



# Simply Nitin



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सुदिनं सुदिनं जन्मदिनं तव। भवतु मंगलं जन्मदिनम् ॥  
चिरंजीव कुरु पुण्यवर्धनम् । चिरंजीव कुरु किर्तीवर्धनम् ॥  
विजयी भव सर्वत्र सर्वदा। जगती भवतु तव सुयशोगानम् ॥  
भवतु मंगलं जन्मदिनम् ॥ सुदिनं सुदिनं जन्मदिनं तव।  
जीवेत शरदः शतम्

**आज** नितीनच्या साठीनिमित्ताने त्याच्या आठवणी लिहायच्या म्हटल्यावर, 'अरे आपला मुलगा साठ वर्षांचा झाला पण' हा विचार मनात आला. आईला आपली मुलं कायम लहानच वाटतात नं! आता त्याच्या बालपणापासूनच्या एक-एक आठवणी डोळ्यांसमोर यायला लागल्या. त्याचा जन्म झाला आणि लगेच दादांची बॉर्डरवर बदली झाली. मग आम्ही कधी जळगाव तर कधी बदलीच्या ठिकाणी, असे राहणे सुरु झाले. त्यामुळे नितीनला दोन वेळा मराठी. नंतर इंग्रजी असे मीडियम बदलावे लागले. त्यावेळी जळगावला इंग्लिश मीडियमची शाळा नव्हती. पण त्यामुळे सर्व प्रसंगांना सामोरे जाण्याची सवय लागली. लांबची शाळा असू दे, लांबचे प्रवास वगैरेची सवयच झाली आणि भाषांमध्ये गुजरातला राहिल्याने गुजराती, आसाममध्ये आसामी, बंगाली, बाकी इंग्रजी, हिंदी, मराठी तर नेहमीच्या. अशा भाषा त्याला अवगत झाल्या. कुठल्याही प्रकारचे क्लासेस, ट्यूशनस नसताना त्याला पुणे विभागात दहावीमध्ये इंग्रजी भाषेत प्रथम क्रमांक मिळाला होता. त्यावेळी तर दादा पण जवळ नसायचे. आता वाटते, अरे, आपण काहीच कौतुक करत नव्हतो मुलांचे! अतुल, केदारला पण अभ्यासात त्याचे मार्गदर्शन असायचे. पुण्याच्या वाडियामधून दहावी-बारावी झाल्यावर आम्ही आसामला गुवाहाटीला गेलो. तेथेच त्याचे एअर फोर्समध्ये सिलेक्शन झाले होते. पण काही कारणांनी तिथे जाण्याचा योग आला नाही. तेव्हा जरा तो निराश झाला होता. पण त्याचवेळी 'द सेंटिनल' या इंग्रजी वृत्तपत्रात तो रुजू झाला. वृत्तपत्राचे किंवा माध्यमाचे कोणतेही औपचारिक शिक्षण त्याने घेतलेले नाही, पण तरीही आज पत्रकारितेतला एक अत्यंत विश्वासू चेहरा म्हणून त्याची ओळख बनली आहे.

'द सेंटिनल' मधून त्याचे लेख वगैरे यायला लागले. आमचे ओळखीचे लोक त्याचे कौतुक करत. मुख्य म्हणजे नितीनला खेळ, राजकारण, गाणी, सिनेमा, वाचन अशा अनेक गोष्टींत रस असल्याने त्याला सोपे गेले. तेथे येणाऱ्या प्रसिद्ध लोकांच्या मुलाखती घेणे उदा. किशोर कुमार, आशा पारेख, प्रसिद्ध इंग्रजी लेखक खुशवंत सिंग, माननीय श्री. अटलबिहारी वाजपेयी यांच्या सारख्यांच्या मुलाखती घेण्याचे भाग्य त्याला लाभले. प्रसिद्ध अभिनेत्री नूतन हिच्या निधनानंतर लगेचच त्याने एक सुंदर लेख लिहिला होता. त्यावेळी खरं तर लहानच होता तो.

वडिलांच्या बदल्यांमुळे कॅम्पमध्ये राहताना, नेव्ही, आर्मी, एअर फोर्सच्या कॅम्पमध्ये तो सतत निरीक्षण करून सगळ्या गोष्टी टिपून घेत होता. या सगळ्या गोष्टी त्याच्या आताच्या आयुष्यात खूपच उपयोगी पडल्या. त्याला गुरु पण छान मिळाले. गुवाहाटीत ज्येष्ठ, श्रेष्ठ पत्रकार श्री. एम. व्ही. कामत आले असता त्यांनी गोखले इथे कसा काय? असा प्रश्न केला. तेव्हा जी भेट झाली त्याच भेटीत त्याने कामत यांना गुरुच केले. तसेच आर्मीमधील निवृत्त लेफ्टनंट जनरल श्री. दत्तात्रय शेकटकर हे पण त्याला गुरुस्थानीच आहेत.

