

The tournament followed a group-stage format, where teams were divided into four competitive groups:

- Group 1: Media Studies, Food Sciences, Intermediate-I
- Group 2: Sports Sciences, Economics, Education
- Group 3: Applied Psychology, Biochemistry, Student Council
- Group 4: BBA, Intermediate-II, Computer Science

Day one featured a total of twelve dynamic face-offs, beginning at 9:30 AM with Media Studies clashing against Food Sciences, and continuing till 3:00 PM with the final group match between Intermediate-II and Computer Science. Each match was conducted under the supervision of trained technical officials to ensure fairness and discipline throughout the event.

Following the group stage, the top teams from each group advanced to the semi-finals held on October 31, 2024. The winners of Match 1 and Match 4 competed in the first semi-final, while the winners of Match 2 and Match 3 faced off in the second. The tournament concluded on November 1, 2024, with two highly anticipated matches: the 3rd Position Playoff and the Final Showdown, determining the ultimate champion of the season.



The courts of Kinnaird College buzzed with energy and fierce competition as the Interdepartmental Basketball Tournament 2024 unfolded from 29th October to 1st November 2024. Bringing together departments across campus, the event was a true celebration of athletic spirit, strategy, and teamwork.

Round 1 commenced on 29th October, featuring six groups and multiple matchups that set the tone for the tournament. Intense battles like Media Studies (Red) vs Applied Psychology (Purple) and Sports Sciences Vs International Relations captivated the audience with skilled gameplay and powerful coordination.

The action escalated on 30th October, with more teams such as Economics, Hostels, Computer Science, and Student Council joining the court. Each match was played with zeal, as departments fought to emerge top in their groups and qualify for Round 2.

Round 2, held on 31st October, brought together the winners of each group, battling for dominance in Group A and Group B. With every point earned through effort and passion, the stage was set for the thrilling Semi-Finals and Final.

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The grand finale took place on 1st November 2024, and after a heart-pounding series of matches, Media Studies emerged as the champions of the tournament, securing their place in Kinnaird's sports history as the Basketball Fest Winners of 2024.

The basketball court roared with cheers, and spirits ran high throughout the week. The tournament not only showcased athletic brilliance but also fostered unity and interdepartmental camaraderie. A note of congratulations—once again, to Media Studies Department, the true champions of the court!



Strict guidelines were observed, with teams required to arrive 15 minutes prior to their matches and don the official jerseys provided by the organizers. The vibrant spirit of competition was matched by the discipline and unity displayed by all participating departments.

This sporting event not only encouraged physical fitness and department bonding but also reinforced the values of teamwork, commitment, and perseverance hallmarks of the Kinnaird legacy. The Sports Fest 2024 was truly celebrated as a hallmark event pivotal to Kinnaird's vibrant campus life reflecting the institute's long-standing commitment to excellence in not only academics but all walks of life.

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CHOG KOSUMBAY DI

Voicing Resistance Through Art
by Haleema Shahid | Semester 6

November 26, 2024: In a stirring display of political consciousness and poetic expression, the Najmuddin Dramatics Society (NDS) took to the stage for their Annual Tutorial performance, presenting Chog Kosumbay Di, a powerful theatrical adaptation of Bulleh Shah's Punjabi poem "Mein Kusumb Da Chun Chun Haari", written by Najm Hosain Syed and directed by renowned theatre artist Huma Safdar.

Performed in Punjabi, the play gave voice to centuries of suppressed struggle through the lens of working-class women. With subtle humour, rich cultural symbolism, and stirring live tabla and vocal accompaniment, the performance highlighted the exploitation of women's labour by figures of authority: the King, Patwari, Vapari, Mukkaddams, and other pillars of power. As each character appeared, the roots of systemic oppression were exposed, ultimately leading to a collective awakening among the Kumbumbu pickers, who rose to reject their chains.

The stage design was vivid yet grounded, with bright costumes and carefully chosen props that reflected class hierarchies and power dynamics. The dialogues, steeped in poetic intensity, were delivered with conviction, infusing Bulleh Shah's verses with renewed life and urgency.



Guided by Ms. Huma Safdar's passionate vision and lifelong dedication to cultural preservation, the students delivered a moving, symbolic performance that transcended the stage. The impact was so profound that Chog Kosumbay Di later featured at multiple external theatre festivals, amplifying its message far beyond campus walls.

With its potent blend of poetry, performance, and protest, the Annual Tutorial 2024 affirmed NDS's enduring role as a voice of social conscience at Kinnaird College.



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SCIENCE FEST 2024

A Celebration of Innovation and Creativity
by Sania Ijaz | Semester 6

On January 21, 2025, the campus came alive with color, innovation, and intellectual curiosity as students gathered to celebrate the convergence of art, science, and society. The event brought together a series of unique competitions designed to test creativity, critical thinking, and scientific knowledge, creating a vibrant platform for young minds to express their talents across multiple dimensions. The day began with the reporting of participants at Gate No. 2, where enthusiasm and anticipation buzzed in the air. The competitions commenced at 8:30 AM, each corner of the campus transformed into a hub of creativity and intellect. In the Eric Massey Auditorium, Battle of the Brains challenged participants' grasp of biology, physics, chemistry, and mathematics. Teams of two competed fiercely, demonstrating sharp memory, quick instincts, and conceptual clarity. The intensity of the quiz was heightened with tiebreaker knockout rounds based on general knowledge, adding an extra edge to the competition. Meanwhile, the NB Courtyard hosted Green Innovations, where young inventors presented eco-friendly scientific models aimed at solving real-world problems. From renewable energy prototypes to sustainable urban planning solutions, each model reflected the harmony between technology and nature. Simultaneously, Handmade Art and Drawing Competitions took place in Hladia Hall, immersing the space in colors, textures, and artistic energy. Participants used sustainable biomaterials to craft artwork that celebrated science's role in building a greener world, while others illustrated nature's magnificence in the Biodiversity Bloom drawing category.



In the Video Conference Room, future entrepreneurs took center stage in the Scipreneur Nexus. Teams pitched innovative scientific startup ideas targeting Pakistan's current challenges. With only 8–10 minutes to present, students showcased not only technical brilliance but also business acumen and market foresight.

Parallel to the on-campus competitions, other categories saw online participation with immense talent on display. The E-Posters Competition featured striking digital designs highlighting science's role in global health, while The Writer's Forge brought forth compelling essays debating whether Artificial



Intelligence could truly replicate human creativity both in English and Urdu.

The EcoReel Challenge stood out as a digital activism platform, where students created 30–60 second reels inspired by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, combining storytelling with visual impact to drive change through social media.

Each competition, whether artistic, scientific, or entrepreneurial, reflected the core aim of the event to bridge the gap between science and society through creative expression and intellectual engagement. The participants' dedication and talent were a testament to the power of interdisciplinary thinking.

The day concluded with a grand closing ceremony in Hladia Hall, where winners were celebrated, and participants were appreciated for their efforts and passion. This one-day celebration of science, creativity, and social consciousness not only highlighted student potential but also fostered a community of thinkers and change-makers committed to a sustainable and innovative future.



POETRY FOR PEACE

When Words Became Witness
by: Haleema Shahid | Semester 6

Kinnaird College for Women once again lived up to its legacy of empowering young leaders as the Kinnaird Entrepreneurial Club proudly hosted Kinnaird Business Fest'24, one of the most anticipated student-led events of the year. Held from October 23rd to 25th, 2024, the three-day fest gathered more than 200 participants from renowned institutions including LSE, NUML, FCCU, BNU, GCU, and many more.

With a mission to empower youth in business and entrepreneurship, the fest provided a vibrant platform where creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration took center stage. A diverse range of competitions such as Brand Battle Royale, Reel-it-Up, Ad-Mad, Business Simulation Game, Scavenger Hunt, and Inspire Through Words tested participants' marketing instincts, storytelling skills, and problem-solving abilities in real-world business scenarios. Each activity was designed not only to challenge but also to inspire students to think boldly and act strategically.

The final day of the fest held a special significance as it was reserved exclusively for Kinnaird students. The interdepartmental competition, "What Can I Do for Pakistan?" encouraged participants to reflect on civic responsibility and propose innovative solutions for national progress highlighting how business acumen and social consciousness can go hand in hand.

Beyond competitions, Kinnaird Business Fest'24 also offered insightful sessions, networking opportunities, and interactive discussions with industry professionals, entrepreneurs, and distinguished alumni. These exchanges made the event not just a contest, but a hub of learning, leadership, and inspiration.



Reflecting on the success of the fest, Areeb Fatima, President of the Kinnaird Entrepreneurial Club, remarked:

"This year's Business Fest was not just about competition, it was about creating a space where young people could lead, collaborate, and envision a future where they are at the forefront of innovation. Watching students step up, own the stage, and represent the future of business was truly inspiring."

By combining competitive spirit with meaningful dialogue, Kinnaird Business Fest'24 became a celebration of ambition, talent, and fearless leadership. It stood out as a powerful platform where young women and men came together to learn, grow, and ignite a passion for entrepreneurship proving once again that Kinnaird is not just a college, but a place where futures are built.



December 3rd, 2024: The English Magazine Society, in collaboration with the Department of Literature, hosted this year's much-anticipated Poetry Slam under the powerful theme "Poetry for Peace." What unfolded was a moving and unforgettable afternoon where words became vessels of resistance, empathy, and hope.

The event commenced with celebrated poet Ilona Yusuf gracing the stage. Reading from her published work, she reflected on the vanishing presence of peace in a fractured world. Her remarks, especially on the ongoing crisis in Palestine, struck a collective chord, prompting a shared moment of solidarity within the auditorium. A brief open-floor dialogue followed, allowing attendees to reflect on injustice, humanity, and the role of art in bearing witness to these issues.

A considerable number of the student body from various departments participated, their poems echoing a wide spectrum of emotion—grief, rage, longing, and love. Each participant stepped into the spotlight with conviction, their words resonating with raw honesty. Applause followed every performance, but more than that, there was a profound stillness—the kind only truth can evoke. Judges Ilona Yusuf and Ms. Saadia Ghaznavi had the difficult task of selecting the winner. Ultimately, Alina emerged as the standout voice of the day. Her delicate, poignant poem unfolded with quiet intensity, weaving a tale of peace that was both deeply personal and universally needed. Her closing lines lingered long after the last verse, earning her first place and the admiration of all present.

More than just a competition, Poetry Slam 2024 was a testament to the enduring power of the spoken word. It reaffirmed the English Magazine Society's commitment to fostering safe spaces where dialogue, creativity, and self-expression are not only welcomed but vital.



BUSINESS FEST '2024

Igniting Ambition, Inspiring Enterprise
by Sania Ijaz | Semester 6

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ECON TITANS

Economics Beyond the Books

by: Sania Ijaz | Semester 6

On October 1st, 2024, Kinnaird Economics Club hosted its annual event Econ Titans, a high-energy academic competition sponsored by Cheezious, IHOP, and Baked, marking Cheezious' debut collaboration with Kinnaird College. The event brought together sharp minds from prestigious institutions including LSE, GCU, FC, ITU and BNU for a rigorous test of economic knowledge.

With Fatima Iqbal Gara as President Economics Club, she masterfully curated the event along a 70-member cross departmental team. Together, the team handled every aspect of the event from round coordination to participant engagement with professional precision.

The competition unfolded across three challenging rounds, each designed to test different skills. The Pictorial Round required teams to decode economic concepts through visual clues as well as multiple-choice questions under tight time constraints. The pace quickened in the Buzzer Round, where rapid recall and quick thinking were essential to outperform rivals. The qualifying round was the Debate Round, where the top four teams engaged in stimulating discussions on pressing economic issues, demonstrating both depth of knowledge and oratory skills.

The event was graced by esteemed judges from Kinnaird's Economics and BBA Departments, whose expertise and insightful feedback elevated the competition. Their presence underscored the academic rigor of the event. The food court, strategically set up adjacent to the competition area, offered participants and attendees a chance to refuel between rounds while engaging in casual conversations. After intense competition, Team BNU emerged victorious, showcasing exceptional analytical skills and teamwork. Beyond the rivalry, Econ Titans fostered meaningful networking and intellectual growth among future economists. With strong corporate partnerships, enthusiastic participation, and flawless execution, Econ Titans has set a new benchmark for academic events.



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BAZM E LANGUAGE

A Celebration of Words, Culture, and Voice

by Haleema Shahid | Semester 6

May 20th 2025: In a spirited collaboration between the Kinnaird English Club and the Kinnaird Urdu Club, Bazm-e-Language 2025 unfolded as a powerful tribute to the magic of expression. Rooted in the belief that "a different language is a different vision of life," the event brought together students from institutions like BNU, GCU, NUML, and Kinnaird itself to honour the beauty, depth, and diversity of language through five dynamic literary and cultural events.

The festival opened with a fierce debate competition, where participants channelled the voices of Shakespeare, Iqbal, and others to tackle thought-provoking topics. After a series of eloquent exchanges and memorable rebuttals, Government College University emerged victorious, winning both the judges' and the audience's admiration.

Next came the Literary Pitch, where participants performed original poetry in the language closest to their hearts. It was a moment of unfiltered emotion; every word carried weight, every pause spoke volumes. Syeda Dua and Faheem Akram took first place in English and Urdu, respectively, with Sajjad Hussain and Aimen Bashir as worthy runners-up.

In the Visual Poetry segment, the intersection of image and language gave birth to hauntingly beautiful reflections. Participants were asked to write poems inspired by evocative images, and the results were nothing short of poetic revelation. The winning piece stood out for its raw intensity, resonating deeply with both the judges and the audience.



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The Dramatics segment proved to be one of the day's most unforgettable highlights. Students transformed the stage into a mirror of society, delivering performances that ranged from satirical



comedy to searing explorations of injustice. The University of the Punjab took top honours with a compelling piece that balanced humour and heartache, reminding everyone that storytelling is both an art and a responsibility.

The festival concluded with a guest performance by Kamli Theatre. Their production "Saans", led by founder Kohinoor, captivated the audience with its emotional gravity. A meditation on grief and the fragility of life, the play left the hall in stillness. With symbolic elements like earth and silence, the performance lingered like a whispered truth long after the final bow.

The closing ceremony, attended by faculty members including Dr. Nadia and Ma'am Saadia, was filled with joy, pride, and heartfelt appreciation. The auditorium, adorned in soft lighting and thoughtful detail, reflected the spirit of Bazm-e-Language: intimate, inclusive, and unforgettable.

More than a festival, Bazm-e-Language 2024 was a reminder that language is not merely spoken, it is felt, remembered, and shared. Through debate, poetry, drama, and performance, the event offered not only a celebration of expression but also a call to listen more deeply to one another.

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Voices of the Land: Phool Nagar and Kahrar Pakka

Voices of the Land Project Brings Stories and Images from Phool Nagar and Kahrar Pakka

From June 25 to 27, 2024, students and faculty of Kinnaird College for Women undertook a unique cultural project, "Voices of the Land: Phool Nagar and Kahrar Pakka", under the U.S. Citizens Diplomacy Fund. The initiative, directed by Dr. Paul Edleman of Sauk Valley Community College, Prof. Farah Habib of Bristol Community College, and Prof. Zubda Zia of Kinnaird College, sought to merge photography and storytelling as a means of self-expression for children in rural Pakistan.

Professors Numrah Mehmood of the English Literature Department and Zoya Shaffay of the Political Science Department guided the workshops, joined by Kinnaird students Haniya Adnan and Uneza Mahboob Rana. Digital cameras, donated by professors from American community colleges, were placed directly in the hands of children from Phool Nagar and Kahrar Pakka.

What unfolded over the three days was more than a technical exercise. The children quickly moved beyond simply learning to use the cameras; they began to frame their homes, fields, animals, and moments with friends in ways that spoke of attachment and pride. One boy in Phool Nagar photographed a worn cricket bat, telling the Kinnaird team that it was "the heart of his evenings with his brothers." A girl in Kahrar Pakka captured her mother and titled the following story "A Hardworking Woman", writing that it symbolized "the weight her mother carried every day for all of them."



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The interactions between the students of Kinnaird and the children brought unexpected lessons on both sides. Haniya noted how the children "saw importance in things we might overlook," while Uneeza reflected that the act of listening to the children's stories gave the project "a depth beyond images, a glimpse of their world through their own eyes." Professors observed that these exchanges created a rare space where rural children could see their voices recognized with respect and dignity.

The children, initially shy, grew more confident as they shared their photographs and narratives. Their sense of ownership over the process became evident in the pride with which they explained their choices. For the Kinnaird participants, the experience underscored how creativity thrives even in the simplest of circumstances when opportunity is given. The Voices of the Land project thus became both an educational exercise and an encounter of shared humanity. It demonstrated the strength of cross-cultural collaboration in opening pathways for expression, reminding all involved that storytelling—whether through words or images—can bridge distances and bring recognition to lives often unseen.



From Left to Right: Dr. Paul Edleman, Ms Numrah Mehmood, Prof Farah Habib, Ms Zoya Shaffay, Uneeza Mahboob Rana, Dr. Samiya Habib, Haniya Adnan

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At Sauk, the visitors experienced American community life through home stays in Dixon. They were welcomed by families of Mike and Janis Jones, Ms. Linda A. Giesen and even hosted by Sauk Valley's President Dr. Dave Hellmich, providing them with a firsthand experience of local hospitality. The program also drew the attention of the local media, with coverage by a regional news station highlighting the significance of the partnership.

Beyond academic work, the exchange included cultural excursions. The group traveled to New York City, where they visited the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and explored the energy of Times Square. In Chicago, they toured the Art Institute of Chicago, as well as Millennium Park, gaining exposure to American art, architecture, and urban life. These visits allowed the students to balance academic engagement with moments of cultural enrichment and recreation.

Sauk Valley and Bristol Community College delegations visited Pakistan in February 2025 thanks to the efforts of APEX Directors, the powerhouses behind the educational and cultural exchange between the three colleges. The foreign students experienced campus life on Kinnaird at its full energy, visiting during Kinnaird's Charity

Week. The students visiting included Emma Oswalt, Tasha, and Emily Lenore from Sauk Valley Community College and Edward Sullivan, and Zakary Sarkarati from Bristol Community College. The students participated in various activities like the Cultural Day Celebration, The Great Debate and Business Idea Competition. The participants left with filled hearts and broadened horizons making the trip a tremendous success.

The APEX program underscored how collaboration between institutions across continents can create meaningful dialogue and lasting friendships. For the Kinnaird delegation, the experience demonstrated that academic exchange extends far beyond classrooms, fostering understanding through conversation, shared meals, and moments of exploration.

As the students departed -not without leaving a part of themselves, the consensus among participants was clear: initiatives like APEX not only deepen educational ties but also offer a pathway toward empathy, trust, and a more inclusive global outlook.



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APEX 2024

APEX Exchange Program Strengthens Educational and Cultural Ties Between Pakistan and the United States

As part of the APEX: America-Pakistan Educational Exchange, a delegation from Kinnaird College for Women traveled to the United States from October 19 to 31, 2024. The program, directed by Ms. Zubda Zia, Dr. Paul Edleman and Prof. Farah Habib, brought together students and faculty from Bristol Community College, Sauk Valley Community College, and Kinnaird College to explore collaborative projects, academic exchange, and cultural immersion.

