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Limited number of copies of NAYA PRAVARTAK may also be obtained through CLASSIC BOOKS, 10 Middleton Street, Calcutta - 700 071, and PEOPLE TREE, 8 Regal Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi - 110 001.

This issue printed at:
NETWARE COMPUTER SERVICES
84/B, Bonide Road, Flat No. 11, Calcutta - 700 019.

PERISCOPE

Made in heaven?

For some time now, the only topic of discussion among my family and friends has been my marriage, or - I am 25 - the absence of it. It is undeniable that almost our entire social life revolves around this institution which, as we are taught since childhood, is the ideal that every relationship should aspire to, and the destination one's life is expected to reach, sooner or later, once one is finished with sowing one's wild oats.

Not that much of this makes any sense - we have all seen enough loveless and intolerable marriages, any one of which would give the lie to all the hype built up around this institution. But that doesn't stop most people from taking marriage for granted without pausing to think about all its pros and cons, without even pausing to think that perhaps there may be something to think about.

But what about us, dear reader? What about me, and what - I daresay - about you? I know that a lot of my friends out there would shudder at the mere mention of the term "gay relationship", and some would even deny its existence. And not without good reason either.

Most of them have been through and seen enough disastrous affairs to put them off the phrase for a lifetime, turning them into a generation that believes it might not be better to have loved and lost after all.

And, in any case, I don't think one could prescribe an ideal relationship that works for everyone - just like sexual expression, human emotional expectations too cannot be put into a straight jacket. While some of us may only find contentment in a complete and fulfilling one-to-one model, others may be perfectly happy to take each day as it comes. Yet others may prefer something else.

Nevertheless, given the strange and cynical times we live in, with edifices once thought permanent crumbling at the slightest provocation, we figured it would probably not be completely out of place to talk about stability for a change. So, in our humble way, we have tried to talk about some of our friends who have - against insurmountable odds - managed to make it work.

Who, in their own little way, have brought about a social revolution of no little magnitude.

We present these stories, not as beacons for us to follow, but as perfectly viable role models for the less fortunate and more confused among us. We realize that this may not be the solution for all of us, but that doesn't make it any less admirable.

Three cheers, then, for relationships - okay two, if you are not particularly looking for one. And remember, while marriages may be made in heaven, a viable gay relationship has to be worked out right here on earth.

NAYA PRAVARTAK JAN-JUN '96
LETTERS

From a long lost friend

SO you guys did it! Good job, keep it up. Only problem was that I was unable to lay my hands on a copy. Hope to be able to pick up a few issues whenever I’m next in Calcutta or Delhi. Hope you guys get a good response from Calcutta’s gays.

Raj

Editor: Where are you Raj? We received your letter in August last year, after the report in “The Asian Age” about Pravartak being available at Classic Books. However, we could publish it only now. It would be great if you would get in touch. Being a founder member of the group, you should. Shouldn’t you?

A ray of hope

I’m really very happy after going through the fourth and fifth issues. The magazine is just like a ray of hope. I love reading the Bengali and Hindi portions also. The news section is also enjoyable. I’m very thankful to all of you who are working hard for publishing Naya Pravartak.

TO:

C/O PAWAN

10237. WEST BENGAL

CALCUTTA

2001079

EDITOR

It has inspired me to do similar work in my region.

Prateek Cuttack

Optimism please

THIS is apropos the Bengali fiction “Aasomi Premik” in the last issue of Naya Pravartak. Why should Joyeesh commit suicide? This is likely to discourage many gay people. Instead, he could have run away from home and built a new world for himself with Firdaus.

Sudhir Assam

Editor: Your point is well taken. But, perhaps, the writer has deliberately shown a sad ending. He seems to have succeeded in his intentions — by evoking a response such as yours. That is, a statement of hope and optimism. A statement of confidence in the fact that gay people need not necessarily suffer a sad end.


WHAT’S INSIDE?

COVER FEATURE

Excerpts from a heart-to-heart talk with two of Calcutta’s gay couples.
(Pgs. 7-11).

NETWORKING

A grand centre-spread of penpal ads — hope you make at least one good friend.
(Pgs. 18-19).

POETRY

The Oxford Book of Homosexual Verse reviewed (Pg. 12);
poetry from nearer home
(Pgs. 13 and 24).

COMICS

Introducing a comic strip — Meet Jhantu and Shintu.
(Pgs. 29-32).

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Starting this issue, we bring you excerpts from Counsel Club’s collection of books. (Pgs. 14-15).

NOTICE BOARD

In this issue...

... the following pages/columns have been sponsored by members/friends of Counsel Club:

- FRONT COVER: Sanjay
- SAFER SEX: Naz Calcutta
- NETWORKING: Hem and Susanta
- MES AMIS: Dr. Sujit Ghosh
- CITYSCOPE: A well-wisher.

READERS PLEASE NOTE

We are unable to carry the WHICH WAY HOME column this time for reasons of space. We hope to make amends in the next issue. Questions are invited which could be covered under the column.

Editor

Cover illustration by Arghya & Ranjan

NAYA PRAVARTAK JAN-JUN '96

NAYA PRAVARTAK JAN-JUN '96
am an extremely happy man today solely due to Counsel Club and Naya Pravartak. In August last year, my "perfect darling" walked into my life after getting my address from what was then Pravartak, and since then our love has only become stronger. I am sure many others have gained from Counsel Club just as I have.

Hence, I was not a little disturbed to read the untitled article in the last issue of Naya Pravartak (Pgs. 14-17), where the author's judgement has seemed to me to be one-sided and defamatory towards gay men in general and Counsel Club in particular.

Throughout the article, sweeping and unsubstantiated remarks have been made, some of which I wish to refute.

The contention that "most gay men's natures here have been nurture and spurtive in expression", and the statement "gays here are content with momentary fulfillment" call for comment. While these statements may be true for a section of gay men (why, for a section of all humanity), has the author not noticed a new consciousness and sense of awakening all around him? A consciousness, which has led to the formation of Counsel Club?

Does he also not notice that an increasing number of gay people are deciding to "come out", and understand and deal with their sexuality? As a result of such efforts, many have been brought out of their confused and frustrating state of mind. Surely, these are permanent goals!

Again, one can take objection to the use of the phrase "pleasure-oriented". Sex is an important part of any romantic relationship, whether "straight" or "gay", and is a basic need of the body and mind. And as long as it is practised in a healthy and caring manner, I see nothing wrong or "dirty" in it.

Objection can also be made to the use of the word "individualism". We do have some sort of a collective force which binds us together, and which has been at the root of the formation of Counsel Club. Though we do not march on the streets with placards in our hands, the media has recognized us. Is this a small achievement?

