



Naamghar Association of America

NEWSLETTER

[HTTPS://NAAMGHAR.ORG/](https://naamghar.org/)

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April - June 2024

MESSAGE FROM THE BOR-MEDHI

Dear community members and well-wishers of NAAM,

We are getting into the Summer of 2024. We see the recommendation from CDC for elderly folks for continuing to take vaccine for Covid-19. Let's do the needful and follow the prescribed guidelines not only for our own safety but also for the safety of all others around us.

Now coming to this second quarter newsletter of 2024 from NAAM, it is my pleasure to highlight our recent major activity and plans for the near future.

- NAAM organized celebration of our *Annual Fund Raising Cultural Event of 2024 on May-18*. Please see a few photos of our cultural event at a later section of the newsletter. We were delighted to have with us Sanjib Bhattacharya Ji, an accomplished Manipuri Dance Exponent, Guru and well-known Choreographer, a recipient of two Appreciation Awards from the Presidents of India in 2006 and 2011, to grace the occasion. He brought with him his team of Manipuri performers from New York City as well. We thank him especially for coming all the way from Cleveland, Ohio to perform for us. We also had performances featuring other Indian dance forms, namely *Bharatnatyam* and *Kathak*. We even included a dance team of young children of the age group of 4 to 7 years to everyone's delight. Additionally, Gayatree Sarma (NJ), Rabin Goswami (DC) and Priyadarshini Inman (NC), and other local artistes from the Nritya Dhwani Group of our

Assamese diaspora joined to grace the occasion.

- We have incorporated an article in this issue on the experience of *Krishnasarana Bhakat* (Edgar Faingor) about taking initiation in *Eka Sarana Nama Dharma* in his own words <https://www.sankaradeva.com/blogs/post/220>. It is a very touching and interesting article on Edgar, who is an Israeli from Russia, trying to relocate to Canada.
- We are planning to host Mr. Mayur Bora, Distinguished Writer and Public Speaker from Assam. The program includes performances of Borgeet and Sattriya Dance to showcase Assamese Sattriya culture. The event is to be held on **July 14th, 2024, Sunday** starting at 3:00 PM with light snacks served at the venue and **free admission to all on first come basis** as seats are limited due to hall capacity, you are kindly requested to RSVP so we can plan the event for everyone's comfort. The event will be held at the Balaji Temple, Bridgewater, New Jersey. Please **RSVP at www.naamghar.org/event**

I look forward to seeing many of you at our July-14 event.

Sincerely,

Dr. Binoy K. Bordoloi, *Bor Medhi*
Chairman, NAAM
Email: binoy.bordoloi@gmail.com



UPDATE ON FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

- NAAM organized an ***Annual Fund-Raising Cultural Event of 2024*** on May 18, 2024. Details are in multiple locations in this newsletter.
- NAAM is hosting **Mr. Mayur Bora**, Distinguished Writer and Public Speaker from Assam on July 14th, 2024 at 3:00 PM at the Balaji Temple, Bridgewater, New Jersey. Please RSVP at www.naamghar.org/event.
- **DONATION TO NAAM FOR TAX BENEFIT:** Consider making NAAM as one of the beneficiaries of your estate planning and/or donate for potential tax benefits for the current tax year (please consult your tax adviser for details).
- ***If your employer matches your donation to a charitable organization (direct or thorough payroll deductions), please add "Naamghar Association of America, Inc." as one the beneficiaries.***
- NAAM is soliciting your donations via its website (<https://naamghar.org/>), NAAM Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/NaamgharAssociationOfAmerica/>), and the "DONATE" button on this page to fund a community Naamghar in North America.
- NAAM is looking forward to an active participation of the community (Assamese diaspora) for realizing a common dream of building a Naamghar in North America. Please use the "DONATE" button below and/or contact Dr. Binoy Bordoloi at binoy.bordoloi@gmail.com for additional information. Thank you!