१९९९ साली कारगिल युद्ध असो किंवा ओरिसा येथील पूर असो, अशा अनेक कठीण, गंभीर परिस्थितीत त्याने तिथे हजर राहून त्यांचे वार्ताकन केले. नंतर या अनुभवांवर आधारित पुस्तके पण लिहिली. कारगिलनंतर त्याचे दिल्लीत स्थलांतर झाले आणि त्याच्या आयुष्याला पूर्णपणे कलाटणी मिळाली. तिथे त्याचे करिअर खऱ्या अर्थाने बहरले, विकसित झाले. चि. सौ. नेहाने पण त्याला छान साथ दिली. कितीतरी अवघड प्रसंगांमध्ये त्याला खंबीरपणे सावरले. त्याला कार्यव्यस्ततेमुळे घराकडे लक्ष देणे जमत नसे. पण तिने ते सर्व सांभाळले. आता मुले पण हाताशी आली आहेत. लहान असताना आजी, आजोबा, काकांच्या संगतीत राहिल्याने त्यांचे प्रेम पण त्याला मिळाले. त्याने दोन्ही आजोबांवर फार छान लेख लिहिला आहे. त्याची भाषा सोपी आणि ओघवती आहे. सहसा तो कुणाला दुखवत नाही. पण उगाचच कुणाची हांजी-हांजी करणे त्याला जमत नाही. आपण बरे, आपले काम बरे, हे बरोबरच आहे असे त्याला वाटते.

शिक्षणासाठी मुलांना घेऊन राहताना मला त्याचा खूप आधार वाटे. देहू रोड येथे जवळपास दुकाने नव्हती, तेव्हा मला सायकलवर घेऊन जाणे, चिंचवड येथून मुंबई-पुणे वर्दळीच्या हायवेवरून सायकलवर गॅस सिलेंडर एकट्याने आणणे, अशा कितीतरी कठीण गोष्टी त्याने सहजपणे केल्या. मागे वळून बघताना असे वाटते की तो पूर्णपणे तावून-सुलाखून निघाला आणि पुढील आयुष्यात पण त्याच्यासमोर आलेल्या अनेक कठीण प्रसंगांचा त्याने एकट्याने सामना केला. ते आमच्यापर्यंत पोहोचू दिले नाहीत. तर असा आहे आमचा नितीन. त्याचे उर्वरित आयुष्य असेच सुखाचे, आरोग्यपूर्ण जावो, हीच ईश्वराजवळ प्रार्थना!

- स्नेहल अ. गोखले (आई)

**नितीन** आणि माझ्या लग्नाला ३४ वर्ष झाली. या ३४ वर्षांमध्ये नितीन जोडीदार म्हणून कसा आहे, असं अनेकदा अनेकांनी विचारलं. आमचं लग्न झालं त्यावेळी तो पत्रकारितेच्या क्षेत्रात कार्यरत होता. त्यावेळी रात्री-अपरात्री कामावरून त्याचं येणं, एखाद्या बातमीसाठी किंवा असाईनमेंटसाठी काही दिवस बाहेर जाणं, याची मला लग्नाअगोदर नितीनने कल्पना दिली असली तरी प्रत्यक्षात ते स्वीकारणं सुरुवातीला खूपच अवघड होतं. पण एकमेकांना सावरत-सांभाळत आमचा हा प्रवास सुरु झाला.

नितीन पत्रकारितेच्या क्षेत्रात काम करत असल्याने घराची आणि मुलांची पूर्ण जबाबदारी माझ्यावर होती. तो घरी असला की घरातल्या अनेक कामांना हातभार लागायचा. पण असे प्रसंग खूप कमी वेळा यायचे. त्यातच त्याने गुवाहाटी सोडून दिल्लीला जाण्याचा निर्णय घेतला. सुरुवातीला तो एकटाच तिथे होता. दिल्लीतल्या वातावरणात आपण कितपत अॅडजेस्ट होऊ शकतो याचा अंदाज आल्यानंतर मी आणि मुलं दिल्लीत आलो. मात्र मधले काही महिने तो दिल्लीत आणि आम्ही गुवाहाटीला, हे खूप आव्हानात्मक होतं.