The author's paranoia about fitting "into exact counterparts of heterosexual roles" is curious. Were one to discard everything that is "heterosexual", one would be left with precious little! What is wrong in emulating whatever is good? It is a pity that the author has to lament about English language supremacy in Naya Pravartak in the very same language! It has always been Counsel Club and Naya Pravartak's endeavor to retain its Indian identity while reaching out to the rest of the world. Hence the trilingual nature of the magazine, and the group's monthly meetings.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that Counsel Club is helping gay people come together as a group, and is providing an abode of peace to the wandering and tormented minds of closeted gay people. I pray that the club grows further and meets the needs of gay people in eastern India and elsewhere, and wish it the best of luck.

I also thank the author of the article for inspiring me to write this piece.

--- Hem

---

The coupling instinct

June 2, 1996 was a memorable day when three Counsel Club members got together with two of Calcutta's gay couples for recording a conversation on "life, love and living together". Incidentally, all the four interviewees were also Counsel Club members. Excerpts follow.

Pawan: There are seven people here. We are going to have a discussion on relationships, and this recording is the second of its kind for CC's oral history project. The people we are going to talk to are Hem (48), Susanta (23), Soporsah (23) and Kaushik (24). Talking to them will be Partha, Pawan and Rinkoo. Let's have a round of introductions.

Hem: I'm Hem and I work for a multinational in the marketing department. I have come across a lot of people in my life and had been looking for a perfect partner who would fit my bill. In Susanta, I have found exactly such a partner, and I think we will be happy forever.

Susanta: I'm Susanta. I'm a graduate. I have found my ideal partner here. I had wanted somebody who would understand me and my problems, correct my mistakes and accept my shortcomings, and I must say I have found such a person. I am very happy today. Though I cannot express my feelings coherently, I am sure my partner loves me tremendously, and only my wish is that I be able to honour his love and commitment in the days to come.

Soporsah: I'm Soporsah, and I aspire to be a music composer, and also to write and be engaged in other artistic activities. I had met Kaushik accidentally, and we have been living together for the last two and a half years. I am very very happy with that accident which has turned out to be one of the most fantastic things to ever happen to me. He is very sensible and understanding, and we want to stay together our life. We have common dreams and ambitions and common expectations from each other. That's all.

Kaushik: Hello, I'm Kaushik. I work for a private company, and my ambition is to work in theatre. I stay with Soporsah, and whatever he said about us is true. I love him more than I can say, and I too believe that we will stay together forever.

Pawan: Will Hem tell us something about himself, his background?

Hem: Actually, I come from Mangalore, but my father used to work in Calcutta, and that's how I am here. I've had many partners, may be more than 100. However, I hadn't come across any emotional empathy, which I have with Susanta. My work takes me all over India and I get to meet all sorts of people. I feel that nowadays the attitude towards alternate sexualities is changing and I find much more acceptance.

Pawan: You said that the attitude is changing. Can you give an example?

Hem: Well, when I used to stay in hotels in Bombay and Siliguri, I sometimes used to call the boys over to my room. I find the reactions of people to such activities is changing now. "To each his own" is the current attitude.

Pawan: Susanta, you are in Calcutta now, but where were you earlier, what work did you do?

Susanta: My own house is quite far away from here - in Gobardanga, I used...
to work in the fire department, and had
come to Ispat Bhavan on work when
I read about a gay magazine in the
"Anandabazar Patrika". That is how I
obtained a copy of Pravartak, and re-
 responded to Hem's penpal ad.

Now, you may ask as to why I did not
choose somebody in my own age group.
Actually, there is a reason for this - when
I was in class nine, I used to have a
tutor who used to love me a lot, and
used to touch me while explaining things.
By that time, a change had
started coming over me, and I used to
understand his intentions somewhat.
At this time itself, I noticed that I did
not feel any attraction for females. However,
being in a village, I could not express
my feelings. Coming here has brought
me from darkness to light. Anyway,
the reply to my letter came on the 13th

At first we had decided that I would
come here permanently after two years.
However, soon we got so involved with
each other that I moved in with Dad last
month (May 12, 1996). I want to be
beside Dad in both happiness and sorrow
and I will try my utmost to make him
happy.

Pawan: But now that you have left your
home, wouldn't there be any problems?
Susanta: There should not be any
problem since my family has always
given me a lot of independence, and
they also have a lot of faith in me.
Though they do not know about my
sexual identity yet, the day it comes in
the open, I will clearly tell them what I
am, and that any endeavour to change
my nature will be disastrous. But, I am
sure that my family will understand me,
and not meddle with my personal life.

Pawan: In the same context, I would
like Kaushik to comment as his family
is in the same city where he is living
with his partner. Many people would be
wary of doing so, probably preferring to
stay in another city.

Kaushik: Actually, I came to know
about my feelings when I was quite
young - in fact it first happened with my
elder brother's school teacher who used
to come and stay at our place. I had
ever wanted to be a hypocrite, and had
wanted to tell my parents about myself,
but never had a frank discussion with
them. However, my father had come to
know of a previous affair, when I tried
to commit suicide when my lover got
married. My father was constantly ask-
ing me about the reason, and I told him
everything. Later, when I met Sopoto,
I told my parents that I am going to stay
with him. I had always been stubborn
and revolutionary, and I fought with my
parents and left home with Sopoto.
Initially they would not accept this since
they were worried about me, that a rep-
etion of the previous incident would oc-
cur. I would often come home and try to
convince them. They are very kind-
hearted, and after a few months of liv-
ing with Sopoto, my parents and broth-
ers finally accepted us.

Pawan: Sopoto, when you went to
Kaushik’s place, what was their reac-
tion towards you?
Sopoto: His parents have never
reacted badly. They are very kind-hearted.
Initially, there were some problems and
misunderstanding on his family's part,
but gradually they have been sorted out.
His mother had a candid conversation
with me, and even suggested that had
Kaushik been a girl, she would have
permitted us to tie the knot. Incidentally,
his father had told me, "I know about
your relationship, but don't waste your
lives and careers, only then I'll support
your living together." Now, even
Kaushik's aunts, uncles and cousins visit
us, and everything is normal.

Rinkoo: Sopoto mentioned Kaushik's
mother saying that she would have
married off the two of them had Kaushik
been a girl. What I want to ask is, do
you see your relationship in terms of a
man-woman relationship? People gen-
erally ask "Who is the husband?" or
"Who is the wife?" even in a homo-
sexual relationship. So if yours is a "pure
husband-husband" relationship of what?