Please contribute to NAAM's effort to build a naamghar in North America:



BOR MEDHI'S SPEECH ON THE MAY 18TH, 2024 EVENT

*Jai Guru SankarXarba Gunakar
Jakeri Nahi Anupam
Tohari Saranaka.....Renu Xata Kauti
Bareko Koruhu Pronam*

নমস্কাৰ, আপোনালোক সকলোকে স্বাগতম জনালো। আজি আমাৰ এই “streaming-as well as a live Multi-Cultural NAAM Fundraising Event ত ভাগ লবলৈ অহাৰ কাৰণে মই সকলোকে মোৰ আন্তৰিক কৃতজ্ঞতা জনালো!

On behalf of the Naamghar Association of America (NAAM), I am very pleased to welcome you all to our Streaming-as well as a -Live Multi-Cultural and Fundraising Event of 2024.

NAAM is a not-for-profit trust that was granted 501(c)(3) status in 2018. We are an organization for the Assamese diaspora to celebrate the spiritual traditions and the philosophical teachings of the great Neo-Vaishnavite Saint Srimanta Sankardeva.

Through NAAM, we offer you a forum to express and experience these rich traditions propagated by Srimanta Sankardeva, including but not limited to regular devotional *Naam-Praxangas*, *Borgeet*, and various performing arts, for example *Xatriya* dance, *Bhaona* and many more at our annual events.

In today's event, we also have performances featuring other Indian dance forms, namely *Bharatnatyam* and *Kathak*. We have even included a dance team of young children of the age group of 4 to 7 years.

We are delighted to have with us Sanjib Bhattacharya Ji, an accomplished Manipuri Dance Exponent, Guru and well-known Choreographer, a recipient of two Appreciation Awards from the Presidents of India in 2006 and 2011, to grace the occasion. We thank him especially for coming all the way from Cleveland, Ohio to perform for us today.

We are encompassing and embracing the entire Assamese community in North America in our noble endeavor of NAAM, while the focus is in the tri-state area of NY / NJ / PA of the east coast for the first community Naamghar. In the future, we can have several Naamghars in North America, where we have a critical mass of the Assamese diaspora and folks interested in having a community Naamghar.

নামঘৰ হল অসমীয়া ৰাইজৰ বাপতি সাহোন।

Our Naamghar *Thapona* was established in 2016 by the *Satradhikar* Dr. Sri Sri Pitambar Deva Goswami of the Auniati Xattrā, one of the oldest and largest monasteries in Majuli, Assam. It was the maiden visit of a *Satradhikar* to America. Its *Guru Āxon* was then duly consecrated by Dr. Goswami in his second visit in 2017.

We have an active land acquisition plan for the construction of our Naamghar, with a **Manikut** to house the *Guru-axon* and will include a **Cultural Center** with **Auditorium**, and a **Library**. We seek your support and guidance in realizing our mission for the Assamese diaspora.

We have organized an attractive agenda for you with devotional songs of Borgeet, classical dance forms of *Xatriya*, *Bharatnatyam* and *Kathak*, the artistes for whom will be introduced by our Emcee Smita Barbora.

Please enjoy.

Note: the event flier and a few selected pictures from the event are in the next page. For more pictures of the event, please visit <https://naamghar.org/events/>. Thank you!



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

An Invited Talk by Mr. Mayur Bora, Distinguished Writer and Public Speaker, Assam

NAAM is hosting Mr. Mayur Bora, Distinguished Writer and Public Speaker from Assam. The program includes performances of Borgeet and Sattriya Dance to showcase Assamese Sattriya culture.