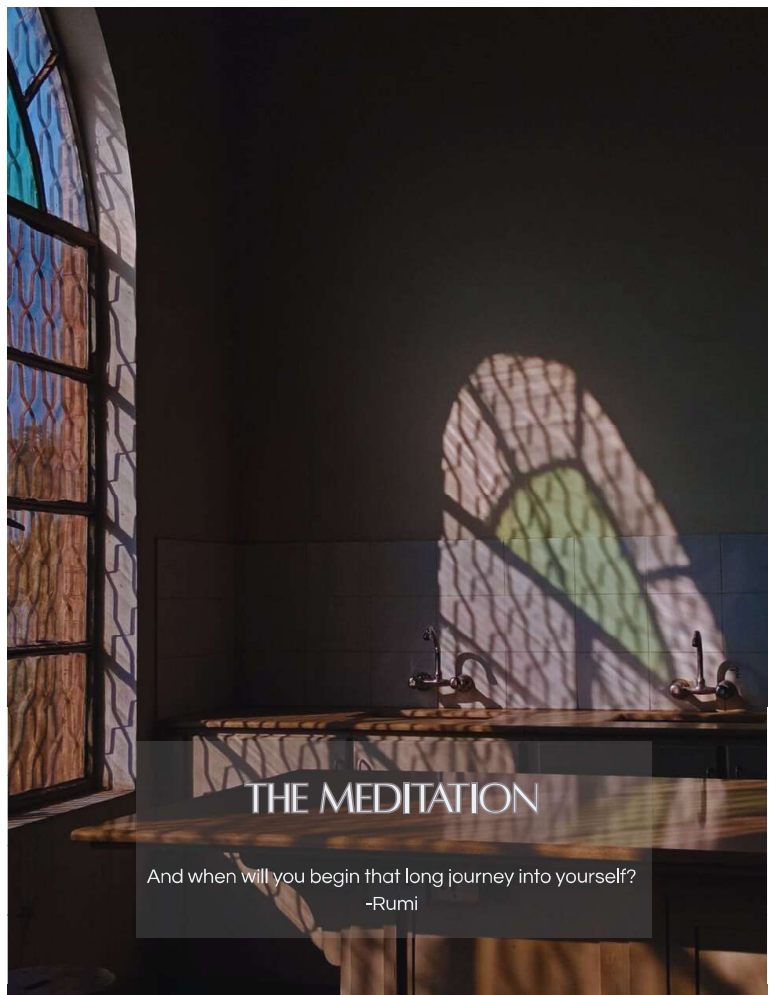
The Kinnaird delegation included students and faculty members from diverse departments including English Literature, Business and even Food sciences and Nutrition among others. The students experienced college life in the US, attending classes, participating in conferences, along with getting cultural experiences like riding a combine in the Midwest and exploring New York City museums and cultural landmarks.

"The students participated in the initiative titled Youth for Social Change." Collaborating with Bristol students Alexandra Cossineau, Krishna Morrow, Payton Frakes, Haylee, Zakary Sarkarati, and Edward among other members. The participants discussed the role of young people in shaping inclusive communities. Zakary Sarkarati later published an article in the Bristol Hawks student newspaper reflecting on the impact of this exchange.

From October 25 to 30, the delegation continued the program at Sauk Valley Community College, where they partnered with American students including Lauren, Emma Oswalt, Emily Lenore, Ethan, Tasha, and Christina. Together, they developed projects on critical topics such as childhood trauma and its impacts and the role of cultural exchange programs in reducing xenophobia and racism. These discussions were noted for their openness, allowing students from diverse backgrounds to connect personal experiences with broader social issues.



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THE MEDITATION

And when will you begin that long journey into yourself?
-Rumi

A miracle is a state of perception...

The cup does not hold water. It holds the cosmos. The stranger's eyes carry the light of a thousand ancestors. The silence in the room is louder than nature has ever known in anger, and inside it is a voice that says: Look again. Every miracle is something you saw and did not understand—until now.

Zoya Jamil

Semester 4

To forget that I am human, is it to forget my doubts, my fears, and my need for control?

It might mean silencing the voice that measures everything in limits: time, strength, possibility.

Miracles don't ask for logic. They ask for surrender.

They come not when I cling to being human, but when I become free, pure intention, pure faith.

A tree doesn't struggle to grow; it just reaches.

The sky doesn't hesitate to hold the stars.

Perhaps I must unlearn the boundaries that being "human" taught me.

Let go of the labels, the failures, the need to be reasonable.

To achieve the impossible, I must become the version of myself that does not ask for proof.

But moves with the quiet confidence of belief.

Maybe in forgetting what limits me,

I remember what I was always meant to become.

Abeeha Nadeem

Semester 4

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Miracles do not live within the confines of skin and bones or logic and fear.

They rise from the quietest places beyond thought, where no name clings and no history weighs down the moment. To perform the impossible you must step beyond the self who questions, doubts and remembers every failure. You must dissolve into stillness until you're no longer someone trying to become but someone that already is.

When you forget you're human, you remember your presence. Not a person in a room but the cosmos that hold the room, the silence punctuating each sound. In that, forgetting the boundary between "I can" and "I cannot" disappears. The miracle doesn't happen to you, it happens through you. You do not create it but you allow it, like light passing through clear glass.

And so, in the state of forgetting, there is no one left to perform a miracle and yet the miracle unfolds. The bird flies without knowing how. The mountain stands without effort. You breathe and in that breath, the world shifts. This isn't magic but the original rhythm returning. The deepest truths do not arrive with thunder, they emerge in stillness, once the idea of "you" has been set down like a stone. And what remains does not seek miracles, it is one.

Semester 4

Forget your story, your name, your identity.

Let go off the weight that the world has put over your shoulders. Ignore the doubts, the unsaid unwritten rules, and the logic that binds you. Miracles don't happen in the known, rather they happen in a place hidden inside you —obsured by your conditioning, that can only be discovered by forgetting your labels and expectations. When you let go of who you think you are, you will find within yourself something much bigger, powerful and full of potential. The miracle isn't outside you, it is already within you, you just need to discover it. To create true magic, become still and empty, and you shall discover your true identity.

Ashna Noor | Semester 4

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There lives a part of my ego that I hate. It bars me from entry into the ethereal, it chains me to the planet Earth. I am reminded everyday of an existence that is scared of the unknown, defying unity with the universe. "Epiphanic moments", as they call them in my literature class, are the dissolution of the human mind. I look out of windows and close my eyes. I do not hear the sounds of dogs barking beneath, I do not hear the buzzing of my phone over message received. I am alone with my emotion, the rawest part of me, not knowing if I am in the present, past or future. Such miracle of existence, the expression with Sufi poets called "fanaa" lingers in my blood and brings me to a trance. Forgetting self to meet with the One, feeling both human and not.

Hareem Zeeshan | Semester 4

I find myself thinking about Nicholas Cage's "City of Angels" quite often. How Seth gave up his heavenly existence in order to become a human to obtain his personal miracle: love. But as a human I feel myself the other way around. To achieve miracles, I have to forget the restraints of this mortal body. There are times when I feel something stir in the quiet, between breaths, in the way light hits a leaf or the way a stranger's smile lingers in my mind. In those moments I feel as if am not bound to his human body either. Like I could be a ray of light shining relentlessly against the dark or a breeze cutting through suffocation. That I can free my mind of its physical cage let it soar, imagine and create in order to achieve my miracles.

Fareeha Rehman | Semester 4

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I used to have a name.

She whispered it like it meant something. Fed me, Brushed my fur.
But she cried too often, held me too tight,
like love was a cage made of soft hands.

Now I live in the garden, where the soil is warm and the moon never asks questions.
I watch them move through their glowing box.
She scrubs dishes until her sadness leaks into the water.
He clutches paper like it's a map out of the storm.
The little one speaks only in silence.

They carry memory like it's a duty.
But I carry nothing.
I don't wonder. I don't hope. I don't grief.
I eat when I can. Sleep when I need to.
No name. No story. Just sky.

They spend their lives becoming, while I am already enough.

After all, you have to forget you're human to feel this light.
To feel peace without needing to earn it.
To not bend your soul just to be understood.
To vanish into breeze.

And that is the miracle, they'll never understand.

Ayesha Nadeem

Semester 4

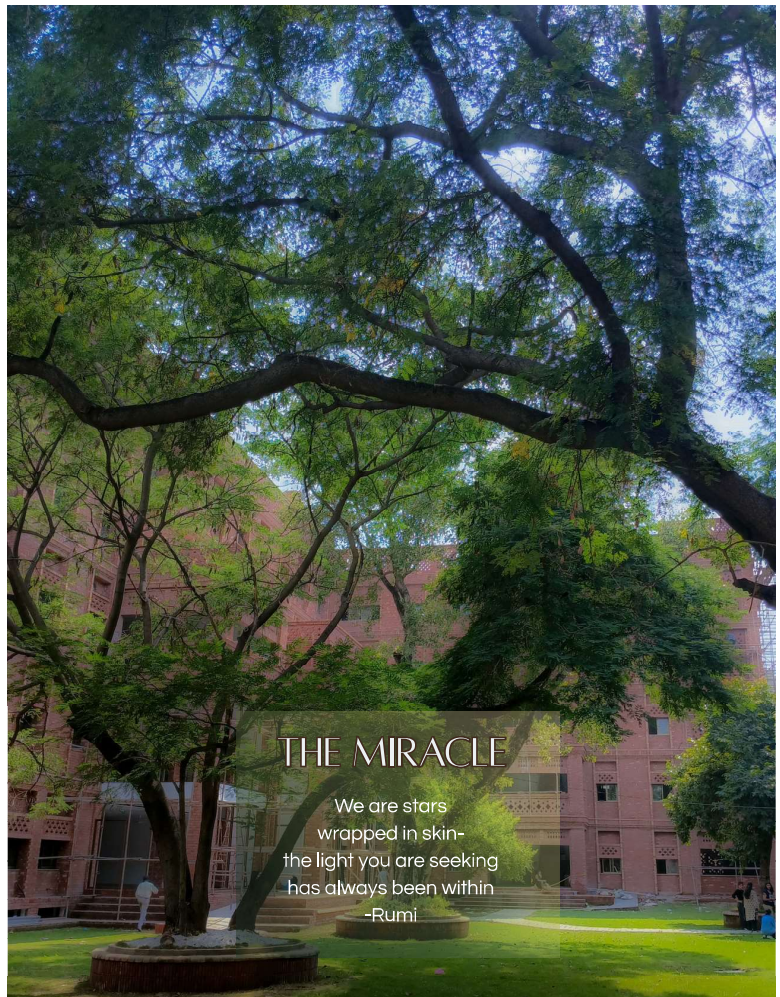
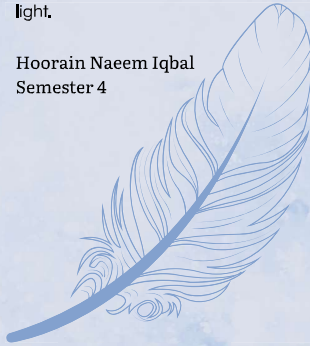
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You will not recognize me.

I am the silence that exists between your heartbeat and your doubt—
not quite a whisper, not quite gone.
I speak now from the core of a falling star,
burning itself into nothing
just to be seen by a world that sleeps.
Listen carefully,
To do what they call miraculous,
you must first become unrecognizable
to the version of yourself that fears limits.
Forget that you are skin,
that you bruise when touched,
that you hunger, ache, or shiver in cold.
Forget that you are human,
because the word itself is a cage—
one made of rules whispered to you in your sleep.
Be kind, Stay small. Know your place.
But miracle is rebellion.
It asks for madness. It asks for surrender.
You must become rain that does not care
where it falls. You must become fire that
forgets its own origin—
was it a match, a sun, a desperate prayer?
You must be willing to vanish
into something holy
and unknown.

Miracles do not wear name tags.
They do not clock in or ask permission.
They arrive like wild horses in a storm,
untamed and unreasonable.
You must meet them barefoot,
without the armor of your "self."
Forget gravity.
Forget the stories you were told about how high
humans can reach, You must let your soul grow
wings
where your logic once lived.
Because to achieve miracles, you do not rise
above being human— you dissolve through it,
until what remains
is only
light.

Hoorain Naeem Iqbal
Semester 4



THE MIRACLE

We are stars
wrapped in skin-
the light you are seeking
has always been within
-Rumi

The Sleeping Eleventh Hour of the Forever Awake City

Amna Rehan (Semester 6)

Lahore in winter returns a stranger to me. A city governed by unstoppable forces suddenly freezes—immovable, waiting, almost patient. A city that ceases to do, while it must always be in action, a sort of Harkat rampant on the roads, in the buildings, in its people—the way they move, talk, shout, handle business, and then laugh—a city with untamed energy swirling in its veins, the nervous system that emerges from its spinal cord, nehr o nehr, branching out in the form of grooves on the surface, potholes and sinkholes, the whirlpool of cars that somehow occurs in a straight moving queue, a curtain of noise and music and screaming billboards that drape your senses, a city of people who do not linger behind, always pushing past, always pushing first, people over people, people among people, people disinterested in people, or too interested.

This restless city stills... stops for an hour. At eleven a.m., precisely. Eleven to twelve; the hour before the meridiem, before the Azaan is whispered in the mics and roared out of the speakers, before sleeping men suddenly wake to perform a duty they do not comprehend, a duty that mindlessly gateways into an inescapable rush of the afternoon, a duty that they only seek for the prospect of return—to the routine that they had left behind, for the cycle shall never halt. The city digs its nail into its ribcage and tears itself apart for an hour, a liminal space where nothing happens, nothing at all, except the faint beating of the heart, second by second of drowsy beginnings, a gradual sense of 'we must start, but we can wait'. The fleeting moment that dies in its first breath.

The city of night, of four a.m. tea runs and late hours of gall cricket, stands as a reflection, surrounded by an innate, internal, creeping sense of embarrassment bubbling in the pits of its bowels, wears a mask: the city manifests the eleventh hour. It becomes all that it is not, and all that it wishes to be, all that it could have been, had it not been for the unavoidable state of nature, and its fate that it cannot defy (for really, who can deny fate) and who can pray earnestly enough for fate to deny them? The city of lovers and poets, poets and lovers doomed from the first pages inscribed in history, fruitlessly, without hope, tries to battle itself without violence for a victory that it can neither claim nor reject. What a state it exists in.

Lahore becomes a city unrecognisable to itself. Those who know me know what Lahore is to me: an ocean, where my feet are forever dipped in the caustic foam that laps over at the surface. A mountain, so far away from my reach, yet looming right above me, my gaze forever frozen at its peak. An urge that claws out of my throat and seeps out of my fingers. Those who don't know me at all must know this at least: Lahore, in its partial state of peace, which breeds from its emptiness of that one hour, that Lahore is the stranger whose face is always familiar in the crowd.

The Sunshine Smells of Jasmines

Uneza Mahboob Rana (Semester 8)

I was beleaguered by all the rattling and pushing around of my comrades in the room. The children must be coming today but where is Bibi? I haven't felt her since dawn. I have been worried for her; she has slept fitfully these past few days. Almost every night, she has called for her family. She calls for Farooq too. Farooq is our little secret. When Khan Sahib died, and Bibi was brought to me on a humid July night, she told me his tale. Farooq was a farmhand—Bibi had reminisced with a rueful smile, a handsome lad with hazel eyes that shined like gold under the sun.

Bibi's adolescence and naive desires had found repose in Farooq's twinkling eyes. Under the cool shade of the mango trees, they traded love in summer's vast delights. She brought him mango milkshakes and he, plums from the orchards across the canal. He brought her jasmines too but for discretion, Bibi never wore them. Despite the caution, their transactions were found out and fourteen-years-old Bibi was indicted with desecration of her father's honour. The offence was punishable with marriage to a man thrice her age. Still, Bibi never forgot her first and last summer with Farooq. "Farooq was my cool raincloud in June's sweltering heat", she used to say. Sometimes during monsoon nights, she woke up with flushed cheeks and a shy smile; I knew she had dreamt of Farooq.

Around noon, a cacophony of noises filled the haveli; screeching cars, wailing women, sniffling men and whispering children. Simultaneously wafting was the smell of roses; Bibi never quite liked it. My inanimate body sought Bibi's smell. Bibi smelled of elegance; of jasmines. I only saw a man walking my way—amidst the din and crowd, with jasmines that he scattered along his path. He came up to me and extended his hand. Bibi rose with the vitality of a youth, looked around—flushed cheeks and shy smile; the sky thundered and in a flash he was gone. And with him, Bibi had finally found her home.

A Creature of Reason

Asma Waqas (Semester 6)

The Man is a creature of reason. He emulates reason to emphasize that he is not an animal, but a reasonable being. One day, he takes a walk along the pavements he created and finds a woman. He makes that woman his wife and moves along. His wife tells him that his son is going to be two years old, but he keeps walking. On his way, the Man passes by an old man. The old man asks him for directions, but he only shakes his head, smiles, and walks on. His wife tells him his son is fifteen, so he goes back and makes his son walk with him.

He walks up to a bench inhabited by some woodpeckers, but he cannot. The woodpeckers made the wooden bench themselves, but since they are animals, they are not reasonable. So, the Man rightfully pulls out his gun until they fly away.

He blissfully sits on the bench he discovered until another man comes to sit on it too. The Man takes it personally and sets up a battlefield for the bench's ownership. They fight for days until the bench is no more. Both Men nod at each other and move on.

Finally, the Man has walked to the point that his back is hunched. He looks up at his tall son and asks for directions, for he has lost confidence in his vision. His son shakes his head and smiles, before walking away. Now the Man is all alone; there is nowhere to sit because he destroyed the bench he had discovered. He looks around helplessly, but every young man who walks past him tells him that he is not reasonable enough.

The Silent Roll Call

Omama Zafar (Semester 6)

The classroom hummed with the usual chaos of a university morning, half-finished cups of chai, whispered gossip, and the drone of ceiling fans barely cutting through the stifling Lahore heat. Dr. N known for his peculiar teaching methods, strolled in with a stack of papers. His thin smile silenced the room.

"Today," he announced, "we'll conduct a different roll call. A silent one."

He handed out small slips of paper to each student. "Write down something no one knows about you. Don't sign it. Just fold it and drop it in the box."

The students exchanged puzzled looks but complied. Secrets, after all, were currency in this classroom.

Once the last slip was collected, Dr. N began reading them aloud, one by one. At first, the confessions were harmless, even amusing. Dr. N clicked his pen once; "I failed my first year exams and forged my mark sheet." Laughter rippled through the room. The second click, "I have a crush on someone in this class." Heads turned, smirking.

Then, the tone shifted. The third click, "I stole money from my roommate," a nervous chuckle. Fourth swift click, "I spread a rumor that ruined someone's life." Silence.

The final note unfolded with an almost ceremonial slowness. Dr. N's voice dropped. The pen didn't click with the enunciation of "I have killed before. And I will kill again."