Sopoto: No, we consider each
other as friends. Because, I believe,
every relationship is ultimately
friendship - even blood relationships
can be considered such. So friend-
ship is possible, whether it is a ho-
mosexual or a heterosexual relation-
ship. A man can stay with another
man but that doesn't make one of
them the husband and the other the
wife, which comes from the concept
of domination or submissiveness.
However, this is absent in our case
- we are like pendulums, oscillating to
adjust with each other.

Kaushik: Actually, our relationship
cannot be compared to that between a
husband and a wife. All we need is some-
one who can be a father, mother,
brother, sister, friend, philosopher and
guide rolled in one.

Partha: I would like to know how ex-
actly you guys met?
Sopoto: Actually, I used to lead a
very hectic, frivolous and bohemian life
in those days. Once, when I was pass-
ing through Shyam Bazar, near Minar
cinema hall, I happened to meet
Kaushik. We both lingered around, and
I felt that something might turn out with
this cute chap. Finally we talked to each
other - I thought he was Marwari! I sug-
gested that he come over to my place
some day but he said, "Why not today?"
and I thought "Oh, he's so bold!" Then
it all happened . . . The first day itself,
I started missing him once he went back
home. We both wanted something more
than sex. And so:

Pawan: I noticed that Susanta referred
to Hem as "Dad". Agreed that yours is a
same-sex relationship, but is it a ro-
nomantic relationship?

Hem: Yes, it is something more than
a romantic relationship. I was always
looking out for a son and Susanta also was
always looking out for a father. He, his
father having passed away when he
was only two days old. Probably he
found a father-figure in me, and that
adds to our pleasure. I don't know if
you would call this incest . . . (laughs).
Of course, we were also looking for sexual
partners and that we have found.
Pawan: Would you like to comment on
this?

Pawan: Since you ask me to comment,
I would say that friendship is the es-
sence of any relationship. The world
of gays has a lot of people trying to carry
out relationships in various different
ways, and there doesn't have to be any-
thing fixed - every relationship doesn't
have to be a replica of the "man-woman-
mode". That is my comment. But an-
other question comes to my mind - re-
cently a very young man came up to
CC and asked whether leading gay re-
lationships exist. After all, the grapev-
ine is full of stories about gay lovers break-
ing up. Comment?
Hem: I wish you would ask me this question 20 years from now. The answer is that such relationships do last.
Rinkoo: How do you guys react to your partners having sex with anybody else?
Hem: Our relationship is open to some extent, but we believe that sex with each other will be the best. Actually, at times you realise the pleasure of having sex with your own partner when you have it outside ‘wedlock’. It also leads to better love between the partners.
Soptorshi: Well, possessiveness is not bad, but that does not imply that one has to possess one’s partner physically. Of course, mental possessiveness must be there—which can be termed ‘faith’—more precisely. In our case, we mix with good guys, and obviously enjoy sex with them. That will never matter in our relationship. That way, we agree with Hem and Susanta’s view of this matter. I never bother when Kaushik sleeps with others, and he in turn doesn’t mind my going to bed with other guys.
Rinkoo: But what about the health aspect? That plays an important role.
Hem: Yes, it is definitely an important factor. We have decided to take all the necessary precautions when we have sex with others—it is a must.
Pawan: A different topic now. We all know that life is tough and one has to bother about so many things—like ration cards, electricity, etc. So how do you really find time for relaxing? How do you romance?
Hem: We just shut out the rest of the world and have lots and lots of sex.
Soptorshi: We only get to relax at night. We get very childish then, and we also have sex, obviously. We share our fantasies and dreams, solve our problems, blow hot and cold on decisions. I start composing or writing, and he goes off to sleep.
Partha: Well, that was about romancing. But tell me about your day-to-day activities, how do you manage your daily chores?
Hem: It is very easy for me as Susanta handles all the day-to-day chores. I come home and give Susanta my salary, and she handles everything like an efficient ‘griri’ (housewife). In this way I have been able to cut down on my reckless spending, and we have managed to visit various places.
Soptorshi: Well, we do not have any regular income right now as we don’t have regular jobs. On my part, I don’t even want to settle down in a job since my ambitions are quite different.
Kaushik: I know cooking, and so I look after the kitchen. As for the other household activities, we share them.
Partha: Now that you guys are in a relationship, do you ever feel the need for private space? Do you ever feel that your partner is encroaching on your area?
Susanta: I don’t think anybody has interfered in my independence. I don’t go outside except when it’s necessary, so I do not think there’s any hindrance to my liberty. And I don’t need any special time for myself.
Hem: Yes, I do feel such at times, especially when I return from work and crave for a few pegs which relieves me of my fatigue. However, Susanta handles it very well and keeps a check on my drinking. So at these times, I do feel so, but not in the real sense.
Susanta: Yes, I have set a rule for him not to take more than two pegs in the evening, and I have also warned him that if he crosses the limit, he can’t touch me.
Soptorshi: Yes, Kaushik really intrudes on my independence, when it is to do with my ‘vices’!
Kaushik: I try to help him with his artistic work. But in case of boozing and smoking I try to control him since he can’t control himself at that time. And in my case, I want to be alone when I’m sad or angry.
Pawan: What do you partners say about adopting a child?
Soptorshi: We definitely have such an idea. In fact, Kaushik had always wanted to do some social work, provide a home for some orphans. But at present we are thoroughly tied up with our ambitions and are working towards them. But in the future...
Hem: Not really, as ours itself is some sort of a father-son relationship. Also what would be the social acceptance of the child? But in any case, already two chaps stay with us and Susanta looks after them like his sons.
Pawan: Now let’s ask each of the couples their future plans, ambitions, whether they would be staying in Calcutta, etc.
Soptorshi: Staying in Calcutta or outside is immaterial. We do not know how things will turn out. But we could go to Bombay, because my ambition is to compose music for films and Kaushik’s is to be involved in theatre—English, Hindi or Bengali. Also I would like to do a lot of writing—prose, poetry, theatre, etc.
Kaushik: Yes, my ambition is to do theatre, set up my own group, act in films, produce them, etc. The main ambition for both of us is to do a lot of social work. Because we do not have any family “obligations” as such, nothing to stop us from going all out on such work. A “family person” wouldn’t be able to do such work, even if he wanted to. We gals can do a lot of such work which others can’t.
Hem: Susanta also wants to do something to help others. But at this point of time we can’t say we what. It would be something creative, something different.
Pawan: So that’s it. I guess we’ll end by saying that today’s discussion has some historical value for CG. At least one couple sitting here has managed to meet through Pravartak... But the law and social attitudes take their time changing. We can forge ahead in the mean time and build our own support system. Definitely we would like more people to be able to try out relationships such as ours. I think the process has begun... Now that’s an optimistic note to end on! (General clapping). Thanks.
Hem: Susanta, Soptorshi and Kaushik very much.