NAAM
PRESENTS

Naamghar: Lifeline of Assamese Society
The Uniqueness of Srimanta Sankaradeva and His Mission

Dimpi Choudhury Alam
Borgeet

Mayur Bora
Guest Speaker
Esteemed Writer & Public Speaker

Pracheeta Bora
Sattriya Dance

Venue:
Balaji Temple
Bridgewater, NJ
Sunday July 14
3:00PM-4:30 PM ET

Organizer: Naamghar Association of America
RSVP today (Free Admission)
Register at www.naamghar.org/event

LIMITED SEATS
RSVP NOW

The event is to be held on **July 14th, 2024, Sunday** starting at 3:00 PM with light snacks served at the venue and **free admission to all on first come basis** as seats are limited due to hall capacity, you are kindly requested to RSVP so we can plan the event for everyone's comfort. The event will be held at the **Balaji Temple, Bridgewater, New Jersey.**

On this occasion, we are republishing Mr. Bora's article in this issue of the NAAM newsletter.

Please **RSVP**
at www.naamghar.org/event



শংকৰদেৱৰ জাতিভেদ প্ৰথা সম্পৰ্কীয় ধ্যান-ধাৰণা কিমান গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ

By Mayur Bora

জাতিভেদ প্ৰথাৰ লগত থকা শংকৰদেৱৰ ব্যক্তিগত, আধ্যাত্মিক আৰু সামাজিক সম্পৰ্কৰ বিষয়ে খুব বিস্তৃতভাৱে চৰ্চা হোৱা সততে চকুত নপৰে। একে সময়তে কিন্তু তেওঁৰ দ্বাৰা প্ৰচাৰিত 'একশৰণ নামধৰ্ম'ৰ বিষয়ে কৰা যিকোনো আলোচনাতে বৰ্ণভেদৰ কথাটোৱে কিছু প্ৰাধান্য নোপোৱাকৈ নাথাকে। অৱধাৰিতভাৱে বিভিন্ন গৱেষক পণ্ডিতৰ আলোচনাত এই বিষয়ে কিছু মতান্তৰো দৃষ্টিগোচৰ হয়। অৱশ্যে আন কিছু বিষয়তকৈ জাতিভেদ সন্দৰ্ভত শংকৰদেৱৰ মনোভাব বিশ্লেষণ কৰোঁতে পণ্ডিতসকলৰ লেখা আৰু বক্তব্যত ফুটি ওলোৱা মতভেদৰ তীক্ষ্ণতা কিছু কম। বৰ্ণপ্ৰধান হিন্দু সমাজ সন্দৰ্ভত তেওঁৰ ভূমিকা পৰ্যালোচনা কৰোঁতে দুটা বিশেষ কথা মনত ৰখা অত্যন্ত প্ৰয়োজনীয়। ইয়াৰ অন্যথা যিকোনো লোকৰে আলোচনা অন্ধৰ হস্তী দৰ্শনৰ নিচিনা হোৱাৰ সম্ভাৱনাই অধিক। প্ৰথম কথাটো হ'ল মধ্যযুগৰ সৰ্বভাৰতীয় পৰ্যায়ৰ ভক্তি আন্দোলনৰ প্ৰভাৱ। দ্বিতীয় গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ বিষয়টো হ'ল শংকৰদেৱৰ পূৰ্বৰ পৰা চলি অহা অসমত ধৰ্মীয় আৰু সামাজিক প্ৰেক্ষাপট। ইয়াৰ প্ৰথমটো বিষয়ৰ ওপৰত আমি আগৰ এটা অধ্যায়ত কিছু আলোচনা কৰিছোঁ। জাতিভেদ সন্দৰ্ভত শংকৰদেৱৰ মনোভাব নিৰ্মোহভাৱে বিচাৰ কৰিবলৈ হ'লে সেই সময়ৰ সামাজিক পটভূমি আৰু ধৰ্মীয় গতি-প্ৰকৃতি অধ্যয়ন কৰাটো খুবেই প্ৰয়োজনীয়। এটা কথা সত্য যে পোন্ধৰ শতিকাত অসমৰ সমাজত দৃষ্টিগোচৰ হোৱা