नितीन ज्या क्षेत्रातला तज्ज्ञ मानला जातो त्या संरक्षणविषयक क्षेत्रात अनेक आव्हानांचा त्याला सामना करावा लागला आहे. मिळणाऱ्या प्रत्यक्ष-अप्रत्यक्ष धमक्या, जीवाला असणारा धोका यामुळे जोडीदार म्हणून मला नेहमीच टेन्शन असतं. एखाद्या कामानिमित्त तो काही दिवसांसाठी बाहेर असेल तर तो परत येईपर्यंत माझा जीव थाऱ्यावर नसतो. त्याला प्रत्यक्ष समोर बघितलं की बरं वाटतं. नवरा म्हणून तो खूप सर्पोटिव्ह आहे. घरात बसून राहू नकोस, तुला ज्यात आनंद वाटेल ते करत जा, असं तो नेहमीच सांगतो. माझ्या बागकामाची आवड असो किंवा मुलांना शिकवण्याची धडपड असो, त्याला नेहमीच त्याचं कौतुक वाटतं. त्याच्या बिझी शेड्यूलमधून घरासाठी आणि आमच्यासाठी वेळ राखून ठेवणं ही कसरत तो कशी काय मॅनेज करतो, याचं मला आश्चर्य वाटतं.

वडील म्हणूनही त्याने आपल्या मुलांवर कधीही कोणतंही दडपण आणलेलं नाही. मार्गदर्शक म्हणून तो नेहमीच त्यांच्यासाठी उभा असतो. पण आपलीच मतं, विचार त्यांनी स्वीकारावीत, यासाठी तो कधीच आग्रही नसतो. उलट त्यांनी चांगलं काय, वाईट काय याचा विचार करावा, असाच त्याचा आग्रह असतो. मुलंही त्यामुळे उत्तम घडली आहेत. बाबांच्या मोठेपणाचं दडपण किंवा त्याचा गैरवापर न करता आज त्यांनी आपलं करिअर निवडलं आहे. आम्हालाही म्हणूनच मुलांचा अभिमान आहे.

त्याच्या या व्यवसायामुळे अनेकदा मोठ्या लोकांच्या वर्तुळात, पाठ्यांना आम्हाला उपस्थित राहावं लागतं. पण तो त्या वर्तुळातून बाहेर आला की एक सामान्य, मध्यमवर्गीय माणूसच असतो. आपला मोठेपणा मिरवणं त्याला अजिबात आवडत नाही. बाहेरच्या जेवणापेक्षा घरचं जेवण त्याला अधिक प्रिय आहे. गोड आणि त्यातही बेसनाचे लाडू हा त्याचा विक पॉइंट आहे.

आज इतक्या वर्षांनी मागे वळून बघितलं की वाटतं आयुष्यात अनेक चढउतार आले, अनेक आव्हानांचा सामना करावा लागला. पण एकमेकांची खंबीर साथ असल्यामुळेच त्यातून आम्ही बाहेर पडलो. जीवनसाथी म्हणून एकमेकांच्या संगतीने इतका प्रवास केला आहे. यानंतरही तो असाच चालू राहू दे. नितीनच्या साठीनिमित्ताने त्याला खूप खूप शुभेच्छा!

- सौ.नेहा नितीन गोखले (पत्नी)



## मागोवा

## जीवनसाथ

**Where** do I begin, it all is in the mind but when you have to write about your elder brother you get mind tied like tongue tied

My earliest memories with Nitindada have been from Lonavla, when I was probably studying in second or third class and he was already in seventh or eighth standard... and as they say the loveliest memories are when you're enjoying, playing and doing masti... I recall the days when we would go around in the forests specially during summer breaks collecting the Jamuns and Shehtut and karvanda (Bengal currant) in INS Shivaji Lonavla, where we were staying. Or play in the backyard of our house...just go fast on the slope on the three wheel scooter with him driving and we sitting on that small deck, taking turns between me and Kedar.... I still remember it was a red coloured scooter!

He was the one who instilled the feeling of being fearless and he would lead us.... and probably this is the time when we started looking up to him... at least me

When we were staying in separated family quarters in Dehu Road near Pune, he was the "man of the house" in absence of Dada, my father, who was posted at the Indian border front... It was also the time when Nitindada shouldered maximum responsibilities along with Aai and we never felt that we were living alone.