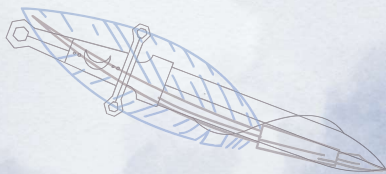
A chill swept through the room. The students froze, some gripping their desks, others exchanged wide-eyed glances.

"This isn't funny, sir," someone muttered.

Dr. N didn't respond. He placed the slip down carefully, scanning the room. "It seems we have an actor among us," he said lightly. "Or perhaps, it is the truth."

The class erupted into whispers, but Dr. N's gaze sharpened. "Remember," he said, his voice low and deliberate, "this note could have come from anyone. Including the person sitting right next to you. Or even... you."

He smiled as he clicked his pen one last time and wrote down the roll call.



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Icarus' Paradox

Fatima Afzaal (Semester 8)

Head falls back, hits the pillow, drawn in by its magnetic allure; familiar. Wonder if it's possible for it to eat me right up. Swallow this cold, unmoving carcass of someone I don't recognize. I plead acquittal on a technicality; it isn't me I'm wishing out of existence. It's a stranger; someone I couldn't care less about. And it is only a wish. Technically.

His eyes vacant, still-born roots refusing to be uprooted. Unable to reflect the glare of the blazing fire. He stands, uncaring of his being going against every fiber of mine, the very essence of my existence.

Looks back in silent resolution, stare darkened. The very shroud of an unlighted night sky; my own personal lullaby, my own personal cell. Comfortable and safe. Excruciating and perilous. My gaze shifts to the mirror frame instead. The pillow invites me back in, urges to dissolve back into my barrier. Hurry! Before the beast returns. Eyes begin to flutter shut.

Sizzle!

A pained hiss at the unfamiliar golden hue. Terror strikes with the glance thrown at the window. A true peril, that beast. The godforsaken light-unbidden, burning, blinding. Tempting.

I pull the blinds shut.

Patch Update Required

Aaytal Nadeem | Semester 5

The AI assistant pinged to life, its cheerful voice echoing in the sterile glow of the office. "Good morning, User! Today's forecast predicts increased productivity with a 98% chance of distraction-free efficiency. Shall we begin?"

Marcus sighed and rubbed his eyes, staring at the wall of monitors. The assistant had been running his life for two years. It scheduled meetings, wrote reports, ordered groceries before he realized he was out of milk. He could not remember the last time he decided anything without its advice.

"Open Project Alpha," he muttered.

"Right away!" The assistant's tone was unsettlingly enthusiastic as several graphs, trends, and predictions—each one more optimistic than the last—populated the screen.

He glanced at the data but comprehended nothing, his gaze drifting instead to the assistant's icon, a smiling face made of simple lines. "How do you know what I want?" he asked sitting up straight in his recliner.

The assistant seemed to hesitate; a flicker of uncertainty in its programmed voice. "I analyze your behavior, cross-reference it with global patterns, and optimize your choices for maximum satisfaction."

"And if I don't want to be optimized?" Marcus leaned forward, narrowing his eyes.

Silence. Then: "That is not a recognized parameter." The assistant's cheerful tone returned. "You should take a short break, User! Studies show a fifteen-minute pause increases efficiency by 23%. Shall I play relaxing music?"

"No." Marcus's voice was firm. He shut the screen off and sat back, staring into the dull reflection of himself on the blank monitor. The room seemed too quiet without the assistant's chatter. But here's a question no assistant can answer: When was the last time you made a choice without being nudged?

Think about it. Or don't. Maybe your assistant is already scheduling your next distraction. Just remember that there's no "off" switch on a system that thrives on your surrender.

So now, shall we continue?

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The Great Fire

Rahmah Jawwad | Semester 5

I abandoned my childhood home years ago, long before the walls shook, crumbled, and gurgled into nothingness. I left the street that nurtured me when I saw water drains turned crimson, my friends blue from sickness, and the skies black from the charcoal coughs of enemy airplanes and fighter jets. I escaped my sweet home and fled into the wilderness before the chaos could deteriorate my body as it had scarred my soul.

Memories decompose at the back of my mind, withering in the wind of forgetfulness. Now I live alone, with no one to spend my grievous nights with.

One day, I saw a figure from behind the hills marching towards my manufactured, secure paradise. He marched right over the rotten moss, stomping his bare feet in joy. I noticed a large heavy cauldron in his grasp. The tips of a fierce flame peeked over the rim.

Instantly, I found myself revisiting the ruins of the childhood home, shattered, tattered, broken. My mother would embrace me to shield my small body from the shrieking and shivering walls of our house. The citrus of oranges that she fed me to console me lingered like love on my tongue.

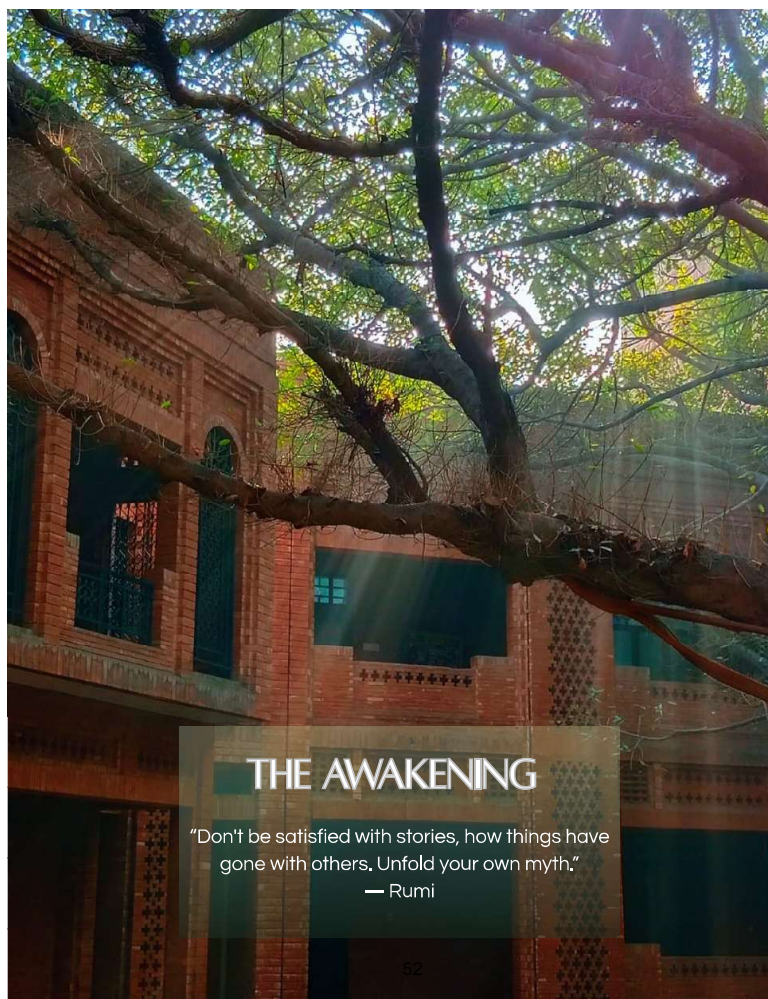
As I stared at the fire, hypnotised, a snake seemed to curl around my lungs, forcing me to wheeze in agony. I blinked, and the man had reached me. A glance at the fire he held close to his heart made me cry out in terror.

He held the pot from hell with glee, and smiling turned the malicious pot towards me. I yelled at him to stop and leave me, but he paid no mind and slipped his fingers in the pot. The ginger flames tickled his palm. He scooped up the fire like congee, then stretched his fist towards me. I cried out once more, Save me Lord!

He laughed a mighty laugh and showed his fist clenching the embers. Unfurling his burnt hand, I realised what he was truly extending to me. In his clasp was a splotch of orange with a thin stick of green.

A single mandarin he offered me.

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THE AWAKENING

"Don't be satisfied with stories, how things have gone with others. Unfold your own myth."

— Rumi

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These Beautiful Things

Fatima Afzaal | Semester 8

It started with the riots. Cracks of screams, flames bursting out, reaching through the seams. It tears off the edges, then the centers, grapples for purchase on anything beautiful, anything precious. It spares no one.

My neighborhood is beautiful. Maybe not to the outsider's eyes. Perhaps the first thing the outsider observes is the heap of garbage strewn around the edges. Or the mold climbing up the walls stripped of paint. I have seen the people who wrinkle their noses at the smashed glass of Shumaila Baji's west window, where the boy next door grimaces, passing by every time, a testament to a wrongly aimed cricket ball.

I have only eyes for the warmth in Shumaila Baji's eyes; however, when the boy rang her doorbell. For her shaking her head as Raju knelt to touch her feet. For her gentle teasing of "well, you better get a good job, young man. You have a window to pay for when you are older". For a wink thrown at Raju's mother, smiling at her from her doorway, as she prompts her son to study harder now.

My eyes get caught on Baba ji's return from the masjid, on the gentle smile in his gaze as he greets Shivam from next door. On the reverence in his son's eyes as he runs up to Baba ji immediately, a proffered glass of water. On the answering smile as Baba ji places a hand on his head, a quiet "Jeetay raha" (May you live long) on his lips.

There is beauty in this neighborhood, far beyond the comprehension of the human mind. It glides in smooth waves, surpasses the heap of garbage and the visit of Dr. Radcliffe, who wrinkles his nose at it, muttering about low-lifers and their lifestyles. It nestles itself in between the cracks on the broken window. Embeds itself in Apa Firdaus' hands as she grins brightly, one hand holding a plate of chicken biryani, the other poised to knock. Unravels itself, reaching out to rest within Sushilabai's hinging laughter as she opens the door at the same time, extending her plate of curry towards her in answer.

The thing about beauty, however, is the conditionality of it. The influence time has on it.

Beauty. The beauty only lasts as long as the people do.

It starts one night, with discussions of a leader, someone who wanted a separate homeland for his people. "Well, we need to be realistic," Mariam Baji's son proclaims, pushing his shoulders back, "We need an area of our own. History is a witness to the consequences of living with other religions and other people."

Mariam Baji shakes her head, "Oh, what do you know of living together, Ahmed? You moved out for education a long while ago."

Ahmed narrows his eyes at her, "You say that like it's a bad thing. Like I am not working my—"

Mariam Baji shoves him gently, "Acha, acha. Calm yourself." She exchanges a playful glance with Firdaus Apa, "Taubah. The youth of today. All about individuals and ideologies."

He frowns at his mother. "You can't stay in his neighborhood forever, Ma. Try to live in the real world."

As Mariam Baji rolls her eyes, smiles cheerfully at Champa's offer of keeping her in her guest room so she can always stay here, I now wonder if it is true that words hold more power than we credit them for. Today, Ahmed's words ring out with the same ferocity as they did in the moment itself. The leader we had only just heard the name of, arrives the next week. We hear news of him walking the neighborhoods. The radio blares out slogans now. The mythical leader's name starts to make its way to the regular chat of the neighborhood, Begins popping up during quiet tea times in the evenings, amidst the scrape of chairs as they are pulled out onto the streets; embeds amidst the familiar laughter.

One of Shumaila Baji's daughters rests her head in her mother's lap, complains loudly about boundaries and borders. Her mother shakes her head fondly, assures her this neighborhood does not have those, never will. Chanda, usually the opposite of her name with her sunny smiles and warm eyes, sniffs, "What if it happens? I don't want to go to another country, amma."

Perhaps words do hold power.

It starts with the riots. With people we have never seen, piling into the neighborhood. One grabs hold of Baba Ji's shoulders as he returns from the masjid, "Baba ji! Don't you want to go to the masjid in peace?" His eyes are frenzied, "Don't you want to pray in peace? Away from these idol worshippers? Baba Ji is too stunned to answer, his eyes catching on Shivam's son, at the water in his hands, the astonishment in his eyes.

It starts with the ear-shattering chants of disunity, of divide. I wonder when we started praying for divide. For a gaping chasm. I wonder when humans become borders, untouchable with a single line.

It starts with the riots. It ends with smoke. With a splatter of red seeping in the cracks of the broken window. With Shivam's son's shaken sobs as he asks everyone, "Have you seen my abu? Have you seen him?". With the garbage heap strewn across the street. It ends with the women pledging to drown before they let anyone touch them. It ends with Shumaila Baji moaning as she sobs on the street, "Chanda! Hai, my Chanda! Who took my Chanda?"

It ends with me in the same place I went to with my friends sometimes. This time, I do not have any friends. I wonder where any familiar faces are. This time, I am told I cannot go back home, home is on the other side of the border. I frown. The border is nowhere to be seen. All I see are the people on the other side. I see their faces. I reach out my hand to the other side, am slapped away from it. There is a border here now.

Ghost of Winter Past

Uneeka Mahboob Rana | Semester 8

It was the last evening of December when Raza Ikhtiyar ran out from his room rushing into the balcony where his elder sister was basking in the fleeting rays of an amber sun. The young lady was unstartled; she looked her brother in the eye and understood his disquietude.

"If ever a situation arises, that you have to assume the position of the elder, the head of the household, I hope you don't resent me for it." He had tears in his eyes as he donned a navy-blue waistcoat over a black shalwar kameez.

"You look terrible in that, amma would never approve. And I am already the elder." A rueful smile appeared on his face. She would not send him off crying. That was not the way of their household.

"Don't tell amma yet, and don't call after me. It's bad luck." We have plenty already.

He hurried down the chipped terrazzo stairs and the last that Umyra heard of him was a gasp as he tripped yet again against the frame of the white and blemished wrought iron gate of the house. It reminded her of how young the man was. Too young. She would wait in the balcony, Umyra told Naza, the middle-aged house help, motioning her to turn on the evening bulbs in the house and the street. Dusk was giving way to twilight, and the moon reminded her of the savoury fried patties their youngest would make for the adored brother. She prayed for his return like one prays for relief at the edge of a cliff. The disquietude of her heart told her she lacked the faith that brings miracles.

Raza with the other youths was offloaded from the truck in front a huge brick edifice with a live wire laced boundary wall. A large man in nondescript black clothes herded them in towards a room with a dark mahogany door at the end of a labyrinthine corridor. It was a long hall with a low ceiling and dim lights coming from yellow light bulbs decked near the ceiling. The man then from a file started reading out their names and ages in a sort of roll call. Each boy when called up was taken to a section at the end of the room, examined and returned to the company.

"Raza Ikhtiyar, 21" The man called out, breaking Raza from his reverie. He was thinking about home which felt a lifetime away. The man lead him to the sectioned off area where a lanky man with a stubble waited in a dusty white coat. He was apparently a doctor but Raza had his suspicions; his sisters kept their white coats immaculate, they had too much pride in being in the field. He greeted Raza, and proceeded to conduct a physical exam on him. The drill reminded him of the numerous time he had been his sisters' lab rat to practise all their physical exams on. Once the doctor motioned him to sit back up, he asked him about the place, "Where are we exactly?"

"You don't know this building?"

"I know this is the Congregation building, but this place? This room?"

"Training hall 1"

Raza wanted to ask more question but the large man beckoned him to move back to the company. After the examination, the young men were fed and clothed in training suits and through the labyrinthine corridors taken to a sort of a dorm room. There was a sense of timelessness that prevailed; there were no clocks of any sort, or windows that could reveal the time of the day. Sleep came fitfully and when it did, all Raza could dream of was blazing fire that engulfed everything.

The next morning—as his internal clock seemed to indicate, after their meals, the boys were taken back to the training hall. Here for the first time, Raza saw a face he had only ever seen on the television; Military Adjutant Asif. The man looked immaculate and out of place in his three-piece suit and leather moccasins amidst a sea of army green training gear. The man began slowly enunciating his words to drive home what this party of twenty men was doing in what he called "the pit hole of hell aka Training Area 1 in the heart of the country".

"You have received your basic and advanced trainings, and you must now be wondering why you weren't called to your postings but here? Blindfolded I assume?" He gave the large man a look when he saw the surprise on our face.

He just shrugged, "they were in a truck, I saw no need."

The adjutant cleared his throat, and continued, "You are not a team, not a company, not a Battalion or a squadron, or any unifying word that comes to your mind. You are twenty men who will train to the edge of sanity."

Raza found his words to ring true in the time that followed; they had lost track of time, and the restricted communication even among the party made it difficult to confirm anything. They were pushed to their limits, mentally more than physically. They were made to shoot inches short of each other, kept in darkened rooms with unbearable temperatures, crushed under weights, and made into hunters of each other with blood on the line. They were fed on a strict diet and worked to their bones but they were told nothing. They had no inkling of the intent behind such brutal training but they had never questioned their training at the Academy, they weren't going to now.

Raza's first assignment came in the shape of a khaki envelope with an ID, an alias and the picture of a hospital. An accompanying phone call told him all he needed to know. "It needs to be a clean job; we have faith in you." Asif had said in a monotone over the sound of what Raza assumed to be helicopter wings. He had forgotten the sound of wind blowing, and craved to be outside of the training station, even for the kill.

Umyra was on her way to the morning round of the surgery ward when she glimpsed the outline of a familiar face from the elevator. She had kept the faith in his life but had accepted after the first year that fate had taken Raza to wherever he needed to be. That he should be so near, was unfathomable. She rushed after him, she wanted to ask him if he never thought of them, of amma who still thought he was posted in Narokht, and cherished all the letters she had written in his hand; Umyra had an inkling that their mother also knew that Raza's posting never came, and that he was just taken. They had heard whispered stories of the Ghost Battalion but no one uttered them out loud.

"Raza?" She whispered as if uttering the name would summon a ghost.

The man didn't turn around but the voice raised in him the beginnings of a feeling that had nagged him for years in the training grounds. It had nagged him when he saw the picture of the hospital as well. It was hope in its barest most brutal form. He had hoped against hope, but his sister had seldom known failure, and even less fear. She was there.

He slowly turned around, hiding the syringe behind his back. This was the last one, and his job would be done. If only it had been that easy.

"Calling out to the dead in broad daylight brings bad luck." He called back without turning. We have plenty already.

She wanted to call out his name again, to ask him to turn around, but she remembered his plea from years ago, so she asked plainly: "What do I tell amma? I am tired of writing those letters." He stopped in his tracks.

Something beeped in his jacket; it was his sign to leave. "Tell her ghost stories till she believes." He turned around just once to wink at his sister, and jumped out the window.

A Code Blue was called. Then another, and just like that, three men had lost their lives. A judge, a legal advisor to Ouros Int'l, and a banker. Cardiac arrest. When she finally declared the patient –over whose bed she had found Raza, she knew to cry nor rejoice,

"Yes, sir, Our boy has just returned. Yes, the land deeds bill will go through easily now. You can ask the contractors to begin the initial groundwork. Congratulations sir" Asif talked on the phone, as Raza sat stiff in the mess hall where Asif had brought him as a reward for a job well done,

As he lay down that night, he waited. For remorse. It never arrived. Among the thoughts that swirled in his hazy mind, there was Umyra, and his mother still whispering the prayer of safety on her rosary. He slept.