বৰ্ণবাদী মানসিকতা আপেক্ষিকভাৱে সৰ্বভাৰতীয় পৰ্যায়তকৈ কিছু কম কঠোৰ আছিল।

তথাপি সেই বৰ্ণবাদৰ বিষবাস্পই অসমৰ ধৰ্মীয় আৰু সামাজিক জীৱনত যথেষ্ট আত্মকালৰ সৃষ্টি কৰিছিল। তথাকথিত হীনকুলীয়া লোকৰ ঐহিক জীৱন হৈ পৰিছিল অত্যন্ত দুখ লখা। ধৰ্মীয় দিশবোৰৰ উপৰি শংকৰদেৱে সূচনা কৰা সংগ্ৰামখন খুব শক্তিশালীভাৱে পৰিব্যাপ্ত হৈছিল অসমৰ সামাজিক আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক পৰিমণ্ডলত। সেই সংগ্ৰামৰ ধ্বনি-প্ৰতিধ্বনিয়ে একবিংশ শতিকাত অসমীয়াকো ধন্য কৰি ৰাখিছে। শংকৰদেৱৰ সৰ্বাত্মক সংগ্ৰামখন আছিল সংকীৰ্ণতা, সাম্প্ৰদায়িকতাৰ বিৰুদ্ধে। যুগৰ সীমাবদ্ধতাই গতিৰোধকৰ সৃষ্টি কৰিলেও তেনে এখন সংগ্ৰামৰ শক্তিশালী প্ৰভাৱ সমাজৰ ওপৰত পৰাতো তেনেই স্বাভাৱিক। সেই প্ৰভাৱে জাতিভেদ প্ৰথাক কিদৰে আৰু কিমান পৰ্যায়লৈকে আঘাত কৰিছিল সেইটো বিচাৰ কৰাই আমাৰ মূল উদ্দেশ্য। জাতিভেদ প্ৰথাৰ কঠোৰতাৰ লগত সমাজৰ উচ্চ শ্ৰেণীকেইটাৰ দম্ভৰ কথাবোৰ জড়িত হৈ আছিল। ব্ৰাহ্মণসকলৰ আত্মাভিমান যিমানে বৃদ্ধি পাইছিল, সমানুপাতিকভাৱে জাতিভেদৰ বজ্জলেপ হাতোৰাই সমাজখনক চেপি ধৰিছিল। তেনে এক পৰিৱেশতে এটা দুৰ্ঘোৰ শক্ত পৰিয়ালত শংকৰদেৱৰ জন্ম। কুলত আছিল তেওঁলোক কায়স্থ আৰু বৃত্তিত আছিল শাসক। গতিকে তেনে এক পৰিৱেশৰ পৰা ওলাই আহি তেওঁ যিদৰে সমাজৰ শোষিত-নিষ্পেষিত জনগণৰ নৈতিক, আধ্যাত্মিক আৰু সামাজিক

উত্তৰণৰ বাবে অহোপুৰুষাৰ্থ কৰিছিল, সেয়া আছিল
প্ৰকৃতাৰ্থত বিস্ময়কৰ। এই কথা সত্য যে এটা শাক্ত
পৰিয়ালত জন্ম হোৱা বাবে তেওঁৰ জীৱনৰ এটা
পৰ্যায়লৈকে ব্ৰাহ্মণ্য ধৰ্মৰ প্ৰভাৱ দেখিবলৈ পোৱা
যায়। কিন্তু আশ্চৰ্যকৰ কথা- সেইজন ব্যক্তিয়ে যুগৰ
দাবীত সমাজৰ সকলো বৰ্ণ আৰু স্তৰৰ সাধাৰণ
মানুহক একেশ্বৰবাদী ভক্তিৰসৰ মাধ্যমেৰে এক উচ্চ
আধ্যাত্মিক দিশলৈ উত্তৰণ ঘটোৱাৰ স্বাৰ্থত সেই
ব্ৰাহ্মণ্য ধৰ্মৰ প্ৰভাৱৰ মাত্ৰাক কঠোৰভাৱে প্ৰশমিত
কৰিবলৈ ওৰোটো জীৱন সংগ্ৰাম কৰি গ'ল।
জাতিভেদৰ হাতোৰা কিছু পৰিমাণে সোলোক-
ঢোলোক কৰি দি তেওঁ অজস্ৰ সাধাৰণ মানুহৰ জীৱন
কৰি তুলিলে মহিমামণ্ডিত। জাতিভেদ প্ৰথা
সম্পূৰ্ণভাৱে ধ্বংস নহ'ল, 'ই সঁচা কথা। কিন্তু
সমন্বয়মুখী আৰু সংস্কাৰমুখী মানসিকতাৰ অংশীদাৰ
কৰি তেওঁ সাধাৰণ মানুহৰ মনত থকা অসাধাৰণ
বৈশিষ্ট্যবোৰক তুলি ধৰিলে। ইয়াৰ ফলশ্ৰুতিত
শংকৰদেৱ ৰূপান্তৰিত হৈ পৰিল সমগ্ৰ অসমীয়া
জাতিৰ পৰিচয় বহনকাৰী এক সত্তালৈ। সকলোৱে
তেওঁক শ্ৰদ্ধা কৰে অসমৰ