Transcription done by: Kaushik, Partha, Pawan, Ranjan, Rinkoo and Soptorshi.
Books

Verse with a label

Partha

The Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse
Editor: Stephen Coote

What exactly is "homosexual verse"? Does it depend only on the sexual orientation of the poet, or would one also accept into this genre poetry with gay themes written by "straight" authors?

On a deeper level, what is it - if there is anything - that separates homosexual poetry from its heterosexual counterpart? What markers distinguish an anonymous poem as either "straight" or "gay"? What indeed?

The introduction to this admirable collection makes its intentions clear at the outset when it declares: "This is a collection of poems by and about gay people."

"For me, a gay poem is one that either deals with explicitly gay matters or describes an intense and loving relationship between two people of the same gender": the editor goes on to specify.

We also learn that the present title was agreed upon after much discussion, "homosexual" being finally chosen over "gay" (which is seen by some as an effete and transitory usage, and, being closer to slang, likely to date) and "homosexual" (which, though perhaps the more proper term, is both unfamiliar and rather pompous).

The collection ranges in time and place from classical Athens to contemporary New York, thus bringing together Homer, Sappho, Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Verlaine, Gertrude Stein, Garcia Lorca, Stephen Spender, W.H. Auden, Pasolini and Ginsberg among others.

In spite of the fact that the editor works mainly within the Western tradition ("That is the one I know best"), ignoring the vast resources elsewhere - from the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh, the Arab cultures and East Asia, the importance of this book or the pleasure it offers is in no way diminished.

Though this anthology can be read for pleasure and pleasure alone; it is also a history of the different ways in which gay people have been seen and have seen themselves. In order to do something about the future, we must know something about the past, and to that extent, the voices collected here are voices of encouragement.

Having said that, let us dedicate this book to the future we would all like to see - a future where a separate collection of "homosexual" verse will no longer be necessary.

---

Poetry

A ten minute eternity

Waiting for the one I love in a wayside restaurant,
smoke curling away
tea going cold
and the train rattling away in the distance;
time stretches like the
chewing gum I pull out in boredom;
a hundred wrinkles appear
on my face
as crows after crows perch on the
thatched shade over my head
and fly off;
I fold serviettes
bend straws
shred a thousand leaves in anxiety;
looking up at every footstep
at every whisper and shout
at every fragrance that floats by
shadows lengthen into
mile-long warped images,
silhouettes form and merge
into darkness;
even eternity seems to
lapse into a slumber of dreams
and fantasies... And then.
He comes in, apologising:
"Sorry, I'm ten minutes late."
I sigh and smile.
His kiss on my cheek
is like the first monsoon shower
in Paradise.

---

Sridhar
FROM THE ARCHIVES

Love between men

When Shere Hite published her report on male sexuality in 1981 ("The Hite Report on Male Sexuality": Ballantine Books, New York; USA), it was hailed both as "brilliant" and "one of the year's worst books". Coming as a sequel to her previous report on female sexuality, this book too raised new questions and unleashed a new flood of controversy. We present here a portion from the chapter on 'Sex and Love Between Men', where respondents describe the time when they felt most deeply in love.

"Being in love is the most all-encompassing, overwhelming experience of my life. I feel ecstatically happy when I'm with him, when we are doing something together, or simply spending the evening together at home. He means more to me than anyone else in the world. I cry myself to sleep when at one point I thought that we were spending too much time together, and that we needed new experiences apart (including, potentially, other sexual things). I was desperately unhappy, both with him and when we were apart. I could barely stand seeing him be cold and unaffectionate with me. Although I agreed that we had become too isolated from other people, I didn't want our reaching out to new people to negatively affect our relationship. But we have more or less worked through this, and the happiest period of my adult life has been the past year. Especially when we were away on holiday together, away from our work, doing new and exciting things together. Perhaps the closest I've ever felt to him was the last time I saw him, and we both cried on each other's shoulder about having to say even a temporary goodbye. Those tears were more expressive and real than any words could ever have been."

"Does feeling deeply in love really need description? I felt that the most important thing in my life was the happiness of the person I loved. I subordinated my own feelings and interests to the objective of my love's happiness. I felt (no doubt irrationally) that it had been necessary for me to make myself as well as have sacrificed my own love for the preservation of my own. My whole experience for a couple of years was suffused with this all-important passion. What happened? The person I loved, who had reciprocated my feelings at first, grew less interested in me and the end of three years of living together he was not any longer in love with me at all. It was a heartbreaking crisis for me, and the emotional agony and scars from that experience have left me permanently and clearly altered in my personality. I have never since had the same emotional capacity that I had before this experience. It is as though a part of my emotional capacity has been burned out right of my body or amputated. Eventually after many months I slowly resumed living. I have never, however, in the ten years since, been capable of a single tear over anything. As I said, it is as if a part of my emotional capacity had been removed... cauterized away. I am basically a happy person. Only rarely do I feel a slight depression, but after that episode I think it must have been three years before I had a week when I could look at myself and say honestly, 'I am happy this week.'"

"The most deeply in love I have been was when I was nineteen, with someone I lived with for six years. There was a sexual attraction, but beyond this there was a sense of 'comfortableness', a tremendous joyful feeling of well-being. I don't like the gay term 'lover', to me that denotes something risque, spurious, without depth. This was a partnership, an equal sharing where both of us had used our talents to complement the other and shared the-day-to-day responsibilities of living. There was no 'he' or 'she', simply two people who happened to be male and who happened to fully enjoy and respect each other. I do not recall that either of us felt any need to be jealous even when one of the other would seek a sexual encounter outside. We were honest in our relationships with others as well as each other. I believe that the honesty in our relationship gave it a tremendous amount of security. I have never known such a sense of well-being or happiness since that time."

"I have been deeply in love twice... both times with straight men who loved me also but could not totally express that feeling, sexually or otherwise. I have kept close contact with both and have continued to love them, one for seventeen years and the other for fourteen. The two times I was in love hit me like an electric shock — like having a bolt of lightning hit me. I knew at that instant that this was going to be the one. I was relatively speechless and flustered. I became flustered. I was unusually aroused sexually although not aware of having an erection. The first time the fellow touched my hand (by circumstance, not intentionally), it was so intense it was almost painful."