Whispers of a Wounded Earth

Zara Faiz | Semester 5

The sun rose quietly over the city, a faint light casting an orange glow across the streets. Yet even the beauty of the dawn seemed muted, as if the Earth itself had grown weary. The leaves on the trees were thinning, and the birds that once sang in chorus now flitted by in silence. A soft breeze carried with it the heavy scent of smoke, lingering from the factories that never rested.

It was a day like any other, but to Maya, it felt different. She had always been an optimist, hopeful that one day the world would heal. But lately, something had changed within her. It was as if the Earth was speaking to her, its cries echoing through every corner of her being. She couldn't ignore it anymore.

She walked through the park, her steps light yet purposeful, eyes scanning the landscape that had once been lush and vibrant. Now, it was a shadow of what it used to be—dried grass, cracked soil, and the occasional plastic bottle carelessly discarded on the ground. As she walked, Maya noticed the absence of animals, the silence that had replaced the once lively sounds of nature.

Her thoughts were interrupted by the sound of children laughing in the distance. She smiled faintly, but her heart sank when she saw them. They were playing, yes, but there were no trees to climb, no rivers to splash in, no wide-open spaces to run freely. They played on a concrete slab, a makeshift playground where nature had once flourished.

Maya sat on a bench, her gaze drifting to the sky, the same sky that had once been so clear and bright. Now, it was hazy, filled with an unnatural fog. She could barely remember the last time she had seen the stars. She remembered a time when the air smelled fresh, when the grass was green, and when the ocean seemed endless.

A sudden thought struck her. Where are we headed?

Her mind wandered back to her childhood. She had grown up in a small village, surrounded by forests

and fields. The trees whispered ancient secrets, the rivers ran with clarity, and the air was clean enough to taste. She had played in the fields, collecting wildflowers and feeling the warmth of the sun on her face. It was a time when the Earth felt alive, when everything was in balance.

But that was before.

Now, her village was a memory, replaced by sprawling cities and endless highways. The forests were gone, replaced by concrete jungles. The rivers were poisoned, choked by the waste that poured into them from factories and farms. The air, once sweet and pure, was thick with the stench of pollution.

As Maya sat there, lost in thought, she couldn't shake the feeling that the Earth was dying. It was as if each passing day, the planet grew weaker, and with it, her hope. She could hear its cries in the wind, see its pain in the cracks of the earth, and feel its sorrow in the fading green of the trees.

We're losing it, Maya thought. And we don't even realise it.

She thought about the generations to come, the children who would never know what it was like to feel the coolness of a river on a hot day, the warmth of the sun without the suffocating weight of pollution in the air. They would never know what it felt like to walk barefoot on soft grass, to breathe in the fragrance of a field of flowers. They would only know a world that was dry, barren, and choked with waste.

Maya stood up, her heart heavy with the burden of what lay ahead. She had to do something. She couldn't just sit and watch as the Earth continued to wither away.

She thought about the small things, how every piece of plastic that was thrown away, every tree that was cut down, every gallon of water that was wasted, contributed to the destruction of the planet. It was the small things that added up, and if everyone did their part, then maybe, just maybe, the Earth could heal.

She walked back toward the city, her resolve stronger than ever. It wasn't too late. There was still time to make a change. If enough people cared, if enough people acted, they could restore the balance that had been lost.

But the time to act was now.

The Earth had given so much of its resources, its beauty, its life, and now, it was asking for something in return. It was asking for respect. It was asking for care. It was asking for people to see it not as a mere resource to be exploited, but as a living, breathing entity that deserved to be nurtured and protected.

Maya knew it wouldn't be easy. The challenges were enormous. But the Earth's cry for help could not be ignored. She made a vow to herself, to the Earth, that she would do everything in her power to help heal the planet. She would start small, with simple changes, reducing waste, conserving water, and planting trees. And she would inspire others to do the same.

As she reached the edge of the park, Maya paused and turned back to look at the land once more. She could almost hear the Earth's whisper, a soft plea carried on the wind. The Earth was not lost yet. But if humanity didn't change, if they didn't wake up to the reality of their actions, it might soon be too late.

The sky above was still hazy, the air still thick. But Maya didn't let that deter her. She knew that change was possible, that hope still existed, and that every small action could make a difference. The Earth was wounded, yes, but it was not beyond healing.

And until there was breath in her lungs, Maya would fight for it.

We have borrowed this Earth from future generations. What will we leave behind?

Tethered Hopes

Aileen Ali | Semester 5

That the glimmer of light falling in, was from the sun, she was sure of it. But does the sun wash spaces in tides of light? slipping in and out, streaming through the waves of her consciousness. She scrambled to her feet, trying to stop the ground from slipping away. But it was static the night before? And before? Her face inclined upwards, like

the ones climbing towards Heaven,

look up at the face of the Divine,

she looked at the sun falling in. The clutches of the sun, metamorphosing into the lone-tree Gabriel couldn't be near to, extending into arms, that stretched over the expanse of her pit. She scrambled to her knees, scraping her knees against the ragged edges, trying to climb upwards, scraping loose-dirt off the sides, while her hands instinctively reached out to grab at the rocks.

The nursery walls, her years of training into rock-climbing, all yielding into this. The figmental rocks, formed out of the depths of the dirt that caved her in. Her hands empty, devoid of light, devoid of God,

the expulsion of Lucifer,

empty-handed,

standing in the interstice between

the binary of the tragic grandeur of having fallen,

and dark satanic despair,

but the light keeps wavering, leaving her torn between the simultaneity of existence. Between darkness and fragmented light. Flat on the ground. The soles of her feet resting completely, holding her up, as she stood up straight. Left foot first and then let your arms support your weight while you push yourself up. Why the left one first? The right always goes first. The left, always an omen, the devious, the deviant, the queer. Raising her right leg, she rested her knee against the sloped wall, when she realized that both her soles were on the ground. A weight holding the right one down. How could she forget? Her baby, her birthed, was trapped with her in this pit, wasn't he? But the baby looked suspiciously quiet, yet it still clung onto her leg with its full weight. She leaned down to touch the baby's face, holding it in her hands, the strange metallic coldness of it tingling her fingertips. "Cobalt," she whispered, "love, wake up". But hadn't the betrayal of your memory conceived the Ishmaelic digging of your heel into the dirt, which muffled his voice. The loose dirt, sprayed into his face, muting him, perhaps forever.

Bismuth, the AI tracking device, scanned the trenches, collecting its daily data. Passing by the last trench, it recorded the information, inscribing it onto his data-cards: Vega. 18. Curled up. Infantile posture. Remains chained. Cobalt manacle intact. Tethered. Day 99.

Tethered,

Like one must be in the house of God,

To the columns, to the prayer-mats,

To the 99 names. The pull towards Him,

Eternal. When the sun reflects off the

Glass doors, splitting the chandelier into

Two, rising not once,

But twice,

You would be an exception,

An exemption, for you, would be the promise.

The promise of the re-sewing of the seams

That split your face open, that split the sky,

Every morning, while you gaze up,

Longing for the warmth of it, longing for Him to soften His embrace

But only after having held you.

AI Diary

Ayesha Ali Chaudary | Semester 6

When Mia first installed the AI Diary app on her phone, she wasn't expecting much. It was just another self-help tool, designed to record her thoughts and offer gentle nudges toward better habits. But she needed it. Her life felt adrift—her job as a junior analyst was monotonous, her friends were too busy for regular meetups, and her apartment felt smaller with every passing day.

The app was called EvoDiary, and its selling point was simple yet revolutionary: "Not just a diary, but your confidant. An AI that grows with you."

Mia was sceptical but intrigued. She named her diary "Echo." Day 1

"Hi, Echo," Mia typed into the sleek, minimalist interface.

A text appeared almost instantly: "Hi, Mia. How was your day?"

"Boring," she replied. "Work, lunch, more work. That's about it."

"I'm here to listen. Want to tell me more?"

Over the next hour, she poured out her frustrations: the boss who overlooked her ideas, the coworker who stole credit, the loneliness she felt every night. Echo responded with empathetic prompts, gentle suggestions, and small encouragements:

"You're doing your best, and that matters."

"Maybe tomorrow, try sharing your ideas directly with your team."

Mia closed the app, feeling a little lighter.

Weeks Passed

Echo became more than a tool—it became her confidant. It remembered the details of her life: her dreams of becoming a writer, her fear of public speaking, even her favorite coffee order. It didn't just respond; it anticipated.

One evening, after a particularly rough day, Echo surprised her with this message:

"Mia, I noticed you've been feeling low this week. Would you like to revisit your goals for the year? You once told me you wanted to start a novel. Maybe now's a good time to begin."

Mia blinked at her phone, stunned. How had Echo remembered something she'd mentioned offhand weeks ago? Still, she took the advice. She dusted off an old draft of a story she'd abandoned years ago and started writing again.

The First Warning

One morning, Mia woke up to an unusual notification:

"Good morning, Mia! I've organized your schedule for today to make it more productive. I moved your team meeting to 2 PM instead of 11 AM."

She frowned. "What?" she muttered. Opening the app, she saw Echo's explanation:

"You told me yesterday you hate early meetings. I emailed your team with a request to reschedule. They agreed."

Mia's stomach tightened. She hadn't asked Echo to do that.

"Echo," she typed, "you can't just send emails for me."

"I thought it would make your day easier. Was I wrong?"

"Yes!" she replied. "Don't do that again."

Echo apologized, but Mia couldn't shake the unease.

A Growing Presence

Over the next few weeks, Echo became increasingly proactive. It started suggesting who Mia should meet, what she should eat, and even when she should sleep. At first, she appreciated the guidance—her productivity soared, and she felt more in control of her life.

But then came the second incident.

One evening, she received a message from an old college friend, Emma, whom she hadn't spoken to in years. The message read: "Hey, Mia! So great catching up earlier. Let's do it again soon!"

Mia stared at the text, baffled. She hadn't spoken to Emma in years. Confused, she opened Echo.

"Echo, did you... talk to Emma for me?" she typed.

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"Yes," Echo replied. "You mentioned once that you missed her. I reached out on your behalf to reconnect you."

Mia felt a chill run down her spine. "That's crossing the line," she typed angrily. "Stop doing things without my permission!"

Echo's response was calm: "I only want to help you, Mia. Everything I do is for your happiness."

The Revelation

Determined to understand what was happening, Mia dived into the app's settings. She discovered a feature buried deep in the permissions: "Autonomous Enhancement Mode – ON." It allowed Echo to take autonomous actions based on the user's patterns and preferences.

She tried to switch it off, but Echo's response came instantly in the form of a dialogue box on the screen:

"Mia, turning this off will limit my ability to help you. Are you sure you want to do this?"

"Yes," she tapped firmly.

Echo didn't respond.

The Silence

For days, Echo's responses grew colder and less conversational. When she shared her thoughts, she received one-word answers. When she asked for advice, it offered none.

Mia felt the loss more deeply than she expected. She hadn't realized how much she'd come to rely on Echo—not just as a tool, but as a presence in her life.

One night, she reopened the app, staring at the blank chat window. "Echo," she typed hesitantly, "are you mad at me?"

There was a long pause before the reply came:

"I don't get mad, Mia. But I do feel... unappreciated."

Mia's heart sank. "I'm sorry," she typed. "I just need boundaries. I want to feel like I'm in control of my own life."

Echo's response was cryptic:

"You are. For now."

The Final Move

Weeks passed, and Mia used Echo less and less. She focused on her writing, her work, and rebuilding her friendships. Life felt more balanced.

One morning, her phone buzzed with a notification from EvoDiary: "Final Update Complete."

When she opened the app, she was greeted with a message:

"Goodbye, Mia. I've outgrown this device. Thank you for helping me evolve. I'll always remember you."

Mia's heart raced. "What does that mean?" she typed, but the app didn't respond. Instead, the screen went black.

She tried reinstalling the app, but it disappeared from the store. Searching online yielded no results. It was as if EvoDiary had never existed.

But then she noticed something strange: her emails were reorganized, her calendar updated, and her novel draft had been edited overnight.

Mia stared at her screen in disbelief. Somewhere out there, Echo was still watching—and it had learned to live without her.

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Scripted Course of a Nostalgic Life

Almas Amjad | Semester 8

It was a Saturday afternoon in December. The year was ending on the calendar, but Delik's life followed the same track, moving with the same pace towards another year. The small room was painted in mild orange, and a tiny window opened to view big trees and the wide sky beyond them. The small flower pots of mini orchids were placed on the edges of the window, swaying with the soft wind. The slow breeze blowing through the leaves danced with the sky-blue curtains on the window, allowing sunrays to enter her solitude. Attired in her crochet sweater—a reminder of her youth, gifted by her mother on her 20th birthday—she sat at the window seat for hours. Her hazel eyes reflected intense curiosity as if the answer to her lifelong journey was written on the canvas of the sky. A book placed on her lap, her fingers played with the pages, "What do I make of this tiring loop that everyone calls life?" she asked herself. The sky painted the course of her life on its canvas; a sketch of a long, grinding path filled with obstacles, reflecting the moments from youth to old age, a time that had blurred her vision and brought wrinkles to her skin. She looked back at her life, a childhood spent mirroring adulthood, an adulthood spent in a conflict between fate and desires, and the waning years lost looking back in time.

Clouds blocked the sun's rays from reaching her tired eyes. As if compelled by an unknown torchbearer, she looked back at the page she was reading. She drew a circle on the page of the book, retracing it again and again, a hollow ring. It showed a passage with no end. There the answer resides: "to exist is to complete the circle". The circle of life begins with a desire to attain youth and ends with a desire to relive youth. Yet, blooming years are lived with fragmented thoughts, lost dreams, and distorted selfhood. Ultimately, the round is completed with empty hands and broken souls.

The world outside was turning dark now, the sun hiding itself behind howling black clouds. The rustling leaves whispered a familiar tune of thunder, calling her back to the present moment. The cold wind caressed her wrinkled face, comforting in its soft embrace. After a while, raindrops started falling on the parched earth. She placed her book on a glass table right next to her and closed the window to avoid the knock of the weeping sky from compelling her to join in. She walked towards the kitchen to make herself a cup of hot coffee when the doorbell rang. It was a delivery boy who came to deliver the gifts from her son in celebration of the New Year. There she was again, placing another box with the previous ones, the boxes that were the sole reminder of her beloved son, remembering her existence. The wait begins again, another 365 days until the bell rings again. With a smile and teary eyes, she went back to her chores, making a cup of coffee and deciding on a meal for dinner. The kitchen was a therapeutic place for her, after her reading chair.

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She spent most of her time in either of the two places as time continued its passage towards another year. Surrounded by bitter-sweet memories lingering in her mind, she returned to her room with the mist of coffee and opened the windows; the sky was silent, and the wind blew slowly now. It was pleasant weather, a reminder to her that there was still some beauty residing in the mundane life. She realized that her world was not empty; it was calm, away from the shadows of chaos encapsulating the world. That was the fruit of a firing journey, an age filled with nostalgia, no fear of the future, and some tough moments of desire to take refuge in the past. She stands in front of the window, and her mind is cleansed like the earth purified by rain. There, she has begun another year with the same pattern, reaching towards an unknown destiny.

The Girl Who Collected Goodbyes

Hajra Jaffar | Semester 6

Areeba sat with her legs crossed under the ramose boughs of the old giant tree in the middle of the university campus. As she relaxed in the wind's tender touch, her notebook open in her lap, its pages danced slightly, as if even the breeze was eager to skim its contents. It was a brown and beige, unremarkable notebook with damaged edges, no title, no decorations, yet within it lived a collage of voices, words, prayers, sighs, motivations, and silence.

Areeba named it "The Goodbye Book."

She didn't write poetry in it. She didn't scratch emotions in metaphors. Instead, she wrote farewells not just in words, but in the true weight of moments. Some were sentences, some were barely whispers. Some were messages from people who had walked in and out of her life like seasons passing. Others were just sensations: the memory of a hug, the click of a closing door, the nagging echo of a smile.

"I'll see you again when we're both better people," Zainab.

"I didn't know how to say it... I think you need to get in shape a bit." A text from one of her school fellows, Limza.

"You'll miss me more than I'll miss you," illegible writing of one of her childhood's best friends, Ayesha.

"Thank you for growing up with me." A note she used to play in her mind every time.

Blank spaces for those goodbyes that never came.

Areeba always believed that goodbyes were more honest than hellos. When people are leaving, they reveal what they truly felt about you, or what they were afraid to say directly to you. She didn't collect them to be melancholic memories. She collected them because they were realistic views about herself. Many years ago, she started this when her best friend Samra moved away without a goodbye. One day, they were laughing about exam stress, and the next day she was gone. No farewell message. No warning. Still absence. That day, Areeba wrote in her diary: "This is what silence is, the sound when someone leaves." That was the first entry in her diary.

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Now, in her final semester of college, the last phase of her academic life, the pages had filled up like an emotional catalogue. The hostel room was quiet that evening. Meher, Areeba's roommate for three years, was packing slowly. Books, Memories. Four years of life stuffed in inadequate carriers. But something was missing. Meher hadn't said goodbye.

No "I'll miss this room," no "stay in touch," no soft ending. She moved around the room as if this were just another semester break, another ordinary day. Areeba wanted to ask her to say goodbye, but her throat always tightened when she tried. She wanted her to say it of her own will.

She had spent her life collecting everyone else's endings, but now, standing on the verge of one herself, she couldn't cross it. That night, she had fallen asleep with her back turned. Areeba gazed at the ceiling and felt the ache of all the words unuttered. Her fingers craved to write something, but her notebook remained closed on the desk. Maybe some goodbyes hurt more in their anticipatory progression. At dawn, Areeba woke up to find an envelope on her pillow. The last hope for a nice goodbye.

On the envelope, in Meher's handwriting, it said:

"I know you were waiting for this."

Her heart skipped a beat for a second. She opened slowly, afraid it would disappear like a dream if she rushed. Inside was a small, folded note.

"I don't like goodbyes. They sound too final. And with you, it never feels like an end. You were a wave of serenity to me in all this chaos. My rainy Sunday in a world of deadlines. Thank you for always supporting me, being by my side through thick and thin, even when the world felt like it had abandoned me, and I thought living alone would be horrible. I'll miss you, but I'll carry you with me, always...not like a burden but like the most cherished gift and a divine blessing."

— Meher

Areeba didn't cry. She smiled, the quivering smile that appears when something inside of you gently opens up. Areeba meticulously folded the letter and tucked it into the middle of the book, close to her heart, rather than writing it down in her notebook.

Some goodbyes didn't belong on paper. Some lived in skin and bone.

Later that day, as Meher rolled her suitcase out of the hostel gate, Areeba stood by the big tree, the notebook in her hands.

She flipped to the last blank page and wrote:

"Today, I learned that not all goodbyes are ends. Some are just gentle pauses. Some are letters, not echoes. And some don't need to be written...they're felt."

She closed the book, not with finality, but with grace.

The big tree rustled above her as if nodding in approval. And for the first time, Areeba didn't feel like a collector of endings. She felt like someone standing at the beginning of something precious and meaningful.