সাহিত্য-সংস্কৃতি-সভ্যতাৰ প্ৰাণপুৰুষ হিচাপে। কিন্তু
শংকৰদেৱে মানুহৰ মন- মননত শেলুৱৈৰ দৰে লাগি
থকা বৰ্ণবাদী দৃষ্টিকোণ সম্পূৰ্ণভাৱে নোহোৱা কৰিব
নোৱাৰিলে। সেয়েহে আজিৰ সমাজতো শংকৰদেৱৰ
প্ৰাসংগিকতা যিদৰে দেখিবলৈ পোৱা যায়, একে
সময়তে জাতিভেদৰ দৰে নেতিবাচক ভাবাদৰ্শও
প্ৰাসংগিক হৈ আছে। সেইবাবে জাতিভেদ সন্দৰ্ভত
তেওঁৰ মনোভাব বস্তুনিষ্ঠভাৱে আলোচনা কৰাটো
সময়ৰ দাবী বুলি ক'লেও বোধকৰোঁ অত্যাুক্তি কৰা
নহ'ব। কিন্তু এইটো কথা মনত ৰখা দৰকাৰ যে
শংকৰদেৱৰ প্ৰাসংগিকতা বৰ্তমান সময়ত বৃদ্ধি
পোৱাৰ সময়তে জাতিভেদ প্ৰথাৰ কু-প্ৰভাৱ কিছু
পৰিমাণে হ'লেও হ্ৰাস পাইছে। নানাবোৰ নেতিবাচক