"I met my lover of two and a half years in a bar. I walked up to him and initated conversation. There was an immediate strong attraction (physical). We returned to my apartment and had sex but it was more like making love... After we had sex, we talked for a few hours, really candidly... I knew this experience was a beginning, I knew it intuitively. We spent much time together, going to plays, movies, and art museums. I remember being turned on by his entering a room. Several times I couldn't tell whether I felt my penis or his. I missed him horribly when I was away. We became such good friends it permitted me to unlock much within myself and him. There was no question about the reciprocal nature of our relationship. There was a deterioration, however, when we took an apartment together. He became absorbed in his career and became distant, and very selfish about some things. I made all kinds of allowances and tried to talk things through. Still whenever things got rough for either of us we each supported the other strongly. When we began our two years to do fewer things together, I knew that my commitment was dying. So I decided not to move with him when he got a job offer in another city. He was surprised and hurt but made a fast recovery. I was upset, too. I still deeply love the guy. We visit each other at holidays, and have sex, but it is more out of a tribute to the past, I guess."
A sister's story

The following article appeared in "The Telegraph", Calcutta in May 1996. Perhaps there is nothing exceptional about the story. Possibly it is not even genuine. However, it was definitely refreshing to see homosexuality treated in a down-to-earth manner in a "mainstream" publication. The article did not carry a byline.

-Editor

In blissful anticipation we ran into the crowded Rath-mela, darting in and out between the crowds of revellers, trying to spot the ticket counter for the giant wheel. I jerked to a standstill and looking back to see what could have caught my brother's attention, I found myself looking at a smiling Kabuliwalla.

He looked harmless enough, but his smile looked a little sinister and I hid behind my brother in fear. Dada, looking the man in the eye, uttered a firm and audible "Nahi jayenga," and rushed me into the crowd, and out of sight of our pursuer.

My outrage knew no bounds. What had that man been saying, smiling so offensively? And why did my brother react so—what was he refusing with that "Nahi"? He explained in confidence later, that some men preferred men to women, and that this was a fairly widespread and a natural phenomenon. Perhaps, in retrospect, he had by then already discovered his own homosexuality, but it was a startling concept to me at the age of 11.

I gradually understood and accepted my brother's gayness. And in a perverse way, as children are sometimes prone to do, felt proud of him as if this streak in his make-up made him different and therefore 'special' to me.

Perhaps being in the minority in a largely non-accepting heterosexual world had made him more open to other peoples' anxieties—he's become somewhat of a champion of the underdog today. All of this and more has changed my childhood hero worship to a more intelligent appreciation of his personality now.

My parents, on the other hand, who were introduced to homosexuality much later in their lives, took time and quite a lot of persuasion to accept this irrebuttable fact. My mother's reaction, initially self-recriminatory, "I must have been an overbearing mother so he's afraid of women," changed only gradually to acceptance of the fact that homosexuality is, in most cases, genetic.

She has tried subsequently to understand how gay people feel and think, and appreciates that even in more liberal cultures, social acceptance is only grudging and often absent.

So today, she is more concerned about his happiness, as she's convinced that, alienated from a lot of people because of his gayness, he may be lonely and discontented.

In my experience, heterosexual men find accepting gayness in other men very difficult, especially in a father/son relationship. My father was rather disturbed initially by my brother's gayness. He is a person who tends to internalise his thoughts rather than express them, but it is evident that he loves both his children unquestioningly. But it has been a struggle to come to grips with the fact that neither of us is as 'biddable' nor as

Continued on Page 33

Keeping syphilis at bay

Besides gonorrhoea, syphilis is one of the best known sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Known since ancient times, it is fairly widespread even today. OSCAR Wilde (1854 - 1900), Irish writer and poet, is believed to have suffered from syphilis. Wilde, as we know, had suffered from a number of ills as well—that of prejudice against homosexuality. In 1895 he was imprisoned for two years for 'homosexual offences'.

ANYWAY, the idea behind mentioning Wilde's name is not to indicate a link between his sexuality and the STD he suffered from. It is rather to point out the importance of being 'cautious' in practising safer sex!

ALL sexually active people need to know the facts about syphilis. Men who have sex with men—gay-identified or not—can't be an exception. And people (men and women) who have sex with both men and women need to be just as aware.

SYPHILIS is caused by bacteria present in the blood and other body fluids of an infected person. Transmission is usually through sexual contact with the surface of an infected mucous membrane—specifically with a syphilitic lesion (chancre or sore).

GIVEN the nature of the transmission, precautions are necessary during anal sex. Vaginal sex, oral sex (stimulating the genitals with the mouth or tongue) and rimming (licking the anus). The parts vulnerable to the infection are the penis, vagina, rectum and mouth.

SYMPTOMS occur in stages:

STAGE I A painless sore appears usually on or near the vagina or penis but sometimes in the mouth or anus. The sore may appear between one and 12 weeks after the infection. It usually lasts about two to three weeks.

STAGE II A rash on the body appears anything between two to six months after the infection. Flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache and sore throat also appear. This stage lasts for two to six weeks.

LATE STAGE: This stage may occur many years after the infection. Symptoms will have disappeared by this stage but the disease will still be present in the body.

IF the earlier stages of the disease have not been treated, there may be permanent damage to the heart, brain and other vital organs. These days, however, this happens very rarely.

PREVENTION: A person with the infection may feel well, but can still be infectious to others. And given that unprotected sex even once is enough to get infected, it is important to

- Use a condom for oral and vaginal sex. (Proper lubrication with a water-based lube—say, KY jelly—is necessary to prevent the condom from tearing).
- Use a condom for man-to-man and woman-to-man oral sex (that is, sucking the penis). In case of men-to-woman and woman-to-woman oral sex (that is, licking the vagina), a little improvisation is called for. A condom cut down the side (using a fresh blade) and laid flat against the vagina can act as a barrier against oral transmission. The condom should never be flipped over, and a

Continued on Page 33
NETWORKING

Please send us your listing as you want it to appear in print. We may need to edit your listing. * Each appearance of the listing will cost Rs. 15. Send cash/postage stamps. There is no charge for CC members. * Non-member readers abroad may send a nominal amount (in US$) as donation towards CC. * For prompt response, use a personal mailing address - residential or a post box / bag number at the local PO. * If you don't want your address printed, we will forward your mail. You will be given an advertisement code number. * All mail to be forwarded to an advertiser with a code number should be sealed in a STAMPED envelope. Only the advertiser's name and code number need be written in pencil on a corner of the envelope. Place this in another envelope addressed to CC. * Please remember that Naya Pravartak is read by non-gays also. * We take no responsibility for what happens as a result of meeting people through Naya Pravartak. * Please reply to any response as a gesture of courtesy. * Naya Pravartak reserves the right to refuse a listing. * Send your listing/mail for forwarding to: Naya Pravartak, C/O Pawan, Post Bag No. 10237, Calcutta 700 019.