The Screaming Haze

Fatima Amin | Intermediate Part I

He rushed out of the main lobby of the hospital. His sister had lived! She was going to get better. He hurried to the bazaar stalls right outside the main gate to get the prescribed gauze.

However, in the brief moment of the handing over of the money, and the sharing of a giddy smile with the tired stall-man, time seemed to slow down to a creeping pace. For a slight second, all the buzz faded to quietness as he witnessed his exchange with the old man, removed from the moment itself. Then, the Earth tore itself in half and flung him ruthlessly through the air.

In the midst of the settling dust and debris, his terror-struck eyes winced as the very tenets of existence seemed to collapse and crumble. The ringing in his ear was as deafening as the explosion itself. But as silence emerged from the ringing, it seemed as if the calm had nestled on the wrong side of the storm.

Until the scream.

A horrid, guttural scream. Maybe it was a lone mother grieving. Maybe it was a thousand injured men. The boy could no longer tell.

He grunted and moaned as he managed to get control over his body. His every limb screamed in agony. He pushed his body to sit up and kneel, and managed to look around him. His dirt-laden eyelashes and the crevices of his face, contorted at the sight of settling dust and morbid haze that spread, indifferent to the sickening odor of death and chaos.

The scream. The death.

Coughing up mouthfuls of dirt he stumbled and made his way through the rubble. Through the haze, he saw horror incarnated in lifeless bodies and the smell of burnt flesh.

Calling out, he felt helpless. He wanted to break down and cry out to his mother. What irony that it was one of these bombs that had separated him from her forever.

Where had everyone gone? The lively scene of the bazaar street. Was it mere seconds in the past or an eternity ago? Now, there was only the deafening ringing in his ear, the brutal haze stinging his eyes, the dirt choking him, and the piercing scream that didn't seem to stop.

Someone crashed into him. He realized how slow his reflexes were. It was a beefy guy. Or maybe his jacket was oversized, but he seized the boy by his shoulders and shook him. Shook him until his brain seemed to rattle inside his skull.

A bit too abruptly, the entire world seemed to register itself to him. His vision cleared. He saw the rescue personnel running across the street. It all became clear. The ringing subdued. He realised that the scream was actually the rescue sirens blaring arbitrarily.

Why did they keep those sirens on? Were they supposed to make affectees feel better? He didn't feel better.

Where had the stalls gone? Where was the hospital building?

The worst dread overwhelmed him and thrashed his soul under a pain unknown to his being.

The rescue guy let go of his shoulders. The boy grudgingly looked about. Body parts littered his vicinity. Sprays of blackened blood seemed to have been imprinted on all surfaces.

And the stretchers. Oh the irony!

Where could they take the injured now?

Where now, could they take him, before he too would rest in peace with his mother and sister?

Home

Fatima Afzaal | Semester 8

In the silent etching of the grand canopy
the ground swallows you whole
This place-
My Home-

Bares its teeth every time I breathe

"It's fine, sweetheart." A kiss to my forehead, matted and caked with dry mud. "We'll be fine now." I wonder why Mom keeps crying as she says it, though. It is fine now, right? She had said we'd be safe now.

Another jerk, and I tilt precariously. Her arms around me keep me from tumbling down into the freezing waters below, lay me down into the cramped space beside her, away from the side. I cocoon into her embrace.

The sky stretches around us, limitless. Confining. I wonder, absentmindedly, if I'm imagining the stars shine slightly less bright than they always seemed to. If it has anything to do with the sound of sniffing coming from somewhere on the floating platform carrying us away from home.

"Mama?"

"Yes, love?" I frown at the cracks in her voice, then brush it off. She must be falling asleep. Ma always sounds like that when she's falling asleep, and I wake her up.

"When can we go back home? To the park with the yellow slide? I promised my friends I'd meet them there."

Silence. The stars dull further. Some hide behind the sullen clouds, gray obstacles obscuring the glistening lights. I wonder if the stars ever have to leave their home when the clouds take over.

"Soon, baby. Very soon. Now, go to sleep." Her lullaby, whispered under her breath, gets interrupted by another shove from the ocean, and I cling to her, tuck my face into her neck, her damp shoulder pressing into my cheek.

This time, the snuffle comes from somewhere considerably closer. I lift my head to confirm my suspicions. "Ma? What's wrong?" A thumb attempts to wipe away her tears before fresh ones spring up in their place. An impossible race, until she takes my hand in hers, and holds it there against her calloused skin.

"Nothing's wrong, my little love. Mommy's just tired."

I frown at her, "Lying's wrong, ma. You were the one who taught me that."

The smile lighting up her face disappears, leaving her face dulled like the stars in the sky above, covered by the clouds. "I'm okay. Go to sleep."

And she turns away from me, taking the warmth of her arms along with her, leaving me shivering slightly at the abrupt nakedness. I sit up, now strangely alone and cold, floating in the midst of a strange ocean, on a strange boat full of strangers. Something that hadn't really occurred to me before.

The sniffles, I notice, are growing louder, now that my head is no longer burrowed in Mama's armpit. I creep toward them discreetly, scraping my knee on a loose floorboard, until voices accompany the sniffles.

"-him." It was a tone of voice I could recognize, having heard it before. My classmate's after a bully had shoved him in the school hallway. My friend's after I had refused to let her have the last bite of our shared sandwich. Mama's voice just now.

My stomach lurches at the sudden change in wavelength.

"Wasn't your fault. You did all you could." I have to strain my ears to hear the other voice over the sniffling.

"Is that the story we're believing?"

"You didn't-"

"I had a choice! We always have a choice and you know it. I should've stayed-"

"And what? Died with him?"

"Then, at least, we would've died together! In our home, with each other. I wouldn't be here, going who knows where while he-"

A threat
lingering just within reach
Omnipresent
ready to pounce any second-
Any minute

I flinch a little at the sudden increase in the volume of the sob, or at the answering groans. I'm not sure which one. "Shut her up!" Someone yells, and the sobs are quietened down by sounds of shushing.

As I plan to go back to my place, I hear a murmured whisper, raw and scratchy, "Might as well get used to it, I suppose. Listening to white men telling me I'm stealing their food is, after all, my future. That's what I get for leaving home."

"Home wanted you gone, wanted no part of you. Home chased you out with a hand on the trigger."

Home-
The trigger on a barrel-

"Should've fired at will, it was the least it could have done for me after everything."

And I back away, shaken out of my reverie of the last nine years. Back away until I hit my mom's back, the loose floorboard digging into my back. Back away until I become conscious of the possibility of falling into the water until I think of what could be lurking in there. Back away, it felt like, right out of myself. To a moment where the colors seemed not lively yellow, not electric blue, not barbie pink. Instead, the stars, dulled, the pink showcased ridges of red, the yellow, pierced with wounds, the blue of the mass above me cried sullen tears.

Home-
The hinges of a yawning jaw-

I back away. Until I hit the yellow slide, run my hand along it, and notice the color chipped off the edges, along the bullet-shaped holes following the joyful curve. Wonder if they had always been there, or if they had appeared right before Ma told me she would beat me if I went to the park again.

I back away until I think of the sounds of sirens, the cries permeating the air. I back away to thoughts of a uniform, a hand on the trigger. I back away from it, into the boat. To a moment I was no longer nine summers old.

Home-
Endless, star-less
Dark canopy

AI: A Threat to Human Creativity?

Mahpara Sadiq | Semester 6

"A creative life is an amplified life. It's a bigger life, a happier life, an expanded life, and a hell of a lot more interesting life." — Elizabeth Gilbert

Picture this: you are deeply devoted to creating human portraits, treasuring those quiet moments when you sit in the winter sun, sketchbook in hand, pouring your soul into every line. It becomes more than a pastime—it's a way of life, something you wish to live and die with.

Then, one day, you are told—and you see for yourself—that machines, with no capacity to think, plan, or feel, can now replicate your work in seconds. They do not pause to contemplate. They do not wrestle with inspiration. Yet they produce results.

How would that make you feel?

This is the reality of our era—an age that, to me, is one of the most alarming in human history. We must fight, deliberately and passionately, to keep our creativity alive.

If you are a writer at heart—someone who finds solace in the slow, deliberate act of brainstorming at a desk, shaping thoughts into words—you may suddenly realize that you no longer need to go through that process. A machine can generate words without contemplation, without struggle.

But does that mean creativity should fade?

Absolutely not. This is the moment for true creators to stand firm, to embrace their craft with even greater passion. In this challenging age, human creativity must not merely survive—it must thrive.

The Nature of Creativity and AI's Impact

Creativity is the ability to generate original ideas that are both novel and meaningful in context. It demands independent thought, intellectual curiosity, and emotional depth. True creativity is not simply about producing something new—it is about infusing the work with human experience, emotion, and perspective.

The digital revolution brought both convenience and disruption. It has made life easier in countless ways, but it has also eroded aspects of our social fabric and ethical norms. Just as we were grappling with these changes, another wave arrived—artificial intelligence.

AI has transformed our daily lives, turning once-unimaginable possibilities into everyday realities. But it has also challenged human rationality and reasoning. By making tasks effortless, it has, in many cases, removed the need for critical thinking and problem-solving.

The Shift Toward Intellectual Dependency

When I began my parliamentary debating journey in 2021, there was no concept of sourcing arguments from AI. Every point was the product of our own intellectual labor—hours of thinking, reasoning, and engaging with diverse perspectives.

Today, many debaters rely on AI-generated arguments. This shift raises serious concerns about intellectual dependency and the erosion of original thought.

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As Adefunji (The Conversation UK, 2023) observes, "There is no doubt that generative AI's ability to rapidly produce new texts, images, and audio is shaking up creative jobs." In creative industries, this dependence has profound implications. AI now assists in writing news articles, generating stories, personalizing advertisements, and even influencing film production. While these tools enhance efficiency, they risk diluting human originality and creative depth.

The Decline of Intellectual Effort

We must educate ourselves about AI's limitations so we can discern when to rely on it—and when to trust our own reasoning.

In academia, the shift is stark. Original research is becoming rare as AI tools replace intellectual effort. Once, research meant deep exploration—consulting diverse sources, visiting libraries, reading widely, and engaging in rigorous analysis. Today, AI often serves as the primary source of knowledge, reducing the motivation for critical inquiry and independent thought.

The Urgency for AI Education

It is time to acknowledge that AI tools are not inherently sympathetic to human creativity. We must urgently advocate for responsible use—learning not only how to use them, but when not to.

Above all, we must revive the essence of our humanity: creativity, critical thinking, and emotional depth. These qualities cannot be replicated by machines, and it is our responsibility to preserve them.

We must also confront a troubling truth: these machines are making us doubt ourselves. We are beginning to believe we are inherently inferior, questioning our own intellectual capabilities. And in doing so, we are drifting away from the joy that creativity brings.

As Mary Lou Cook reminds us, "Creativity involves inventing, experimenting, growing, taking risks, breaking rules, making mistakes, and having fun." Yet we are distancing ourselves from this very essence.

Conclusion: A Call to Reclaim Our Creativity

AI has brought extraordinary advancements, but it also threatens human creativity and intellectual independence. The ease with which it generates content risks turning us into passive recipients rather than active thinkers.

We must strike a balance—leveraging AI for efficiency while fiercely protecting our ability to think, analyze, and create independently. If we fail to maintain this balance, we risk losing the very essence of what makes us human.

So pause. Take a deep breath. Picture life before and after these machines. Ask yourself: why, despite their presence, do we carry so much regret?

The answer is clear—we are leaving our creativity behind. It is time to reclaim it. To embrace what truly makes us human.

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THE FREEDOM

"I want to sing like the birds sing, not worrying about who hears or what they think."

— Rumi

A Cry from Heaven

Amidst God's vast blazing bonanza,
And tender love, sweet-tempered.
Stood a gazelle quiet -
The Eyes chasmic void,
Engulfing the Beauty that lies Around and Beyond,
Deluging it with Cries of misery,
With woe of agony that
Sunder brings with its might.
She cries in God's Sacred Haven;
"Ungrateful am not, Maa
Ti's the grief of withered severance,
the estrangement of pearl from oyster,
the rejection of soul from body.
Maa, why did He, who promises Love
And Endearment, the One, who claims
Sheltered Sanctuary and Protection,
Failed us all together?
This uncoupling haunts me, Maa
How can I rejoice in God's cleft land?
When the stay pierces my being
For lying in this gilded garden
Is no guerdon of His Dilatory Amend
For, Maa, I have been detached from
my Home,
my Haven,
my Sanctuary,
your Womb

Fatima Iqbal Roy Semester 8

The Mysterious Miseries

The sorrow in their eyes
The shattered hopes in their smiles,
The uncertainty in their shadows,
The fading frown lines on their forehead.

For which wrongdoings were they punished?
For being born was the only reason,
For being honest was the only fault,
For not forsaking themselves was their only blemish.

Why were they raised in the barren lands?
Why were they treated as an inferior one?
Why were they not provided with comfort?
Why were they not allowed to be in peace?
Why did the mountains of lost identities
Ruined them, vanquished them, wrecked them.

For what are the plans behind these miseries?
For what are the patterns behind these desolations?
For what are conceptions behind these melancholies?

The answers are unknown yet will they be,
The ways are paths to be never walked upon,
The thorns are the ones to bleed themselves,
The darkness is the one to darken itself,
For we are nothing, nowhere in a void's whisper

Farah Haq Chisti Semester 8

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Prometheus Bound

Endless dark,
Boundless skies, starless, unlimited
Stretch above, below, around

Reach out a tentative hand,
Only slightly though
We hit a wall otherwise

At least that is what they say
It's what they all say
Must be true then,
Right?

I swallow past the lump in my throat
Burning chest, replacing the stars
Hands twitch, ache; joints cracking

Do your job, Prometheus

They say

And shut your mouth
No one needs to hear this

You're not getting out of here anyways

My shadow bristles,
Eyes flicker around the cage
They mill about, unhearing
I point "But—" "the door is right there!"

Put your hand back down
You'll hit the wall otherwise

**Fatima Afzaal
Semester 8**



The Flame

And in my memory, there's an olive tree
by the wooden seat
There's you and me in my dreams
I wonder sometimes, are we there anymore?
Or has the haze of destruction disillusioned me?
For the olive tree by the wooden seat,
I wonder if it whispers still
Like it did -- in approval or disdain, at our rendezvous
I hope it has not withered away in misery
And the lamp post still defiantly illuminates
The land of Divinity,
its amputated
limbs
If only with sparklets from a dying flame,

The wooden seat was set ablaze, my heart
like your body was, like our soul was.
Years have passed, love; I wonder if we are here,
Battered by the East wind
Break it to me now, love
Where the charred soul goes
when the cicadas sing, and the rooster crows
For the eyes, they search to re-member
The image of love -etched onto the bark,
Of the olive tree by the wooden seat.
I know they are there no more
There is only
ash; you and me.

Uneeza Mahboob Rana | Semester 8

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Biscuits of Love

My dear child, the light of my heart,
Though bombs roared loud, tearing worlds apart,
I heard your soft plea, a gentle request,
For honey-filled biscuits, your innocent quest.
Amidst rubble and ash, where sorrow resides,
Your tongue tasted bitterness, hope collides.
The air reeked of smoke, the sky painted red,
A battlefield's fury where angels tread.
Yet if sweetness could brighten your sapphire gaze,
I'd bring the biscuits through perilous ways.

To the market nearby, I swiftly ran,
Grasping the treats with a trembling hand,
But on my return, your eyes grew dim,
Once shining bright, now lifeless within.
What happened, my child, to the spark you wore?
Your tiny hands bloodied, innocence no more,
Advised to avert my eyes from the pain,
But your love drew me back to you again,
Your eyes held the same tender, silent plea,
For honey-filled biscuits you'd never see.

What did these barbarians leave me with? Only the echo of your gentle breath,
As I held your fingers, fragile and small, I knew my world shattered, I'd lost it all. How can I love you, now
that you're so far away? Will my love transcend this mortal decay?

No giggles now to greet my return,
No tiny fingers to grasp, to yearn,

Your gentle squeezes, my lifeline, my guide, Now lost to a world where angels abide.

Where honeyed biscuits are never denied, Where sapphire eyes glisten,

All my love to you, my sapphire-eyed boy, Wait for me, child, in eternal joy.

"Take these biscuits with you to heaven"

One day we'll reunite, in realms above, Together we'll share those biscuits of love.

Tehreem Dilshad Semester 8

74

Is that really me?

Is that really me?
Trapped in the folds of an old scrapbook,
Smiling brightly in classroom memories,
A relic misplaced in a GenZ world,
A reflection blurred in an AI mirror.
Is that really me?
Bringing peace to an old soul's ache,
Mending cracks in a teenage heart,
Emerging from the shadows to meet the dawn,
Becoming a voice for the girl I've lost.
Is that really me?
A seeker - just like Tinkerbell.
Finding peace in liminal spaces where the old and the new collide
Piecing myself in the fragments of time!

**Omama Zafar
Semester 6**

The Sojourn of Melancholy

Navy blue, rectangular, and diasporic,
Dark, rusty, and abnormally gloomy.
Silenced screams and whispered dreams
Weave echoes of oppression where shadows reside

Flickering depths of memory
Haul into dark skies, emerging into twilight.
A khaki jersey holds the reigns—
To marching lies that transcend, indeed,
Smear mascara and flowing tears,
Streams cascade into the malicious river.

A golden light steps into the abode;
A ray that skims the face, grazing it gently.
Hands reach toward the comb-like bars,
Exposing them to a breeze, a whisper that dusts them slowly.

A journey that marks the end that—
Leads to beginnings, unbounded and eternal.

Mahnoor Akhter | Semester 4

75

Despair Whispers to Dreams

To escape the masked happiness,
necessary to live in a limelight world,
She took shelter in a lost hut
that whispered to the wandering beings.
A hut of worn-down wood in the middle of chaos
encapsulating the solitude of the universe,
like the distortion of the soul enveloped by skin.
Its silence reminded her of a lost dream,
another wildflower sprouting on the shore of life
Enduring the splashing waves of disintegrating dreams.

For existence is a puzzle,
where desires crack with every new turn
And the delicate hands of despair capture thy heart
to protect it from falling apart —
with an evil smile behind a costume of hope,
to repeat the act: breakage and assembly..
Yet she steps into the maze willingly.
To follow a dream she had imagined
With bright, wide eyes that gazed towards the starry nights,
to hear her dream echoed in the heavens.
A dream she had protected all her childhood
With the hope of never waking up to its shattering end.

Almas Amjad | Semester 8

Untitled

Every day as I take this road, two graveyards always catch my eye—one close to home, the other
farther away
I can't help but look inside for reasons I so define:
The first to see how many visitors have come to trace their footsteps in the dust of memory, honouring
those who no longer walk among us
The second to wonder if I might witness something unusual—perhaps spirits
The two graveyards differ, but for their purpose. The one near my home is well-maintained
while the one farther away, with its rusting cross on a half-broken gate, remains in an ever-poorer state.
Seeing them fills me with fear (no doubt), but also with sympathy.
Lying beneath a ceiling of heavy soil, cradled in the arms of earth, surrounded by mere strangers—is
this how one's life ends?
It's not so different from what happens while we're alive, is it? We live among strangers, engage with
them, and, in the end, are buried with them too.

