

THE WORLD THROUGH MY GRANDPARENTS EYES

(Siddharth Vinayak Chatterjee-VII B)

Those eyes are not as bright and keen as they used to be when they were young. Those eyes which have seen everything- slavery and freedom, highs and lows. Yet, my grandparents still dream of a future which is both bright and hopeful!

My grandparents, now in their solemn seventies were children of pre-independent India. They were proud witnesses of the Indian tri-colour announcing the birth of a free India. They very fondly remember the 15th of August 1947. From the early days, they were very aware of the huge responsibility thrust on them of nation building.

Though they never grew up with material luxuries and conveniences that we take for granted, they had their idols like Gandhi, Nehru and Sardar Patel before them.

My grandparents are an inspired and inspiring lot. Little things like a hug or an arm around their shoulder, from their grand children make them happy. They live by a great principle-

“Waste not, Want not”

They have seen frugal life and know how to live within their means. From early childhood they have learnt to discharge their responsibilities and willingly shoulder the burden of expectation from their elders. Another phrase they practice and preach with unflinching regularity is –“Clean up your own mess. ” They are exceedingly independent even in their se years. If one was to describe their philosophy in one word, it would be simplicity.

They are very old and life has left its prints on their bodies. They suffer from many physical ailments. But at heart, my grandparents are still quite young. They are very alive to the present day happenings of the world and our country and thoroughly enjoy life.

They present day technological advances have made life easier for them as far as physical convenience and comfort is concerned-especially in the field of communication. They are all praise for Rajiv Gandhi, our late Prime

Minister, who dreamt of bringing the world to our fingertips. This has resulted in the expansion in the field of tele-communication. The mobile phones have brought great changes in this world. These lovely people who live far away can now talk to their children from whenever they are. My grandparents are still getting used to the internet. But are wary of using the computer.

My grandfather, who I call dadan is a qualified mechanical engineer and my grandmother (didani) a retired school Principal. Both are retired from service but spend most of their time in various social activities. They just cannot sit idle at home. Instead they engage themselves in using their education experience for the good of the community and they also spend a lot of time in the service of God, through the Ramakrishna Mission.

Both my grand parents enjoy reading and sharing what they read with others. They like reading both English and Bengali literature. They feel that children today do not spend time reading books and vouch for the computer instead. Today's children, cling on to soft copy, electronic version and hard copies have become alien to them. My grandparents are thrilled when they receive a post card or letter and for them, a letter carries the touch of the writer while the E-mail is very impersonal. When they were young, the Radio was the only electronic source of entertainment. These days the T V is a great companion to them and keeps them engaged. My grandfather is a sports addict and we really enjoy watching football and cricket matches together on TV. His favourite sports stars of today are Leo Messi and Rafael Nodal. He supports the club Manchester united in the football league. He is a great person to be with and we sometimes refer to him as the living encyclopedia" because he knows a lot and has an answer to almost every question we ask him. In his life time he has seen Lev Yelsin (Russian goal keeper) and Sir Gary sobers. He makes long walks every morning. My grandmother, didani is a very kind and loving soul. In her free time she knits and stitches and has stitched many woollen sweaters for us. She knows many, many stories and is the right person to go to if you need inspiration. Both of them know how to laugh at themselves. They are still eager to teach and even learn from their grandchildren. They have been abroad to many places (U.K, Singapore, Russian) but always, say that India is the best. When I try to see the world through my grandparents' eyes, I see a long passage of time. The wrinkles on their faces and the thick

veins on their frail hands remind me of a once beautiful fortress now in ruins, and the mortality of the human body. Yet, sometimes, somewhere perhaps in the turning in their eyes, I see a longing. They seem to tell their grandchildren, let us live again through your achievements, let us discover a whole century through your eyes!