26-YEAR old banker from Orissa; 5'5"; 56 kg.; seeks friendship with sensitive and sincere men of any age. Interests include reading, writing, painting and music. Photograph requested. Confidentiality expected and assured. Write to: Dev [Code No. 6K]

HELLO everybody. I'm Prateek, 19 years old. 6'3" tall and weigh 54 kg. I have a slim, well-shaped and hairy body, and a fair complexion. Hobbies include making parfums, reading, writing, cooking, gardening, films, music and traveling. Looking for a long-lasting relationship with a caring and sincere guy. Age and looks no bar. Write with photo. All letters will be replied to. (Cuttack/Jaipur) [Code No. 64]

M.F. 32, warm and straightforward. A blood of the romantic and the rational one. As important, but not the might one. Sex is important, but not the might one. If you are understanding, ultimate for me. Write to: Jyoti [Code No. 66].

75% SBC, warm and straightforward. A blood of the romantic and the rational one. A love is important, but not the might one. If you are understanding, ultimate for me. Write to: Dipali [Code No. 67].

31-YEAR old sensitive, fun-loving, body with a sense of humour, enjoys life and loves almost everything. Looking for close friendships. Write to: Jyoti [Code No. 69].

28-YEAR old, post graduate, highly creative, well settled, sincere and loving, male wants friends of any age, for true friendship. Confidentiality assured. Write to: Srikant [Uttarpara]. [Code No. 6H]

21-YEAR old, well-built (178 cm, 76 kg.) affectionate man; working as a manager; looking for friends in the age group of 30 to 65 years for real love. Photograph requested. People in Madras/Tamil Nadu and foreigners preferred. Reply assured. Write to : SVR (Madras). [Code No. 61]
The nuclear family...

GAYA NUSANTARA; Jaijan Mulyosari Timur 46, Surabaya 60112, East Java, Indonesia. Gay men's group; publishes newsletter 'Gaya Nusantara'.

GLPCI NETWORK (Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition International); C/O GLPCI Publications Office, P.O. Box 43206, Montclair, NJ 07043, USA

HOMODOK; University of Amsterdam, ILGA Archives, Oudezijds Achterburgwal, 185 NL-1012 DK Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Documentation centre for gay and lesbian rights.

IGLHRC (International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission); 1500 Mission Street, Suite 200, San Francisco, CA 94103, USA. (415) 255-8890. Group working for 'human rights and freedom for gays and lesbians'.

ILGA (International Lesbian & Gay Association); C/O Antenne Rose, 81 rue Marche-aux-charbon, B-1000 Bruxelles 1, Belgium.

KUISH; P.O. Box 6172, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1P6, Canada. For South Asian gay men.

NEPAL QUEER SOCIETY; P.O. Box 8975, EPC 5203, Kathmandu, Nepal.

SHAMAKI; P.O. Box No. 460456, San Francisco, CA 94148-0456, USA. For South Asian lesbians and bisexual women; publishes newsletter 'Shamakami'.

SALGA (South Asia Lesbian and Gay Association); P.O. Box 50, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276-0050, USA. (212) 2942555.

TRIKONE; P.O. Box No. 21354, San Jose, CA 95151, USA. (408) 2708776. For South Asian gay men and lesbians; publishes newsletter 'Trikone'. Contact CC for copies.

...and the extensions

AIDS BHEDBHAVYIRODHIANDOLAN; Post Box No. 5306, New Delhi 110 053. Community work on issues of education, health, law, women, gay men, lesbians, professional blood donors and drug abuse.

CINI-ASHA (Child in Need Institute); 63 Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road, Calcutta 700 016. Works with street and working children.

JABALA; 6A Outram Street, Calcutta 700 017. Works with women and children of the Bow Bazar red light area in north Calcutta.

MANAVI; P.O. Box 614, Bloomfield, NJ 07003, USA. Focuses on women's issues.

SANLAP; 171A Rashbehari Avenue, 1st floor, Opposite Ayesha Cinema, Calcutta 700 019. Focuses on women's issues.

STD/HIV INTERVENTION PROGRAMME (Sonagachi, BowBazar and Kaliaghatar red light areas); C/O All India Institute of Hygiene & Public Health, 110 Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta 700 033. An HIV/AIDS and sexual health education and support service.

THE NAZ PROJECT; Pallingswick House, 241 King Street, London W6 9LP, UK. (0) 181 5630191. An HIV/AIDS education, prevention and support service for the South Asian, Turkish, Iran and Arab communities; publishes newsletter Naz Ki Pukar.

THOUGHTSHOP FOUNDATION; 2G Maurya Centre, 48 Garisath Road, Calcutta 700 019. Produces communication material on HIV/AIDS and sexual health for other NGOs, sex education for young people; etc.

COUNSELLING HELP

We have come across many who are not comfortable with or sure of their sexual orientation. Often, having discovered their true orientation, they find themselves unwilling to accept it. It is for such of us that Counsel Club offers counselling services. COUNSELLING in other areas - profession, choice of career, how to manage family situations, health and safer sex - is also provided. Besides, we can arrange pre- and post-HIV test counselling.

WHATEVER be your problem, wherever you are - in Calcutta or outside - write to us or meet us. We will help you help yourself. Here's how.

We will answer your queries in Naya Pravartak's counselling column. Your identity will not be disclosed if so requested.

CC members specially entrusted with the task will reply to your letters in consultation with the CC counsellor.

We will help you get in touch with the CC counsellors in Calcutta with whom you can discuss your problems freely.

You would be most welcome to attend CC talk sessions and workshops.

COUNSELLING help, in case it involves sessions with counsellors, may carry a charge. (For CC members the charge may be dispensed with.) Counsellors may have preference to students and those who cannot afford to pay. Those earning will be requested to pay in full.)

WRITE TO: Counsel Club, C/O Pawan, Post Box Bag No. 10237, Calcutta 700 019.

NAYA PRAVARTAK JAN-JUN '96
An outing through dance

A fabulous amalgamation of innovative subjects and breathtaking performances marked the evening of June 1, 1996 at the G.D. Birla Sabhaghar auditorium. This was courtesy Sapphire Creations Dance Workshop which presented four ballets dealing with a spectrum of themes.

ONE of the ballets - "The Alien Flower" - dealt with the trials and tribulations of men who love men. Choreographed by Sudarshan Chakravorty, the ballet was based on poems by Counsel Club member Sanjay and US-based literateur Rakesh Ratti. With the same name as the final poem (written by Sanjay), the ballet managed to present a controversial subject sans political shilliness.