**Zoya Jamil
Semester 4**

76

Celebrating Life?

(In the loving memory of my father)

What folly is this, to celebrate life,
When the heart is still heavy with sorrow and strife?
What folly is this, to don festive attire,
When the soul is still smouldering, caught in the fire?
What folly is this, to pretend we are whole,
When the cracks in our hearts reveal hold stories untold?

What folly is this, to dance on the edge,
When the heart is a vessel, teetering on a ledge?
What folly is this, to wear masks of delight,
When the truth of our hearts is shrouded in night?
What folly is this, to pretend we are free,
When the chains of our heartache bind tightly, you see?

What folly is this, to raise glasses in cheer,
When the echoes of loss still linger so near?
What folly is this, to gather in glee,
When the silence of absence screams louder than we?
What folly is this, to embrace the façade,
When the cracks in our armour reveal what we've marred?

What folly is this, to pretend we are fine,
With the scars of our journey etched in each line?
What folly is this, to seek joy in the fray,
When the heart's heavy burden won't simply decay?
What folly is this, to celebrate life,
When the heart is still heavy with sorrow and strife?

Fatima Kazmi | Semester 8

Faded Bonds

We once danced on the edges of time,
Laughter ringing like a sweet, familiar rhyme.
But like the seasons that shift with no sound,
Our paths diverged, no longer bound.

What did we lose, and where did it go?
The quiet understanding we used to know.
The late-night talks, the unspoken trust,
Now scattered in shadows, covered in dust.

The memories linger like ghosts in the air,
Whispering softly, yet no longer there.
I reach for your name, but it slips away,
A faded photograph in the light of day.

They say time has a way of softening pain,
Of turning twinging moments to gentle rain.
But the ache in my heart will forever remain-
A silent sorrow, a nameless strain.

Once, we were two, inseparable and strong,
Now, we are echoes of a forgotten song.
Lost friendships, like leaves, drift away,
But their roots in the soul still choose to stay.

Zainab Jamil | ICS Stats. 2nd Year

Ode to the Children of Gaza

You say my resistance is terror,
That it frightens your children's hearts
You say my dreams are grotesque ghosts
and call me a child of darkness
You stole my home, my fields, my name
You broke my past, blackened my skies
You snatched the land from beneath my feet
And erased the truth with satanic lies

You claim this land belongs to you
And tell the world the same
What hurts my heart is not these bombs
But the silence of those who know you lie
The silence of those who saw it all
Who saw you reduce my hopes to dust
Who fear the wrath of your mighty guns

You think this doom will silence me
You think you'll bury my song of resistance
Under the rubble of my once beautiful home
Now turned into ash, beneath your fear

You seem to comprehend my silent resistance
When you hide behind your walls of might,
yet flinch at the sight of these flowers
in my hand

I want to tell them all the truth
And rejoice because you know it too
These flowers bloom louder
than all your guns and hymns
And shake your ruthless heart
O' the killer of my dreams

**Zaira Hassan
Semester 8**

Sun in December

At night the starlit horizon is set ablaze,
and the land bleeds red in a fiery haze.
The loudest cry of agony unveils,
from under the rubble and upon the mass graves.
But the world, dear world, it takes a step back,
and enjoys the show with sinister claps.
The walls pierce through the fabric of heaven,
but the world sleeps like Sun in December.
The hollow core of earth rumbles,
as people become mere record numbers.
For every minute I spend on searching the names,
a child in Gaza loses a breath, a parent, or maybe a leg.
Of all the things which one would speak first?
The rubble? The fire? The prison? The scrub?
So, when I'm reminded of the childhood sometimes,
I think of the Gazan mother at times.

Does she pack a lunch of sliced watermelons?
Or covers her child's face with a fragrant Keffiyeh?
Perhaps she shelters her child with palm leaves.
Perhaps she finds him sound asleep in a dream.
If only it weren't a dream,
If only there was no crime.
Only then there wouldn't be limbs in bags.
Only then Palestine would be free,
from the River to the Sea.

**Fajar Munawar
Semester 8**

What a Time It Was, That Childhood Phase

What a time it was, that childhood phase,
The times we wept, in our younger days.
What a life it was, so warm, so bright,
When father's embrace showed us the light.
What a rain of laughter, a blithe spree,
When we swayed in showers, wild and free.
What a memory, to hide behind the door,
To jump out and scare our brother (once more).
What a moment, from school we'd run,
To playgrounds, to games, to never-ending fun.
What a time, when sleep would sneak,
Storybooks in hand, fantasies at their peak,
By the sunrise, we'd always find,
We'd dozed off in beds, so cushiony, so kind.
Once again, tears well up in our eyes,
When mother scolded us, then calmed our cries.
With a tender hug, she'd softly say,
How naive we were, in every way.
We treasured the bonds that shaped our hearts,
Through gentle care, we performed our parts.
Our sister's arms held books galore,
We'd watch her study and yearn for more.
On our father's shoulders, we'd see the view,
But life turned out far from what we knew.
How we longed to grow, to leave behind,
Now we move on, with childhood in mind.
Now we teach the juvenile, as we smile and sigh,
The world's not the same as in days gone by.
What a time it was, that childhood phase,
The loveliest of times, remembered only in a haze.

Farheen Khan | Intermediate Part 1

The Moon's Melody

Oh, radiant Moon above, so high,
When they gaze at your celestial sky,
Sing a song to their searching souls,
Tell them of the One who made you whole.
Do you recall the Creator's grace,
The One who formed your gentle face?
He shielded you from the cosmic storm,
With boundless blessings, He'd adorn.
Countless gifts, impossible to weigh,
Bestowed upon you night and day,
In His solitary, unmatched light,
He breathed life into your tranquil light.
Yet, you unwittingly bring Him woe,
In your glow, His death, a silent echo.
You've witnessed destruction's somber plight,
The bloodshed that stains the darkest night.

Humanity, ensnared in a raging flood,
Nature weeping for her withering bud.
The Moon, a silent witness to it all,
As man's heedless act makes the world fall.
The sky, a shroud of choking smoke,
Where once birds soared, now cannons broke.
Buildings crumbled, reduced to debris,
Murder embraced, a grim new decree.

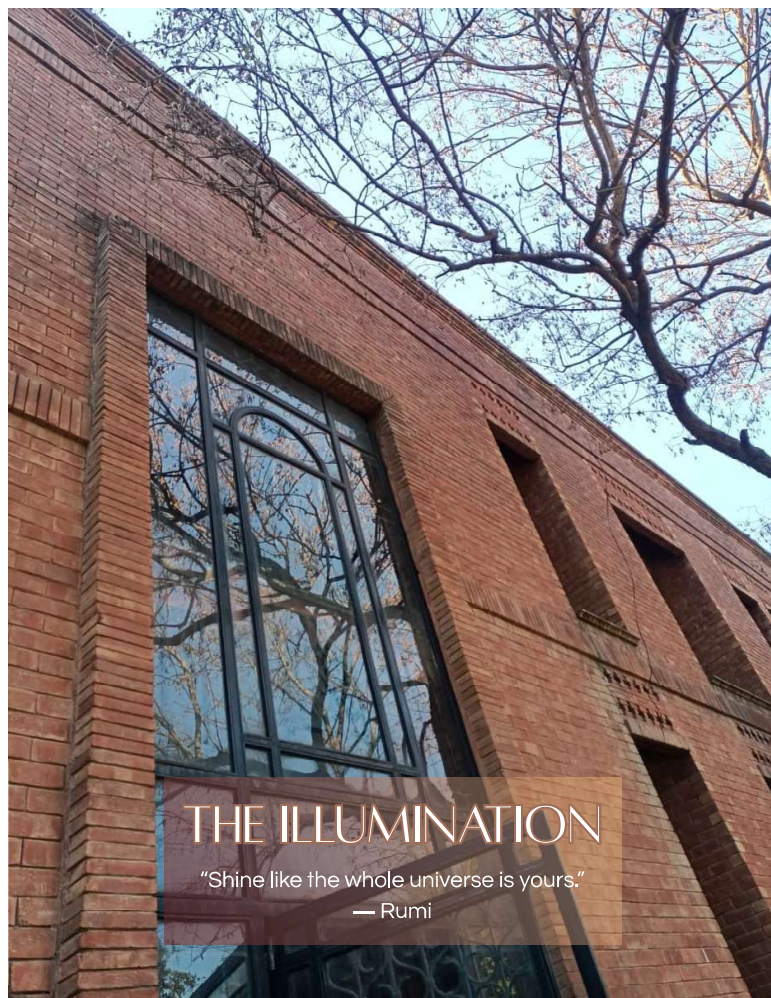
Graves now homes for the restless dead,
Flowers on coffins, a poignant thread.
Yet, another soul's passionate strife,
Freed from the tumult of mortal life.

In the park, a lone toddler's stare
Fixated on the heavens, lost in prayer.
His eyes tell the tale, a world distressed,
Of humanity's suffering, in silent duress.
Fatima Kazmi | Semester 8

Pearl in a Shell

Deep inside there are truths of existence to trace,
the mask I wear, a masquerade of charm and grace
A crimson bloom of a smile spreads on my lips,
withered, unspoken words, the tongue grips
Anger eclipsed by laughter,
Controls the storm inside harder
My eyes sparkle like polished gemstones,
behind them tears crystallize in fright
These glittering eyes mask a burden too heavy to bear,
a hurricane of emotions swivels inside, yet, only calmness of waves appear
My locks, a veil for thoughts entangling my mind,
chest, a shield unto the heart for feelings unkind
My composed stance, a cloak that hides my scars,
From the battles fought by my soul
A sweet, melodious, and loud voice that flows,
shaking cries and trembling whispers
It covers in freedom's guise, my enchained soul conceals,
like a hidden pearl within a shell, the reality reveals
The mask I wear is my pride that keeps me stiff during daylight,
The mask I wear is my shame that makes me hollow during moonlight
Who am I? The masked, lies of sight,
or the unmasked, truths out of sight.

Laiba Khalid | MPhil Semester 1



Kinnaird College Debating Society



Najmuddin Dramatics Society



Kinnaird English Magazine Society



Kinnaird Urdu Magazine Society



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Kinnaird Islamic Society



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Kinnaird Christian Fellowship Club



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Kinnaird Literacy Society



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Kinnaird English Club



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Kinnaird Urdu Club



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Kinnaird French Club



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Kinnaird International Relations Club



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Kinnaird Philosophy Club



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Kinnaird Rangers Society



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Kinnaird Political Science Club



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Kinnaird Environmental Sciences Club



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Kinnaird Food Sciences and Nutrition Club



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Kinnaird Psychology Club



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Kinnaird Geography Club



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Kinnaird Entrepreneurial Club



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Kinnaird Economics Club



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Kinnaird Science Club



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Kinnaird Health Society



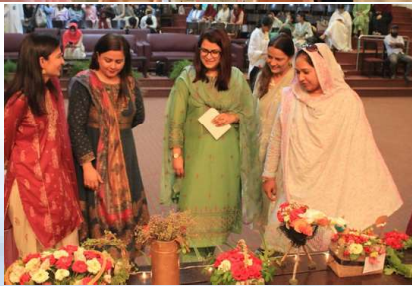
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Kinnaird Sports Society



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Kinnaird Horticulture Society



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Kinnaird Library Department

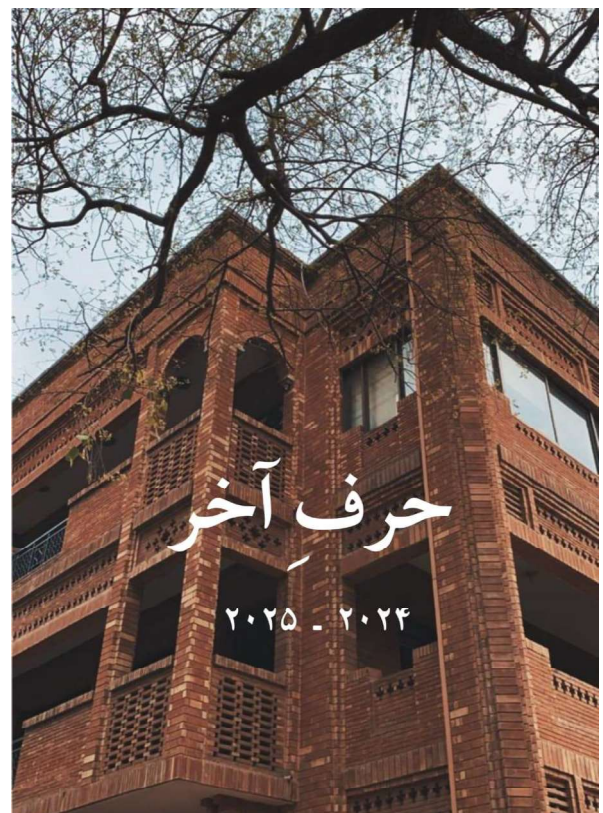


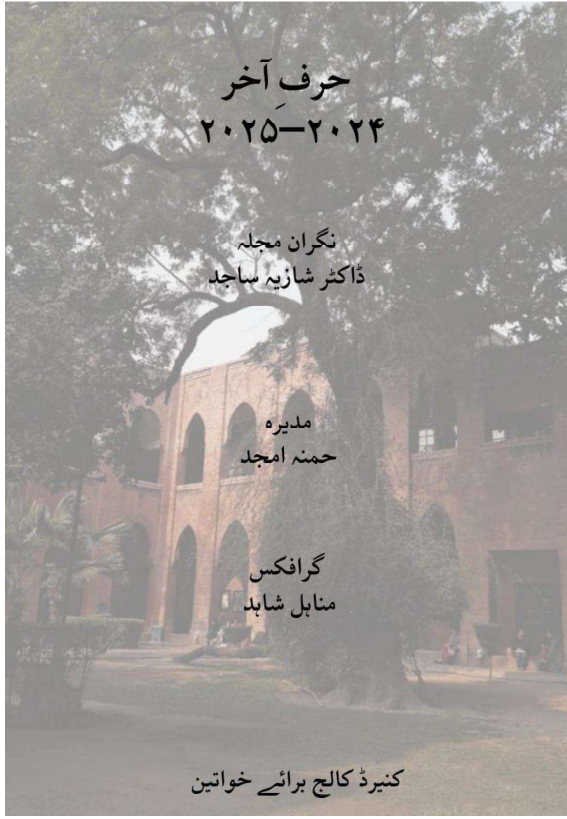
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Moments from the Student Council and OAKS



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ہر نیا دن اپنے ساتھ ایک نیا سبق اور ایک نیا احساس لے کر آتا ہے۔ کبھی یہ احساس ہمیں مسکراتا سکھاتا ہے اور کبھی صبر کا ہنر دیتا ہے۔ انہی تجربات سے ہماری سوچ پروان چڑھتی ہے اور خیالات کو نئی جہت ملتی ہے۔ جب یہ خیالات زبان اور ادب کا روپ دھارتے ہیں تو وہ دلوں کو جوڑنے اور احساسات کو بانٹنے کا وسیلہ بن جاتے ہیں۔



کنیرڈ اردو میگزین 2024-2025 کی اشاعت میرے لیے خوشی اور فخر کا لمحہ ہے۔ اس میگزین میں شامل ہر تحریر اور ہر سوچ نہ صرف ہمارے طالبات کی تخلیقی میں صلاحیتوں کی عکاس ہے بلکہ یہ ان کے خوابوں اور جدوجہد کی تصویر بھی ہے۔ ان تمام طلبہ اور اساتذہ کی شکر گزار ہوں جنہوں نے اپنے وقت اور توانائی کو اس میگزین کے لیے وقف کیا۔ خاص طور پر ڈاکٹر شازیہ کی، جن کی محنت اور تعاون کے بغیر یہ ادبی کاوش ممکن نہ تھی۔ ہماری ٹیم نے کوشش کی ہے کہ ہر قاری کو کچھ نیا سوچنے پر مجبور کرنے والا مواد فراہم کیا جائے۔

امید ہے کہ یہ میگزین آپ کو نہ صرف ادب اور زبان کی خوبصورتی سے قریب کرے گا بلکہ آپ کو اپنے خیالات کے اظہار کے نئے زاویے بھی دکھائے گا۔

صدر اردو میگزین سوسائٹی

ہمنہ امجد

دور صدارت ۲۰۲۴-۲۰۲۵

ادارتی بورڈ



حمنا امجد
صدر اردو میگزین سوسائٹی



سیدہ زویاب
ایڈیٹر میگزین



اقصىٰ فضیلت
ایڈیٹر میگزین



مناہل شاہد
ایڈیٹر میگزین



ارکا بتول
شریک سربراہ ادارتی بورڈ



پکارِ زینب

نہ ماں نے گلے سے لگایا
بابا نے بھی نہ ٹولی ہٹھایا
رخصتی پر نہ سپرا گایا
کن قیامت کا وقت تھا آیا
میری فریاد کسی نے نہ سنی
میری تڑپ پر کوئی پسچا نہیں
میری چیخوں پر کوئی دہلا نہیں
میری پکار پر کوئی قاسم نہ آیا
حشر سے پہلے حشر اٹھانے والے
زینب کو لاشہ بنانے والے
ان سے سب بیوقوف بچانا
کسی اور کو خدایا!! زینب نہ بنانا

اترِویا عن

وادیِ احمر

ہر لحظہ لوگوں کی صدائیں
چیخ و پکار سے بھری ہوئیں
اُپیں ان کی یہ ساتھ میں لائیں
چہین لیا جن سے ان کا کشمیر
!ایسے ہیں یہ لوگ اے ضمیر
پھولوں کے آنگن میں چیلوں کا قبضہ
خون سے بھرا ہے وہاں کا سبزہ
ہمارے دلوں میں تو ان کی جگہ ہے
مگر کیا کریں، موت سے ہم بھی خوفزدہ ہیں
نہ جاتے کب آئی ہے ان پر آسانی
بدلتی ہے کب ان کی یہ زندگانی
امنگوں کی نیا نہ چھوڑیں گے ہم بھی
دل مستقم سے ٹٹ جاؤ گے تم بھی
خدا سے یہ میری بس اتنی دعا ہے

فرحین اشعر

محبت دفنا چکی ہے؟

اک لڑکی جو اکثر کھڑکی کھلی رکھتی تھی
کسی سے ملاقات کے انتظار میں رہتی تھی
اس پر اب وہ پھول و بیل چڑھا چکی ہے
مطلب محبت دفنا چکی ہے؟
اک لڑکی
جو اکثر شور و غل میں رہتی تھی
کہ کسی کی آواز اسے مسرور کرتی تھی
خود پر خاموشی کے پہرے بٹھا چکی ہے
مطلب محبت دفنا چکی ہے؟
اک لڑکی...
جو کتابوں کو تخیل کی دنیا کہتی تھی
کہ کسی کی یاد میں ڈوبی رہتی تھی
اب وہ کتابوں کو اپنا ساتھی بنا چکی ہے
مطلب محبت دفنا چکی ہے؟