কথাই আৱৰি থকা অসমীয়া সমাজখনৰ বাবে এয়া
নিশ্চয়কৈ এক শুভংকৰ বাৰ্তা। অৱশ্যে সাম্প্ৰতিক
সময়ত জাতিভেদ প্ৰথাৰ কু-প্ৰভাৱ কমি অহাৰ পূৰ্ণ
কৃতিত্ব শংকৰদেৱৰ ওপৰত আৰোপ কৰিলে সত্যৰ
অপলাপ কৰাৰ লেখীয়াহে হ'ব। আধুনিক জীৱনৰ
বিভিন্ন কাৰকৰ সন্মিলিত প্ৰভাৱৰ খুন্দাতহে এই
প্ৰভাৱ কিছু কমিছে। সেইবোৰ কাৰকৰ কথা আমি
বৰ্তমান আলোচনাৰ মাজলৈ আনিব বিচৰা নাই।
তদুপৰি শংকৰদেৱৰ ধৰ্ম প্ৰচাৰক মূল উদ্দেশ্য কৰি
গঠিত কেতবোৰ ধৰ্মীয় সংগঠনৰ প্ৰতিক্ৰিয়াশীল
অত্যাৎসাহেও বৰ্তমান অসমৰ গ্ৰাম্য সমাজত এক
ওভোতা বৰ্ণ বিদ্বেষৰ সৃষ্টি কৰিছে। বিভিন্ন সমস্যাই
জুমুৰি দি ধৰা অসমীয়া সমাজৰ বাবে ই এটা
নিৰুৎসাহজনক বতৰা। ব্ৰাহ্মণ কুলত জন্ম হোৱা
যিকোনো লোককে সন্দেহৰ দৃষ্টিৰে চোৱা এনেবোৰ
সংগঠনে সেয়েহে অসমীয়া হিন্দু সমাজৰ প্ৰতিটো
জাতি-উপজাতিকে নিজৰ আদৰ্শৰ প্ৰতি সমানে
আকৰ্ষিত কৰাত বিফল হৈছে। ব্ৰাহ্মণ্যবাদক প্ৰতিহত
কৰিবলৈ গৈ একধৰণৰ নৱব্ৰাহ্মণ্যবাদে এনেবোৰ
সংগঠনৰ একাংশ নেতাক এনেধৰণে আক্ৰান্ত
কৰিছে যে বহু সময়ত তেওঁলোকে পাহৰি গৈছে
শংকৰদেৱে হ'ল অসমীয়া পৰিশীলিত জীৱনবোধৰো
অন্যতম মহানায়ক। এনে এক প্ৰেক্ষাপটত
জাতিভেদ সন্দৰ্ভত শংকৰদেৱে পোষণ কৰা
মানসিকতা অধ্যয়নৰ বিষয়টো কিছু পৰিমাণে
স্পৰ্শকাতৰ হ'লেও অত্যন্ত গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ বুলি বিবেচনা
কৰিব পাৰি।

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LONG JOURNEY TO THE TRUE INNER SELF - A PERSONAL REFLECTION

By Krishnasarana Bhakat (Edgar Faingor)

I am originally from Moscow, Russia, born in a non-religious family. From my early teenage years, I was interested in spirituality, as I had pressing questions regarding the nature of our being, and the meaning of life. As Russia is historically and predominantly a Christian country, naturally at first, I was exploring Christianity, and joined a course in a Catholic Church. Later on, I felt the need to study other spiritual paths, and therefore engaged in long-term studies of Hinduism and then Buddhism. While still in Moscow, I became interested in the teachings of Gaudiya Vaishnavism and Vedanta and visited the Hare Krishna temple as well as Ramakrishna Mission centre. I was also reading about Buddhism, and even-though the concept of the *anatman* (no-self) was always alien to me, the other aspects of Buddhism were indeed captivating, particularly its emphasis on compassion and equality of all beings.

As I really wanted to see Indian spirituality firsthand, in 2005 I travelled to Nepal. Unfortunately, I faced a somewhat discriminatory treatment in Pashupatinath temple, as I was denied admission to this holy place, due to not being a Hindu. This was a rather unexpected and painful experience to me, as I have always looked for equality and egalitarianism. Unable to recover from this traumatic experience, I switched my attention to Buddhism, which was open and welcoming. I joined some retreats both in Tibetan Buddhist tradition, as well as Southern Buddhism (Vipassana meditation). I also participated in some academic study programs in Kathmandu, where I was involved in teaching English language, and met my would-be wife, a Nepalese. We got married, and our son was born

in 2010. We moved to Thailand, where I joined the International Buddhist College to deepen my knowledge of Buddhism. Though practicing and studying Buddhism with as much dedication as possible, time and again I felt some crucial things missing, particularly the clearly formulated idea of God and also the devotional aspect. Most importantly, the notion of an eternal soul (spirit, *atman*) is absent in Buddhism. But for me this has always been a very significant and focal aspect, which has proven indispensable with time. As I did not want to hop from one religion to another, I was trying to put up with these disagreements, but the internal dissatisfaction was growing more and more within me.