FOR the dozen odd CC members in the audience it was history in the making. This was probably the first time in India that the subject was openly dealt with through dance. Of course, it was a big event for Calcutta too, supposedly a haven for cultural broadmindedness!

APART from Sanjay's poems and providing numbers in the audience, CC was also involved in another aspect of the production. Sanjay and Partha provided the voice-over for a number of poems.

JUDGING by the press reviews and public reaction, it seems "The Alien Flower" succeeded in providing food for thought for many who otherwise would have remained in the dark about the issue.

Honeymoon with...

...the media goes on, as Counsel Club and Naya Pravartak keep getting mentioned in various publications throughout the country - sometimes without our own knowledge! Not that all the reports are as positive or accurate as one would like them to be, but they at least go to show the media's interest in our work.

TWO reports appeared last year - "Coming out of the closet" in "The Economic Times" (October 21), and "Coming out of the Purdah" in "The Statesman" (December 24). The ET report by Pallab Bhattacharya says: "Calcutta's gays plan to ask for their rights without offending society..." and talks about a certain "Calcutta Gay Club" which sounds very much like Counsel Club!

"THE Statesman" article, on the other hand, was about our organisation and newsletter. Written by J.P. Yadav, it carries extracts from various issues of (Naya) Pravartak, and says of Counsel Club that it "has been working quietly but with determination to make them (gay) see that they have a choice".

THE May 15, 1996 issue of "India Today" carried a one column piece on Naya Pravartak in their "Happenings" page. Calling it "Gay in the East", author Ruben Banerjee gives a short informative account on the magazine's fifth issue - but goes up and calls it the sixth, issue, and somewhat misinterprets Pravartak as "Catalyst".

AND finally, what is a penpal ad from Naya Pravartak doing in an article on date rape? The media, it seems, makes strange bedfellows too. In "Just Don't Do It" ("The Statesman", May 19, 1996), Ajanta Mallick advises against casual dating, and also talks about "The Gay Way": "Homosexuals... are dating regularly now - in Victoria Memorial, Dhakuria Lake and Curzon Park", she informs but also adds that "homosexual dating... has more evils than heterosexual ones!"

MALlick also mentions that Naya Pravartak carries personal classified ads (and actually reproduces one verbatim) which "come handy for people looking for homosexual friends in Calcutta".

ASK task

AS tasks go, it was perhaps the most enjoyable of them all! CC participated in another pioneering effort - this time involving sex education for young people.

OF course, it's the ASK (AIDS, Sex, Knowledge) column we're talking about. Prepared by Thoughtshop Foundation, an agency specialising in preparing information-education-communication material, the column had an uninterrupted run for more than a year (March 1995 to June 1996) in the VOICE's section of "The Statesman".

AN interactive column, ASK was targeted at young people, perhaps one of the most vulnerable sections of society in the context of sexual health. The column created quite a sensation and amassed a huge following among teenagers and young adults.

GIVEN its target (young people), medium (a newspaper considered quite conservative) and duration of existence, the column can truly be credited with a number of firsts. And for CC too, collaborating in the exercise was a first of sorts.

CC members Partha and Pawan风暴 teamed with Himalini of Thoughtshop Foundation for preparing the material and answers to queries related to sexuality. The column dealt with the subject over all of four episodes, covering a range of topics, and included CC's postal address in one of them.

SURE, there was a deluge of letters, a significant number from teenagers and those in their early 20s. This has prompted CC to start a "youth circles", where the participants would be able to discuss problems peculiar to their age.

CC is proud indeed to have taken ASK's "interactive element in print" to its logical conclusion - face-to-face interaction. It also plans to help Thoughtshop Foundation in the preparation and distribution of ASK... and More! - the ASK column's proposed new avatar (that of a broadsheet in English and Bengali).

Tailpiece

TO end, here's a list of events where CC members were present:

- The West Bengal Sexual Health Project workshop on sexual health at Digha in December 1995.
- The WBSPH workshop on counselling at Katimpur early this year.
- The Gender Just Laws conference in Bombay in May-June 1996. We hope to have a detailed report on the conference for the next issue of Naya Pravartak.

WHILE the two WBSPH workshops were attended by member Rana, the Bombay meet had two CC representatives Shalmali and Rana Shalmali, one of the newest members of CC, is also a key figure in Stee Sangram Collective, a lesbian support group in Bombay.

ROVING EYES:
- Saptakshari (Calcutta); Partha (Calcutta); Pawan (Calcutta); and Rana (in Bombay).
বিষ

আর যে একজন অন্য ছবি হিসের কেন্দ্রে—
তবে কেই তোমরা আমার ছবি আঁকা রকে—
বিষ গুলো যিনে?

বিষ, বিষ, সবকায় বিষ,
শুধু বিষ যেখে বেটে গেল পৃথিবী বন্ধে,
আমিই তো মানুষ — এই বিষ বেলা,
আম কভুক সহা হয়?

আর তো কখনো শির দুলিনি কোনা—
পথচারীর কিছে-
তবে কেই তোমরা আমার সহায়তায় চুক্ত এলে?

ঝলক

গতকাল আটরিকার যেতে যেতে হঠাৎ গলির মোড় জীবন হাতিনি যিনে ঝলান।

আমার হংসের কোমতে কালি
আম সরবরাহ সিদ্দান্তের বিষ
আমী কাঁচ, আমার সাহস হয় না—
তবও মার্কেটরই সম্পর্কতে
পতের ধার জীবন গড়িয়ে যাচ্ছে।

— পার্থ

REPORT

অবধেন

সমকামিতা নিয়ে গবেষণা — একটি অভিজ্ঞতার আলোক বিবরণ

সমকামিতা নিয়ে গবেষণা করা ছিল আমার
একজন মানুষের সর্বনাম (Identity Formation)
নিয়ে অধ্যয়ন করতে দিলে। এর দিকে অভিজ্ঞতার যে হোক, বিচার মানুষের
সাথে ব্যাপিত এবং প্রশ্ন আলোচনা মধ্যে দিয়ে।
বিশেষ করে আমার শয়ন বক্সকার এই ক্ষেত্রে
সমকামের মানুষের কি ভাবছে, সেই প্রশ্নের উত্তর
পুর্ণের প্রতি যাচার তাদের সাথে পরিচয় পাওয়া হয়।

নানামান্য সম্প্রতি একটি প্রশ্ন— বিশেষত আমি
নিয়ে ভাবলে সমকামী সম্পন্ন করা না — সেখানে কিভাবে আমার গবেষণা করা হবে,
একমন্ত্রে যা করার উদ্দেশ্য ছিল। বিপুল উদ্দেশ্য চিন্তিত হয় আমার একটি
আস্থাভর্তী এবং আমার গবেষণায় এখন
সাহসিকতার চূড়ান্ত মাধ্যম ছিল।