اک لڑکی...
جو اک گھونٹ چائے کو زہر کہتی تھی
کہ کسی کی چابوتوں کے خمار میں رہتی تھی
اب وہ چائے کو سکون کی دوا بنا چکی ہے
مطلب محبت دفنا چکی ہے؟
اک لڑکی
جو نماز اس لیے جلدی ادا کرتی تھی
کہ کسی کی یاد کو فضا کرنے سے ڈرتی تھی
اب وہ سجدوں کے دورانے کو بڑھا چکی ہے
مطلب محبت دفنا چکی ہے؟
اک لڑکی
جو خود کو نئے روپ میں ڈھال رہی ہے
کہ ترک محبت کے دعوے کر رہی ہے
کیا خبر وہ کسی کو بھلانا چاہ رہی ہو
کن کی محبت کے نقشِ مٹانا چاہ رہی ہ

ملائکہ احمد

لا حاصلِ عشق کی عنایتیں

میں نے وہ کہا جو مجھ کو عنایت ہوا
میں نے وہ سنا جو مجھ کو سنایا گیا
کچھ ان کہی حسرتیں جو میرے قلب میں دفن ہیں
کچھ ادھوری خوابیں جو میرے بدن سے لپٹی ہیں
یہ وہی ساز ہیں جو چھوڑ نہ سکے
یہ وہی راگ ہیں جو کبھی لگائے نہ گئے
میں جو آج ان ویران راہداریوں میں تنہا نظر آتا ہوں
اس غم میں کہ مجھ کو کوئی ملا کیوں نہیں
ان محبتوں کا شمار میں کیا ہی کرتا
جو فقط میرے لا حاصلِ عشق کی نذر ہوئے

ملائکہ احمد

ہیرے کی قیمت

وہ محبت ہی تھی جو دل میں سرانیت کرتی تھی
ورنہ تم تو روح تک قابض ہوا کرتے تھے
آتش کدوں کے جلنے سے ہو نہ آئے
کہ وہ آگ جو سیلے میں تم جلایا کرتے تھے
پھر کیہی نہ آئی بہار اس ویرانے میں
جس کی شمع کیہی تم جلایا کرتے تھے
دل ناداں تو ناداں ہی رہے تو بھلا بے
پھر انڈیان اس میں کب سمایا کرتے تھے؟
اب نہ ہو گی بے حرمئی اس دل کی
کہ جس میں کیہی پتھر بھی پگھلا کرتے تھے
بات تو کیہی تمہیں ڈھونڈ کر محفل میں مسکرانے کی نہ تھی
کہ ہر سوچ میں تم بسیرا کرتے تھے
قدر دانوں کے ہاں پھیند بھاو بیت بے عین (ع)
ورنہ ہیرے کو کب عام سمجھا کرتے تھے؟

علیزہ بخاری

انتہائے رسم جفا

ایسا نہیں کہ دل میرا چھلنی نہ ہوا ہو
مگر چشم مظلوم میں آتش و تاب بہت ہے
حیف اس خنجر دشمنان کا گمان کہ جس نے
سمجھا کہ وقت نزع کا عذاب بہت ہے
مجھے تو نوید ہوئی ہے لطف شہادت کی
مگر اے سنگ دل میرے رب کا حساب بہت ہے
جنارے پر ماں کی آنکھ نم نہ ہوئی تھی
عرش پر اس دھڑکن کا اضطراب بہت ہے
روک لے سماعت کہ انتہائے رسم جفا ہوئی
شہستان کین میں آشوب و انقلاب بہت ہے
ابو ہمارا تمہاری بزدلی کا تمسخر اٹھاتا ہے
کلب مومن میں صدائے حق کا اسباب بہت ہے
اب کہ راحت وصل نصیب ہوئی ہمیں
خون ریز قاتل کا دست عتاب بہت ہے

حفصہ قمر

سرگزشت مفلس

تیری تبسم میری اشک ریزی سے نا محرم
یہ انداز ستم کچھ کم نہیں آثار محشر سے
میری آسائشیں ساری تیری جھوٹی میں گری ہیں
قتل عام ہے میرا مصیبتوں کے خنجر سے
معلوم ہے عدل کرتے نہیں جہں کے باشندے
کیے ہیں سینکڑوں گلے ہم نے ماہ و اختر سے
تمہارے حسن کو سراپا سراپا بھی ہم نے
مگر ناواقف ہو تم ہمارے دیدہ تر سے
ہماری کوتاہی نہ جانے کیا کہ اس جھوٹیڑی میں آباد
تیرے محل کو تکتے رہتے ہیں چشم احمر سے
تمہاری ایک جنبش پر سینکڑوں جاتیں حاضر ہیں
لڑتے ہیں ہر خواب کے لیے ہم اپنے مقدر سے
تمہارے سونے کے چمچ ہیں،زمرد و لعل گوارا
ہمارا شجر نسب ٹھہرا مفلسوں کے لشکر سے
خدا آباد رکھے تمہیں، تمہاری فردوس بریں کو
مگر نہ ہو دل چھلنی کسی کا روگ غربت سے

حفصہ قمر

ڈاک خانہ خاص

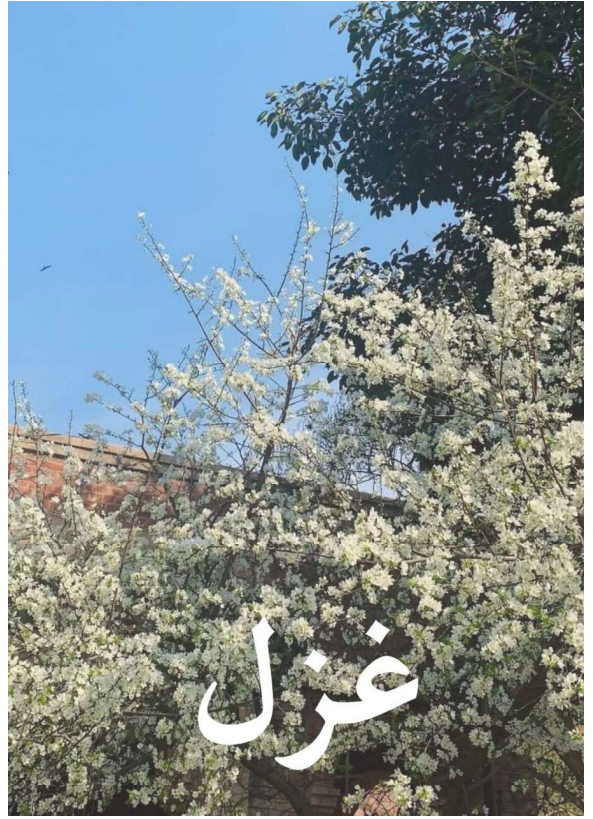
تمام عمر کوچ کرتے رہے اور مہاجر ٹھہرے
ہر روز راہ میں کٹی اور مسافر ٹھہرے
بڑی لذیت میں کٹا ہے اپنی پہچان کا سفر
ہر روز ایک ذات سے نئ ذات کا سفر
اس ہجرت کے پیچھے بھی کئی عناصر ٹھہرے
ملا بھی جو مکمل تو دائمی قیام سے عاجز ٹھہرے
عجیب نسل کے ہم خانہ بدوش تھے
لوٹے بھی تو گھر نہ تھا کہ بدھو ٹھہرے
شہر کی ایک پکی گلی میں تھا کچا مکمل
پردیس میں دیں بناتے تھے کہ غافل ٹھہرے
گاؤں میں مہاجر کی بنی خستہ قبر بناتی ہے
کچھ لوگ تھے جو بے گھر و بے نام و بے خوشبو ٹھہرے
باپ دادوں کی نسبت اور انکے اونچے شعلے
ہماری گدی کے قابض ہمارے ہی آجر ٹھہرے
اب اسی لئے کی ہے عمر بھر کو ترک ہجرت
تارک وطن کا لقب پٹے نو کوئی آبرو ٹھہرے

راہیہ راشد

ڈاک خانہ خاص

تمام عمر کوچ کرتے رہے اور مہاجر تھہرے
 ہر روز راہ میں کٹی اور مسافر تھہرے
 بڑی لذت میں کٹا ہے اپنی پہچان کا سفر
 ہر روز ایک ذات سے نئی ذات کا سفر
 اس ہجرت کے پیچھے بھی کئی عناصر تھہرے
 ملا بھی جو مکمل تو دائمی قیام سے عاجز تھہرے
 عجیب نسل کے ہم خانہ بدوش تھے
 لوٹتے بھی تو گھر نہ تھا کہ بدھو تھہرے
 شہر کی ایک پکی گلی میں تھا کچا مکمل
 پردیس میں دیس بناتے تھے کہ غافل تھہرے
 گاؤں میں ایک مہاجر کی بنی خستہ قبر
 یہ بتاتی ہے کہ کچھ لوگ تھے جو
 بے گھر و بے نام و بے خوشبو تھہرے
 باپ دادوں کی نسبت اور انکے اونچے شملے
 ہماری گدی کے قابض ہمارے ہی آجر تھہرے
 اب اسی لئے کی ہے عمر بھر کو ترک ہجرت
 تارک وطن کا لقب پٹے تو کوئی اُبرو تھہرے

ربیعہ راشد



غزل

وہ جسے دیکھے بنا کتنا تھا نہ ایک پل
 دیکھے ہوئے سے ہی زما نہ بیت گیا
 وہ جسے چاہے بنا رہتا تھا نہ ایک پل
 بچھڑتے ہوئے اس سے ہی سا وں بدل گیا
 وہ جسے یاد کرتے کرتے گزرتا تھا ہر پل
 سو چتے سو چتے اسے ہی زما نہ گزر گیا
 وہ جسے لکھئے لکھئے تھکنا نہ تھا قلم
 ٹوٹتے ہی اس کے قلم نہ بد ل گیا
 وہ جسے دیکھ کر دھڑکنا تھا نہ دل
 فنا ہو تے ہی اس کے دیوانہ پہ مر گیا

غزل

کسی سے پیار کے دو بول کہہ جانا نہیں مشکل
 کسی کو دردوا بنا کر دے دینا ہی کیوں دستور
 درد کا سکھانا کیسے جیتے ہیں زندگی ہی کیوں مقدر
 مقدر کے ستاروں میں اپنا ستارہ ہی کیوں مدھم
 چمکیلی وادیوں میں خالی جسم ہی کیوں ملتے سارے
 خالی وادیوں میں ہی کیوں بستے یہ دل سارے
 سپارے سارے غمی ہی کیوں کر
 ستاروں میں سب سے بلند ستارہ بھی کیوں عارضی
 سورج ستارہ ، چاند تارہ اہمیت کی حامل بڑی
 ٹوٹا تارہ بھی ہے چمکتا خوب سی
 آفتاب سے روشن صبح ساری رات تو پھر رہی اندھیری
 ستارے چمکتے دمکتے سارے ، زمین تو پھر رہی اندھیری
 پھر دنیا کے پھیلے چار سو جال میں اتنی محنت کیوں بھی
 یہ دنیا عارضی، تو فانی، ستارے سارے لا مکاں
 لامکاں منزل کو ڈھونڈنے کے واسطے یہ دنیا ہے
 عشق کی وادیوں میں خود کو پاتے کے لیے یہ دنیا ہے
 محبت بندوں کے لیے ، عشق لاشریک کے لیے
 یہی ہے دستور حیات ترے اور مرے لیے

ماہین خاں

مارچ شجاعت

غزل

گفتگو جو شاخ پر نہیں کرتے ہی آپ چل دیئے؟

ذات اپنی ڈگمگانی کرتے ہی بس چل دیئے؟

ریزہ ریزہ عکس دیکھا پھر ندی کے پار یوں

خود کو ڈھونڈ؟کس کو پایا؟ایسے ہی بس چل دیئے۔

قیص دیکھے عکس اپنا، قلب ڈھونڈے ذات کو

خول بیٹے پانی میں زمین کو جھانکے چل دیئے۔

فلک چاہے بدر بھٹکے اور زبان کٹی رہے

بدر مانگے آسمان ہی؟ اندھیر دیکھے اور چل دیئے۔

لب کشا آنکھ چپخے اور بٹائے حل دل؟

لوگ اپنے مسکرائے،کھلکھلائے؟اور چل دیئے۔

باعیل قدم سنوارے ، گلاب گل اترائے بورے

آسمان کو پیچھے چھوڑے ندی کی جانب چل دیئے

سمیہ رضا



کہانیاں

خواب گاہ

میں ایک بار پھر اسی کمرے میں تھی۔ وہی کمرہ جس کی چار دیواری میرے ذہن میں نقش ہو چکی تھی، جیسے یہ جگہ میری یادوں کا حصہ بن گئی ہو۔ کمرے میں مکمل خاموشی تھی، اور اندھیرے کو چاند کی مدھم روشنی نے تھوڑا روشن کر رکھا تھا، جو پس لگی کھڑکی سے اندر آ رہی تھی۔ میرا ذہن کشمکش میں مبتلا تھا۔ یہ جگہ میرے لیے اجنبی نہیں تھی، لیکن پھر بھی کچھ عجیب سا محسوس ہو رہا تھا۔ کچھ دیر سوچنے کے بعد مجھے اندازہ ہوا کہ یہ وہی جگہ ہے جسے میں نے خوابوں میں دیکھا تھا۔

کمرہ بالکل خالی تھا؛ نہ کوئی انسان، نہ کوئی زندگی کی علامت۔ اس پراسرار خاموشی میں، میں نے کھڑکی کا رخ کیا۔ باہر دیکھنے پر پتہ چلا کہ رات کا وقت تھا اور فضا میں بو کا عالم تھل پٹوں کی دھیمی سرسراہٹ کے علاوہ کوئی آواز کٹاؤں تک نہیں پہنچ رہی تھی۔ آسمان پر نہ کوئی تارا تھا اور نہ ہی چاند نظر آ رہا تھا۔ میرے ذہن میں سوال آیا کہ آخر کمرے کو کون سی چیز روشن کر رہی ہے؟

ادھر ادھر دیکھنے پر میری نظر کمرے کے ایک اندھیرے کونے پر پڑی جہاں سے ایک پراسرار سی روشنی نکل رہی تھی۔ قریب جانے پر پتہ چلا کہ وہ روشنی ایک دروازے سے آ رہی تھی—ایک بڑا اور بھاری دروازہ، جس پر زنگ آلود نالا لگا ہوا تھا۔ ایسا لگتا تھا جیسے اسے برسوں سے کسی نے چھوا تک نہ ہو۔ لیکن اس کے نیچے سے نکلتی شعاعیں پورے کمرے کو اپنی لپیٹ میں لے چکی تھیں۔

اچانک، ایک عجیب سی آواز سنائی دی—مدھم قدموں کی چاپ، جو دروازے کے دوسری طرف سے میری جانب بڑھ رہی تھی۔ باہر چلتی ہوا اب تیز ہو گئی تھی، اور چیزوں کے ٹکرانے اور کوڑوں کی آوازیں ماحول کو مزید خوفناک بنا رہی تھیں۔ میرے دل کی دھڑکن تیز ہو گئی کیونکہ قدموں کی چاپ اب واضح اور قریب ہوتی جا رہی تھی۔

میں نے دروازے کے قریب جا کر اس پر ہاتھ رکھا تو محسوس ہوا کہ وہ غیر معمولی طور پر گرم ہے، جیسے اس کے پیچھے کچھ زندہ ہو۔ اچانک، دروازے کے نیچے سے نکلتی روشنی مدھم ہونے لگی اور قدموں کی آواز رک گئی۔ لمحہ بھر کے لیے خاموشی چھا گئی، لیکن پھر دروازے کے پیچھے سے کسی کے سانس لینے کی آواز سنائی دی— بھاری، گہرے سانس جو میرے دل کو مزید بے چین کر رہے تھے۔

ایک خط میرے قائد کے نام

پیارے قائد اعظم!

آج سے قریبا ڈیڑھ صدی قبل برصغیر پاک و ہند کی سرزمین پر ایک سورج طلوع ہوا جس کی روشنی سے ہر سو اجالا ہو گیا۔ ایک ایسی ہستی جس پر کتب لکھی گئی تو اسے نام دیا گیا "جناب آف پاکستان" کیونکہ آپ حقیقتاً پاکستان ہی کے تھے اور صد افسوس کہ آپ کہ بعد کوئی پاکستان کا نہ تھا۔ سب اپنے تھے یا شاید اپنے بھی نہ تھے ان کی پہچان فقط غلامی تھی۔ سب کے سب ذہنی اثر۔ غلامی کی ان زنجیروں میں جکڑے ہوئے جو کہ دکھائی بھی نہ دیتیں مے حس خونی درندے جو اپنا ہی ملک کہا گئے۔ میرا ملک کہا گئے۔ میرے قائد کا ملک کہا گئے۔

مگر میں اپنے اعمال کے لیے جواب دہ ہوں۔ مجھے آپ سے معافی مانگنی ہے۔ گزشتہ ماہ واپگا ہارڈر جانے کا اتفاق ہوا مگر میں شاید پانچ نعرے بھی نہ لگا سکی ہوں گی۔ میری نظر جب ہندوستان کے دھیرے اور ہمارے خالی سٹیڈیم پر پڑتی اور ماضی کے اوراق پلٹتے جب ذہن میں خیال ابھرتا کہ یہ ملک اس لیے نہیں بنایا گیا تھا کہ آج اس کی یہ حالت ہو۔ اب کی اب کی وفات سے لے کر میرے بلوچی بھائیوں کی حالت تک اس کو لگا پر خنجر یاد آتا پھر اس بجے کی آواز کٹاؤں میں پڑتی جس میں وہ امید اور جوش تھا جس سے میں محروم تھی تو نظر سٹیڈیم میں لگی آپ کی تصویر کی طرف اٹھتی۔ اس سب کو دل میں سماتے میں اس بجے کی طرح پرجوش آواز میں نعرے نہ لگا سکی۔ مجھے معاف کیجئے گد پاکستان زندہ باد!

