



A Musical Joy

*Kiran Devendra**



Last year, I was travelling from Kolkata to Bolpur. I was excited that I was going to visit Shantiniketan for the first time. It was a wonderful train journey of two hours. The green trees, plants, and small and large water ponds were a sight which was soothing to the eyes. The train stopped for two minutes at a station and hawkers boarded the train. The lemon tea which I had was delicious, I had two cups of it. While I was sipping tea, I saw a man, very thin, very ordinary looking, making a great deal of effort to adjust while resting a very ordinary harmonium on the edge of a seat. Once this effort had been made, he started singing *Rabindra Sangeet*. It was so soothing. This ordinary, unknown singer was so involved that he only concentrated on giving his best to the passengers. The speed, the moving hawkers, and the loud voices of passengers did not bother him. He was happy that he was giving his

best; this happiness was radiating on his thin dark face.

Most passengers were busy talking, laughing, using mobile phones, or even reading newspapers. Very rarely would a passenger smile and nod at him, which made him happy or I should say very happy as it gave him the confidence to start the next song! After he had sung three-four songs, passengers gave him very small amounts of money (coins of one, two, or five rupees). The singer was very grateful to them as he bowed his head and put his hand on his chest. He got down at the next station, but before he did so he stood before me to thank me for continuously letting him know that I was listening and appreciating his talent and effort.

After my meetings, as I sat in the guest-house my thoughts were constantly going back to this man who was so good in his singing that he created his own space while sharing

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his music with the passengers. The impression he left on my mind was so great, that the next day when I boarded the train, I was hoping against hope that he should board the train, again when it would halt for two minutes.

I cannot express how overwhelmed I was with emotion when I saw him. He made the same effort to give his best to the passengers.

Even after a year, this simple man keeps revisiting my thoughts to make me realise that if you have a sense of duty, commitment, and the will, nothing can stop you from performing and achieving a sense of satisfaction. While people in towns and cities need a perfect ambience, pin-drop silence, and a thunder of applause, this man performed in a fast moving train, amidst a lot of noise and movement of the people and the train. He did it as a part of his duty to a profession that helped him to keep his

family together and the household going. The most beautiful part of his personality was that he had no complaints, and he was not looking forward to project his talent. He did everything naturally.

Teachers could share and discuss such incidents with their students. Sharing experiences would enable both teachers and children to reflect on various issues. This could also mean giving an opportunity to every child to express herself/himself. This would ensure participatory learning and children would also learn that any work or duty done well can bring joy, happiness and satisfaction. Teachers could tell the children that one need not look for appreciation from outside and that joy and satisfaction is much more valuable. Every experience can be valuable for both teachers and children to grow together while appreciating and reflecting on various experiences.