আমার গবেষণার উদ্দেশ্য ছিল করেকৃত প্রথম
উত্তর চেয়ে যা আমার করে অস্পর্শ মধ্যে
হ্রদের। এক অন্য যা হলো, এক প্রস্তাব এবং
বিচার প্রক্রিয়ার মাধ্যমে
শুরু করা এই প্রক্রিয়া করা হবে যে
দেখা দেয়া উচ্চতার (Focus Group

1) ভিত্তিতে আলোচনা সমকামী মানুষের উপরের

৩) সমকামী মানুষের সাথে মানুষী

ভিত্তিতের প্রতি প্রতি

১) ভিত্তিতে আলোচনা সমকামী মানুষের উপ

২) ভিত্তিতে আলোচনা সমকামী মানুষের উপ

সম্পর্ক সম্পর্কে

অঞ্জলি

সম্পর্ক এই পোষার মানুষের ও বিচার দৃষ্টিতে মানুষকে পরিবেশ লেখিতে পারে. অথবা এই একটি অন্য নতুন সম্পর্ককে শাসক বলা হয়. আর বাংলাদেশের (abstract) যন্ত্র সমাধানে, সেটি পড়ে বিবর্জনের (সম্ভবত অন্য অন্য সম্পর্কের এবং তার সাথে সম্পর্কের কথা দেখা) পর্যন্ত এই অন্য এই বিশেষণে পর্যন্ত করার প্রয়োজন। অথবা সেটির মধ্যে সহস্র সহস্র সম্পর্ক ও অন্য সম্পর্কের নিয়ম প্রয়োজন।

বিশিষ্ট প্রতিষ্ঠা হিসাবে এই অন্য একটি প্রচলিত করে, কেননা আর সামগ্রিক মানুষের (P.C. — Section 377 এর) অন্তর্ভুক্তি প্রাপ্তি মানুষের সাধারণের মধ্যে সম্পর্কদারি (difference and divergence) নেয় ফুল। কোনো বর্তমানের সাধারণতার গণ্যকে আর করিয়ে দিয়ে পাতা হবে।

এই প্রচলিত হিসাবে এই অন্য একটি প্রচলিত। করার সম্পর্কে decriminalise করার ক্ষেত্রে, মানুষের সাধারণ সত্ত্বাকে বেঁচে থাকার কিছু সম্পর্কদারি নয়। অন্য এই প্রচলিত? এই প্রচলিত ১৯৩০ সালের পাপুরায় সংবাদ পত্রের প্রতিক্রিয়া (paradigm) বল প্রকাশ করে ও তা হ্রাস পায় না। প্রক্রিয়া এই প্রচলিত হিসাবে এই প্রচলিত এবং সম্পর্কের পর্যায়ের প্রতিক্রিয়া বলা হয়। অথবা চেকারিশালী এ বিষয়ে এই প্রচলিত এবং অন্য এই প্রচলিত এবং মানুষকে মানুষের সাদৃশ্য প্রতিক্রিয়া বলা হয়।

প্রথম প্রচলিত হিসাবে এই পরিস্থিতি অনুভব করা হয় এবং এই শব্দের মাধ্যমে আর সম্পর্কের মাধ্যমে আর সম্পর্কের প্রতিক্রিয়া করা হয়।

এটি পদ্ধতি (methodology) — প্রথম প্রচলিত হিসাবে এই পরিস্থিতি অনুভব করা। অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে অন্তর্ভূক্তি এর সাথে।

• স্থানীয় অঞ্চলের এক অংশ সংঘর্ষ

সামাজিক বাছাইকরণ, সামাজিক লিঙ্গি সম্পর্কের সমস্যামূলক প্রবন্ধ নির্মাতা করা হয়।

NAYA PRAVARTAK JAN-JUN '96
অস্তিত্বের সংকট

মন্ত্রণালয়ের হাতে মেনে ধরেকরো যে এই লেখাটি আমাদের গত সংখ্যায় বিপ্লবগত, কিন্তু সম্পাদনার ক্রমে কিছু নতুন সম্পাদক রঙে অপবিত্ত হয়েছে। এই লেখাটির প্রকাশক হয় বলে আমাদের সাধারণের জন্য এটি অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ।

পাবলিক কর্তৃত্বের অন্যান্য চরিত্রের সঙ্গে সাক্ষাৎকারের মাধ্যমে যখন আমরা জানি যে কোন মানুষকে অত্যন্ত ঘনিষ্ঠভাবে প্রভাবিত করতে চাওয়া হয়, তখন আমাদের লেখা সম্পাদকের কাছে প্রকাশ করতে হয়।

নায়া প্রবার্তক জানু-জুন '৯৬
A sister's story

Continued from page 16

'normal' as the children of most of his contemporaries.

To illustrate my point, and explain it better, I'd say it was as difficult for him to accept that I would not marry at 16 a man of his choosing (but would go on to educate myself further, build a career and only then marry a man from my circle of acquaintances), as it was for him to accept that my brother would in fact not marry at all, would remain a childless bachelor, living his life as a respected scientist in the USA, content with friends of his own choosing, and perhaps inclination too.

He respects my brother for his scholarship and his scientific achievements, but would have in his own words, liked to have his 'lineage' continued into the next generation. That appears to be his only source of regret. Both parents with stoical resignation accept that he will live his life his own way and have stopped hoping for the dream of a host of grandchildren for them to spoil and indulge.

My brother thankfully hasn't found it difficult to accept his own orientation and hasn't felt the need to either conceal or proclaim it. He treats it, as I do, as an inherent part of his make-up, neither as an extraordinary phenomenon nor something to be confused about.

Perhaps, I ought to thank the chance encounter with the Kabuliwala for my early introduction and acceptance of the concept of homosexuality. It helped to ensure that my brother's words would never be a reason for misunderstandings between him and me.

Keeping syphilis at bay

Continued from Page 17

new piece should be used every time. The same improvisation can work in case of rimming.

- Urinate immediately after sex, and wash the mouth and genitals before and right after sexual contact.

TESTING: The diagnosis is based on symptoms and/or blood testing.

TREATMENT: Syphilis can prove serious (to the point of causing death) if untreated in the early stages. Fortunately, that need not happen at all these days. It can be completely cured with antibiotics prescribed by a doctor.

HOWEVER, it is essential to keep the follow-up appointments with the doctor. He or she will need those to make sure the cure is complete.

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NAYA PRAVARTAK JAN-JUN '96
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