In 2017 my family and I moved to Israel, as it is my second citizenship. I started exploring other spiritual traditions, particularly various Hindu denominations. Those were long years of reading, analyzing, researching and communicating with teachers of a number of schools of Sanatana Dharma. From my very first encounter with Hinduism back in the late 90's, Bhagavad Gita was always the pivotal text, exhorting irresistible attraction on me, and its message deeply resonated with my internal feelings and understanding. Bhagavata Purana has also been truly magnetizing, as the work akin to Bhagavad Gita, with its fascinating spiritual stories of pure devotion and surrender to the Absolute Truth. So naturally I was more interested in the schools of Hinduism which are based on, or guided by these two texts, which of course brought me closer to Vaishnavism. With further research and communication, it became very clear that most of the existing Vaishnava lineages are extremely demanding in terms of

the required level of austerity, or at times very difficult to approach and join. Though having spent many years as a spiritual practitioner and truth seeker, I could never boast of any deep spiritual realization or ascetic prowess – I am a rather simple, common person, with multitude of weaknesses and limitations. So, my search also required that the desired spiritual tradition be fit for such a commoner like me.

Once, while I was rather heavily distressed by the inability to find such a lineage, I was going through a list of Vaishnava traditions in Wikipedia, and suddenly saw something I never knew of before: Ekasarana Nama Dharma, which was listed under "Other traditions". The name immediately drew my attention, as I understood that this was directly pointing to the famous *sloka* in the Bhagavad Gita (18.66), which always struck me as the core summary, the very heart and essence of complete devotion and surrender to the Lord. I vividly recall the excitement with which I was reading through the description of this tradition of Assamese Vaishnavism and nodding my head in complete agreement to the doctrines of Ekasarana Nama Dharma. It was simply amazing and unbelievable: all what I myself held true was there in this formerly unknown spiritual tradition! Starting with the reduction of Vedic ritualism, continuing to its simple and accessible nature, and then the absolute focus and surrender to a single Supreme Reality, whose manifestations are equally true and valuable – all of these were just perfect, and completely balanced. I was truly elated by this at the time of first encounter, just as I am still elated at present! Even such more nuanced elements as the emphasis on the *dasya* mood of devotion and the sole focus on Lord Krishna as the only object of reverence were exactly what I hold proper and realistic for myself. Also, the figure of Srimanta Sankaradeva, who is the founder of Ekasarana Nama Dharma, was appearing as a true saint and brilliant

progenitor of Assamese culture – a grand person of the highest caliber. It was too good to be true, and yet it was indeed true.

What followed was a very pointed investigation into the details of the doctrine of Ekasarana Nama Dharma and searching for the contacts within the tradition. I was very fortunate to find the website www.sankaradeva.com, which brought me in contact with Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti – an acclaimed scholar and author of a great number of books on Ekasarana Nama Dharma – who would very kindly and patiently answer my incessant questions. It took a year and a half of further research, contemplation and internal work for me to finally make sure that this is the path I wish to follow. Dr Borkakoti offered his most precious assistance in organising the Sarana ceremony for me, which took place on April 2, 2024, in Bali Satra, Koliabor. Hiro Prasad Mahanta Prabhu was exceptionally benevolent to me by officiating the Sarana, and also granting me a new Hindu name of Krishnasarana Bhakat. The ceremony itself was an unforgettable event which had – and is still having – the most positive and joyful impact on me on all levels. I am thus forever grateful to Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti, Hiro Prasad Mahanta Prabhu and the wonderful devotees I met at the Sarana ceremony, as well as at Bordowa Than the next day. The kindness and friendliness of these wonderful people is perhaps the best indicator of the spiritual strength of Ekasarana Dharma, which I have never witnessed before in my years of living in Nepal and Thailand. May the light of the great tradition championed by Srimanta Sankaradeva be spread, and may all beings receive its liberating power!

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Q&A

Q: What is NAAM?