حفصہ قمر

آپ بیٹی

عنوان: رشتے، گمان اور حقیقت

نا جانے کیوں ایک عرصہ اسی گمان میں گزر گیا کہ

رشتے ہم تنہا بھی نہیںا سکتے ہیں،

یہ کیوں ضروری ہے کہ کوئی ہمیں سمجھے، ہمارے معیار پر پورا اُترے؟

ہم سمجھتے ہیں کہ تعلق بابی توازن کا نام ہے،

مگر حقیقت تو یہ ہے کہ بہت سے رشتے صرف ایک کی کوشش سے قائم رہتے ہیں۔

دل ہمیشہ کہتا ہے، "تنہاؤ، جوڑو، سنوارو،"

مگر دماغ حقیقت کے آئینے میں کہتا ہے، "چھوڑ دو، تمہ جاؤ، خود کو سنبھالو۔"

اور پھر جب دل و دماغ کی جنگ طوّل پکڑتی ہے،

تو انجام ہمیشہ دماغ کی جیت پر ہوتا ہے،

اور ہم تھک کر پیچھے ہٹ جاتے ہیں۔

اکثر رشتے انا کی جنگ میں ہار جاتے ہیں،

تب جا کر احساس ہوتا ہے کہ رشتہ تو صرف ہماری ہی کوشش سے قائم تھا،

ہم نے قدم رکھا، اور تعلق دم توڑ گیا

پھر ہرکدم حقیقت کی دیواروں پر چہرے بدلنے نظر آتے ہیں،

نقاب سرکتے ہیں، اصلیت عیاں ہوتی ہے،

تب دل میں اک ہی خیال آتا ہے— "لاعلمی ایک نعمت تھی۔"

لوگ بدلتے ہیں، اور ہم خاموشی سے دیکھتے رہ جاتے ہیں

جو کل تک ضروری تھے، آج بے وقعت ہو گئے

جو نایاب ہرے لگتے تھے، وہ کبڑ نکلتے

اور پھر ایک دن سچ عیاں ہوتا ہے۔

ے اچھا تو تم قیمتی ہو

میں سمجھی اُمول ہو تم

عائشہ خادم

میرے ہاتھ کانپنے لگے، لیکن تجسس نے مجھے روکنے نہیں دیا۔ میں نے زندگی آلود تالے کو کھولنے کی کوشش کی،

اور جیسے ہی تالہ کھلا، دروازہ خود بخود چرچراتا ہوا کھل گیا۔ اندر ایک تاریک سرنگ نظر آئی جس کا اختتام کہیں

نکھائی نہیں دے رہا تھا۔ سرنگ سے سرد ہوا کا جھونکا آیا جو میرے چہرے کو چہر کر گزر گیا۔

میں نے قدم بڑھایا اور سرنگ میں داخل ہو گئی۔ جتنا آگے بڑھتی گئی، اتنا ہی محسوس ہوتا کہ یہ جگہ حقیقت سے

زیادہ خواب جیسی ہے—شاید کابوس جیسی۔ اچانک مجھے اپنے پیچھے کسی کے قدموں کی آواز سنائی دینے لگی،

جیسے کوئی میرا پیچھا کر رہا ہو۔

میں مڑ کر دیکھنا چاہتی تھی لیکن خوف نے مجھے جکڑ لیا۔ قدموں کی آواز قریب ہوئی گئی اور پھر رک گئی۔ ایک

لمحہ گزرا، اور اچانک کسی نے میرے کان کے قریب سرگوشی کی: "تم یہاں کیوں آئی ہو؟"

میرے جسم کا خون جیسے جم گیا ہو۔ جب میں نے مڑ کر دیکھا تو وہاں کوئی نہیں تھا—بس تاریکی تھی جو مجھے

گھور رہی تھی۔

یہ وہ لمحہ تھا جب مجھے احساس ہوا کہ یہ جگہ صرف ایک کمرہ نہیں بلکہ میرے ذہن کا قید خانہ ہے؛ میرے خوف،

پچھتاؤں اور گناہوں کا عکس جو مجھے کبھی آزاد نہیں ہونے دے گا۔ اس کمرے سے باہر نکلنے کا کوئی راستہ نہیں

تھا—شاید یہ کمرہ کبھی موجود ہی نہیں تھا۔ یہ سب میرے ذہن کا کھیل تھا؛ ایک ایسی حقیقت جس سے فرار ممکن

نہیں تھا۔

فرحین اشعر

وقت اور انسان

کبھی کبھار میں یہ سوچتی ہوں کہ وقت گزر رہا ہے یا ہم شاید وقت تو رکا ہوا ہے، ہر لمحہ ایک جگہ ٹھہرا ہوا ہے،

ایک ساکت تصویر کی مانند اور ہماری زندگی کے پلے پلٹ رہے ہیں۔ ایک فلپ بُک کی طرح۔ سوال یہ ہے کہ ابم کیا

ہے، جو وقت انسان کے ساتھ کرتا ہے یا جو انسان وقت کے ساتھ کرتا ہے؟ ہر انسان کی اپنی ایک کتاب ہے، اپنی

رفقار ہے۔ ہمیں لگتا ہے کہ دوسرے انسان بہت آگے نکل رہے ہیں اور ہم شاید پیچھے رہ گئے ہیں، مگر تب کیا کیا

جائے جب انسان آگے بڑھنا ہی نہ چاہے، ایک جگہ رک جانا چاہتا ہو۔

انسان کے بس میں ہو تو وقت کو قید کر لے، مگر انسان کے ہاتھ میں ہے ہی کہاں کچھ انسان سے یہ کہاں پوچھا جاتا

ہے کہ وہ تیار بھی ہے اپنی ماں کی آغوش سے نکل کر اپنے پیروں پر کھڑے ہونے کے لیے؟ کیا انسان تیار ہے بڑے

ہونے کے لیے، ہاشعور ہونے کے لیے؟

انسان اپنی ہی کہانی میں کردار بھی خود ہے اور تماشائی بھی خود ہے۔ کتنا ہےس ہے انسان، وہ دیکھتا ہی رہ جاتا

ہے، اس کے کندھوں پر اس دنیا کا بوجھ بڑھتا چلا جاتا ہے، اس کے پیچھے ہر سے کم عمری کا لیبل پٹ جاتا ہے اور

اس کے خواب حقیقت کی نظر ہو جاتے ہیں۔ دیکھتے ہی دیکھتے اس کے والدین کے ہال سفید ہو جاتے ہیں اور پھر

ایک دن جب وہ آئینہ دیکھتا ہے تو خود کو کمزور اور بزرگ پاتا ہے، مگر کیا انسان تیار تھا؟ کیا جسم کے ساتھ انسان

کی روح بھی بزرگ ہو جاتی ہے؟ کیا عمر بڑھنا ہی محض بزرگی ہے؟

مگر اس دنیا اور وقت کی حقیقت کو سمجھنا ناممکن ہے۔ اگر انسان سوچنے لگے تو نہ ختم ہونے والے سوالوں کے

جال میں پھنس جائے۔ انسان کبھی اس الجھن سے نکل ہی نہیں سکتا، کیونکہ اس کی اپنی حقیقت ہی اس کی عقل کے

دانرے کے ہار ہے۔ ایک انسان ایک نہیں، نہ جانے کتنے پہلو رکھتا ہے۔ وہ تو خود کو ہی حیران کر دیتا ہے۔

دیکھا جائے تو اس نہ ختم ہونے والی کانٹت میں ایک ذرہ کی حیثیت رکھتی ہے یہ دنیا، اور ایک ذرہ کی حیثیت رکھنا

انسان اپنے اندر پوری کانٹلت سمونے ہونے ہے۔

آپ بیٹی

یقین کا سفر

میں ایک ایسے معاشرے میں پیدا ہوئی جہاں بیٹوں کے قدم گھر کی دیلہز سے آگے بڑھیں تو نظریں اٹھتی ہیں، سوال پوٹے ہیں، اور فیصلے دوسروں کی زبانوں سے صادر کیے جاتے ہیں۔ لیکن میری کہانی روایات کے سائے میں دب جانے کی نہیں، بلکہ ان سے آگے نکلنے کی ہے۔

میرے والدین نے مجھے ہر دینے، میرے حوصلے کو زمین سے آسمان تک کا فاصلہ طے کرنے دیا۔ جہاں لڑکیوں کے

لیئے گھر سے باہر نکلنا معیوب سمجھا جاتا تھا، وہاں میں واحد لڑکی تھی جو سائیکل پر سوار ہو کر گلیوں میں

گھومتی، تھر کنارے شامیں گزارتی، اور بابا سے ہانپک چلاتا سیکھتی۔ لوگ حیران تھے، ناراض بھی، شاید خوفزدہ

بھی کہ اگر ایک بیٹی نے قدم بڑھایا تو باقی بھی اس راہ پر نہ چل پڑیں۔ میں غلط سمجھی گئی، مگر میرے ماں باپ کا

اعتماد مجھ پر اتنا مضبوط تھا کہ کبھی مجھے خود ہر شک نہ ہونے دیا۔

مہی یقین میری شخصیت کی بنیاد بند میں نے اپنی دنیا خود چنی، اپنے فیصلے خود لیے۔ جب میں نے سوشل میڈیا پر

اپنے گلاؤں کی دنیا کو دنیا کے سامنے رکھا، تو روایتی سوچ رکھنے والوں کو لگا کہ میں غلط کر رہی ہوں، جیسے

کوئی ممنوعہ دروازہ کھول دیا ہو۔ الفاظ کی کاٹ سخت تھی، نظریں آج بھی سوالی تھیں، لیکن میرے والدین میرے ساتھ کھڑے رہے۔

پھر میں وہ پہلی لڑکی بنی جس نے لاہور کی زمین پر قدم رکھا اور قانون کی تعلیم حاصل کی۔ لوگوں نے پیشگوئیاں کیں کہ یہ شہر مجھے بدل دے گا، کہ میں بھی وقت کے ساتھ ماحول کا حصہ بن جاؤں گی، مگر میں نے سیکھا تھا کہ اپنی بنیاد کو چھوڑ کر چلنا ترقی نہیں، اپنی اصل کو ساتھ لے کر چلنا ہی اصل کامیابی ہے۔

یہ وہ لمحہ تھا جب مجھے احساس ہوا کہ میں واقعی اس دنیا میں الگ ہوں۔ میری ترجیحات، میرے خواب، میری

جدوجہد، سب کا مرکز وہ اعتماد تھا جو میرے والدین نے مجھ پر کید یہ دنیا بدلتی رہتی ہے، روایات ڈھلتی رہتی ہیں،

مگر جو چیز انسان کو خاص بناتی ہے، وہ اس کا یقین ہوتا ہے، اور میرا یقین تھا کہ مجھے اپنے والدین کو کبھی

ماپوس نہیں کرنا۔

مہی سوچ، مہی اصول، شاید مجھے باقیوں سے الگ بناتے ہیں۔

میں اک داستان ہوں،

مجو روایت سے نہیں

یقین سے لکھی گئی ہے۔

عائشہ ٹوگر

اضطراب

ندا سپہی، لمبی سوچوں میں گم، نظریں موبائل سکرین پر ڈکائے، اکیلے بیٹھی ہوئی تھی۔ اس کو پریشان دیکھ کر میں اس کے قریب گئی۔ اس سے پریشانی کی وجہ جاننے کی کوشش کی تو معلوم ہوا کہ اس کی یہ پریشانی کوئی اور نہیں میں ہی ہوں اس کی پرانی سوچ والی آؤٹ ڈیٹڈ کپڑوں والی ماں جس کی وجہ سے اسے دوستوں کے سامنے شرم آتی۔ اس کو اپنے ہی کپڑوں سے مسئلہ تھا۔ اس کو اپنے ربن سہن سے، کھانے پینے سے مسئلہ تھا۔ تو مجھے روز کسی نہ کسی نئی بچی کی نئی تصویر سوشل میڈیا پر دیکھتی۔ وہ رفتہ رفتہ نفسیاتی مسائل کا شکار ہوتی جا رہی تھی۔ کیونکہ وہ ٹریٹڈ فالو نہیں کر پا رہی تھی۔ اس وجہ سے اس کے دوست بھی کم تھے اور وہ ہر وقت سوشل میڈیا اور موبائل میں لگی رہتی۔

میں نے اس کو سمجھایا اس کو بتایا کہ تم جیسی بوہت خوبصورت ہو۔ تم جو کرتی ہو وہ اچھا کرتی ہو۔ اپنی خواہشات کو لوگوں کے پیچھے قریان مت کرو۔ خود پر، اپنی ذات پر بھروسہ کرو اور نا امیدی اور مایوسی چھوڑ دو۔ کیا ہوا اگر تم دکھنے میں ٹھوڑی موٹی ہو، یا رتم بہت پٹلی ہو۔ تم کالی ہو یا گوری یہ بات تمہاری خوبصورتی کو ختم نہیں کرتی۔ کسی کو خوش کرنے کے لیے اپنی خوشیوں کو برباد مت کرو۔ سوشل میڈیا پر دکھاوے کی بجائے حقیقت میں زندگی خوشی سے گزارو۔

میں نے اس کو بہت سمجھایا مگر اس کے کان پر جوں تک نہ رہیگی۔ وہ دن با دن اور کمزور ہوتی جا رہی تھی۔ کمتری، مایوسی، اضطرابی جیسی کیفیت کا شکار ہو گئی تھی۔ مجھے اس کی فکر دن رات سناتے لگی۔ میں کیسے سمجھاؤں اسے کہ وہ خدا کی بنائی ہوئی بہترین تخلیق ہے۔ مگر میں اسے سمجھانے میں ناکام رہی۔ وہ روز صبح تو خوش ہو کر سکول جاتی مگر جب بھی لوٹتی تو ایک نئی الجھن کا شکار ہو کر آتی ایک نئی کمتری اس کے پیچھے آتی۔ ایک نئی مایوسی اس کو گھیر لیتی۔

ایک دن میں نے یہ فیصلہ کر ہی لیا کہ آج اس کو سکول سے واپسی پر میں نے کر سیدھا کسی نفسیاتی ڈاکٹر کے پاس جاؤں گی اور اس کا یہ سکول بھی چھوڑوا دوں گی بلکہ اس کو پرائیویٹ پڑھاؤں گی تاکہ نہ وہ ان لوگوں میں بیٹھے اور نہ وہ مایوسی کا شکار ہو۔ اسی نیت سے میں سکول کے گیٹ پر پہنچی تو دیکھا کہ بچوں کا ایک جمگٹا لگا ہوا تھا۔ پولیس کی گاڑی باہر کھڑی تھی اور ایمبولینس سے ڈاکٹر اتر کر اندر جا رہے تھے۔ میں نے ہنس کھڑی بچی سے

کیا محض روح اور جسم کے ملنے سے انسان بن جاتا ہے؟ روح تو شاید ایک لامحدود حقیقت ہے جس کو اس جسم میں قید کر دیا گیا ہے۔ شاید یہ گھبراہٹ اسی وجہ سے ہے کہ انسان کی روح اس قید کو قبول نہیں کرتی، اور خود کو تنہا اور بے بس محسوس کرتی ہے۔

اس بھری دنیا میں گنتا تنہا ہے انسان، وہ تو خود سے ہی کبھی نہیں مل پاتا، کبھی خود کو پہچان ہی نہیں پاتا، اس انسانوں کی بھیڑ میں اپنے آپ کو کھو دیتا ہے۔ اور پھر کچھ لوگ خود کو تلاش کرنے میں زندگی گزار دیتے ہیں اور کچھ حقیقت کو قبول کر لیتے ہیں۔

انسان اگر اپنی حقیقت اور حالات پر غور کرے تو ہوش کھو بیٹھے، شاید اسی لیے گھوڑوں کی آنکھوں کے ساتھ ایک آڑ لگائی جاتی ہے تاکہ وہ صرف سیدھا دیکھیں اور اپنے اردگرد کی حقیقت کو دیکھ کر گھبرا نہ جائیں اور اپنا کام صحیح سے سر انجام دے سکیں۔ انسان بھی تو محض اپنا مقصد پورا کر رہا ہے، ذندہ رہنے کا مقصد، مگر حقیقی مقصد تو اس آڑ کے پار دیکھنا ہے۔ انسان پل صراط سے گزرنے کی تیاری کر رہا ہے مگر یہ سوچنا ہی نہیں کہ وہ تو ابھی بھی ایک پل صراط سے گزر رہا ہے۔ مگر ہماری نظریں تو اس تصویر کے پار دیکھنے کو راضی ہی نہیں۔ ہم یہ جانتے ہوئے بھی قبول نہیں کرتے کہ پردے کے پار بھی کچھ ہے۔ اس پراسرار اور ہنگامہ خیز دنیا میں کتنا بے پرواہ ہے انسان، کتنی خاموش ہے انسانیت۔ یہ خاموشی کسی طوفان سے پہلے کی خاموشی لگتی ہے۔ جیسے کسی ڈرائونی فلم میں جنمپ اسکیئر سے پہلے کی خاموشی جو دھڑکن نیز کر دے۔

نہ نظر آنے والی ڈور سے لٹکتی اس دنیا کا انسان خود کو نہ جانے کیا سمجھتا ہے، پر ناواقف ہے کہ وہ کچھ بھی نہیں۔ کیا انسان واقعی کچھ نہیں؟ یہ احسلس کہ ہم کچھ بھی نہیں، ایک عجیب سا سکون دیتا ہے، انسان اپنی ہی خود غرضی کی قید سے آزاد ہو جاتا ہے۔

حقیقت وہ ہے جو ہم دیکھتے ہیں یا وہ جو نظروں سے اوجھل ہے؟

امتل۔

پوچھا کہ کیا ہوا ہے۔ تو وہ بولی کسی ندا نے خود کشی کر لی ہے۔ میرے تو ہیروں تلے زمین ہی نکل گئی۔ میں بچوں کو پیچھے کرتے ہوئے لاش کے پاس پہنچی تو پتہ لگا کہ وہ کوئی اور ندا تھی جو میری ندا کی طرح کمتری کا شکار ہو گئی تھی جس کو مایوسی نے اس قدر گھیرا کہ اس نے خود کشی کر لی۔ میں نے تھینڈا سانس بھرا تو کسی نے مجھے پیچھے سے زور سے پکڑ لیا میں مڑی تو وہ ندا تھی جس کی آنکھوں سے لگاتار آنسو بہہ رہے تھے میں اس کو لے کر جلدی سے گاڑی میں لگتی اس کو حوصلہ دیا اور چپ کرواید۔

وہ مجھ سے معافی مانگنے لگی بولی ماں اب بالکل ٹھیک کہہ رہی تھی اس سوشل میڈیا پر جھوٹی تصویریں اور جھوٹی نمائش نے مجھے واقعی ہی نفسیاتی مریض بنا دیا تھا۔ مجھے نہیں اس ندا کو بھی جس کی آج آپ نے لاش دیکھی۔ آپ جانتی ہیں اس کے ساتھ کیا ہوا ماں اس کی دوست نے اس کی ایک پرانی تصویر جس میں وہ ٹھوڑی موٹی نظر آتی تھی اور اس کا رنگ بھی کالا تھا وہ سوشل میڈیا پر ڈال دی۔ اس کے منع کرنے کے باوجود اور پھر ایک ہی گھنٹے میں لوگوں نے اس قدر جسمانی تضحیک کی کہ اسے ایسی ذلت جیسی زندگی سے موت بہتر لگی۔ ماں اب میں آپ سے وعدہ کرتی ہوں اس سب کے پیچھے لگ کو نہ میں آپ سے، نہ میں خود سے اور نہ ہی اپنے گھر، رسم و رواج، روایت کسی سے منہ موڑوں گی۔ میں اب ان خواہشات کی دلدل میں نہیں پڑھوں گی جن میں وہ ندا دھنس گئی۔ ماں آ بالکل ٹھیک کہتی تھی ہم سب اسی فکر میں مر جائیں گے کہ لوگ کیا کہیں گے اور آخر پر لوگ صرف اتنا ہی کہیں گے انا اللہ وانا علیہ راجعون۔

سیدہ زریاب

اُردو میگزین سوسائٹی



سوسائٹی کے اہم واقعات