A: Naamghar Association of America, Inc. (NAAM) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit spiritual and cultural organization formed to construct and manage a Naamghar for the Assamese diaspora to celebrate and perform the spiritual traditions and philosophical teachings of Srimanta Sankardeva. With strong ties with all the *Satras* of Assam, NAAM seek to provide a forum for learned spiritual leaders and traditional artistes to share their knowledge and talent with the current and future generations of the Assamese diaspora.

Q: What are the immediate goals of NAAM?

A: Some of the immediate goals of NAAM include spreading awareness on NAAM initiatives, build a digital media platform, plan for fund raising, and participate regularly in Naam-proxongo. NAAM seeks volunteers from the large Assamese diaspora across the United States to achieve these goals. Please join us (details at the bottom of this newsletter). In our planning activity, the first

priority is to identify what is needed to establish a temporary *Naamghar*. This will make the *Guru Axon*, consecrated by the Sri Sri Auniati Satra Satradhikar, more easily accessible to the public, while we work on the longer-term project of building a permanent *Naamghar*.

Q: Does NAAM collaborate with other organizations?

A: NAAM is actively seeking to collaborate with all community organizations which are willing to help achieve NAAM's mission. NAAM plans to have meaningful discussion with all organizations in our community; please contact us if you would like to be a part of this conversation (contact details at the bottom).



HOW TO GET INVOLVED WITH NAAM?

JOIN THE NAAM WORKING GROUP (WG): We need your help in achieving the dream of building a Naamghar in North America. Therefore, NAAM is open to everyone who is interested in building the Naamghar.

If you are interested in getting involved actively in NAAM's mission, please join the NAAM by

sending an email to: Naaminfo@Naamghar.org. The WG meets regularly via teleconference/video conference to discuss various issues that are related to NAAM and its mission and goals.



NAAM WORKING GROUP TEAM MEMBERS

Following individuals comprise the current NAAM working group (WG) team. ***We invite all individuals who are sincerely interested in the Mission and Goals of NAAM to join the NAAM team.*** The current WG members are:

- Iswar Agarwalla, NC
- Tutumoni Baishya, Assam
- Niraj Barbara, PA
- Dr. Sanjib Bhuyan, NJ
- Pranab Bora, WI
- Lolit Bora, PA
- Subhasini Bora, NC
- Dr. Babul Borah, OH
- Utpal Borah, VA
- Dilara Boruah, CA
- Dr. Binoy Bordoloi, NJ (*Bor-medhi*)
- Manoranjan Bordoloi, NJ
- Monidipa Bordoloi, CA
- Susanto Bordoloi, CT
- Chirayu Kr. Borooah, CA
- Malabika Brahma, NJ
- Debojit Chowdhury, CA
- Niren Choudhury, NJ
- Dr. Bikul Das, MA
- Namita Das, VA
- Dr. Pradip Das, MO
- Rupam Das, Assam
- Shyam DevChoudhury, PA (Secretary)
- Dr. Saswati Datta, OH
- Hemanga Dutta, NJ
- Panchali Dutta, NJ
- Sawmick Dutta, CA
- Prandeep Gogoi, NJ
- Ajoy Hazarika, NY
- Kamalakshi Hazarika, NJ
- Suranjoy Hazarika, NJ
- Priyadarshini Inman, NC
- Sridevi Jaggannath, NC
- Diganta Kalita, IL
- Dr. Jukti Kalita, NJ
- Lalita Kalita, IL
- Rashmi Kalita, CA
- Sangaurav Kaushik, NC
- Nilanjona Mahanta, CA
- Nabanita Mazumdar, WA
- Chayanika Mohan, NC
- Shakhyar Neog, NJ
- Dr. Yashwant Pathak, FL
- Lelkhika Pathak, Assam
- Anu Perlmutter, VA
- Nilakshi Phukan, NC
- Gayatree Prasad, CA
- Dr. Purandar Sarmah, NJ (Treasurer)
- Vavani Sarmah, CA

Contact Us

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Website: www.naamghar.org

Facebook: Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NaamgharAssociationOfAmerica>