Thereafter, I remember, we moving to Narangi in Gauhati in the 1980s but he was not there.... as he stayed back for 11th and 12th studies in Wadia College, Pune. After his studies, he joined us in summer of '82 or 83 and that's where... he started his first job.... into the journalism profession.... And see ... he has stayed with this profession and flourished since then.... Forty long years .... I for one probably learnt the quality of being tenacious from him... He has mentioned this umpteen times in his memoir and blogs and write-ups et cetera that how his journey as a journalist began with Sentinel, the young new newspaper in the middle of the Assam unrest.... Rest as they is history...

I vividly remember one thing....how he would get up around 11- 11.30 in the morning, because previous night he would have come late around 1.30 or 2 am or even beyond that on his Yamaha RX100 travelling from Newspaper office to home....all of 20 years young...

I vividly remember the day when he took us (Kedar and me) for an overnight stay and observation of how the news paper work.... The newsroom and typesetting and newspaper printing areas...We were so thrilled to see the entire process of Newspaper getting print-



## तुम ही हो बंधू, सखा तुम्ही हो



ed with all the latest news... they would wait for the late last news to arrive around midnight on the tele printer... which would continuously be ticking in one corner of the editorial office...

From that time till about 4-5 years ago... the intervening period was when he was busy in his professional life and making a niche in his chosen field with many downs early in life to the ups that he has reached now, we met not so often though...

Without being the "big brother", he is always there... At the back of your mind you know that there is somebody whom you could bank on... whom you could speak... even just for a minute or so...but you would get solace or advice or solution to your problem

When I joined Symbiosis in 2016, people already knew Nitindada and I was then known as younger brother of Nitin Gokhale.... how proud I was when people would say "oh you are NITIN's brother" and probably as they say these things worked in my favour... it increased my credibility so much among the people at Symbiosis...

What else would you want from elder brother who without being flashy without being called as "Tu Janta Hai Mere Bhai Kaun Hai" but he's there all the time.... happy to be a younger one for him....God bless him with great health, more contentment and happiness

**Atul A. Gokhale (Brother)**

**Always** someone to look up to, everything that Nitindada said was the last word during my growing up years. My earliest memories of Nitindada are from Lonavla where we used to play cricket in the enclosed veranda during monsoons. While we spent relatively few years living together, he was the one whom I used to turn to in times of crises during hostel days - career advice and shortage of funds being the key ones.His foray into journalism was sheer coincidence. He quickly learnt the ropes and never looked back. Being well read, he was able to cover politics, sports and entertainment with equal ease during his early years in Guwahati. And it was such a joy to listen to the tidbits around each story from him - whether it was interviewing Atalji or Asha Parekh, or how he spontaneously wrote an obit to Nutan or covering the 1987 World Cup in India. Crowning glory of his initial days, at least for me, will always be the 1985 Assam Accord broadsheet that was brought out singlehandedly by him. Completely exhausted having worked for close to 20 hours, the greatest satisfaction for him was to have provided the news of this historic moment to the readers when the whole state was observing a 'bandh'.His growth as a journalist was gradual and he created a niche for himself as an expert of the northeast. Having frequently interacted with armed forces personnel due to the security situation there and inherent liking of the defence services, he was assigned to cover the Kargil war because of which he eventu-



ally landed in Delhi. He has now established himself as one of the most sought after security and strategic affairs expert. I have never seen him boast about or take advantage of his acquaintance, friendship or closeness to several decision makers across the defence and security establishments ... perhaps the reason he is trusted so much for his unbiased views on strategic matters of the nation.I think Nitindada misses the old days of print journalism but has still been successful in today's world of YouTube channels and news websites, having adapted himself so gracefully to both. And there have been no compromises with the basics of journalism - to be to the point, convey in a way understood by the common man and yet leave the most important thing unsaid! His simple and flowing language has endeared him to so many readers. It is always a joy and pleasure to read his articles and books - well researched, informative and authentic. One can actually picturize what he has written and that is most satisfying for any reader.While his exploits and successes as a journalist are well documented, there are several challenging events, few of them life threatening, that he rarely mentions and are not known to many. And therein lies his unassuming nature. And so is he when he is around the family too. Never to impose his decisions even though he is the eldest, he encourages everyone to seek their own path but is always available with his views when needed.On his 40 years in journalism and his 60th birthday, here is wishing Nitinda a very healthy life and prosperous and fulfilling career.

**Kedar A. Gokhale (Brother)**



## Simplicity is the keynote!

**It's** been close to 30 years of knowing Nitin dada, though frankly I do not remember when exactly we met for the first time. I think he was the first journalist I knew, and I was fascinated with the work he did. Till the time he was in Guwahati writing for local newspapers, I really did not get a chance to read his articles. That opportunity came when he started working with Outlook. I found his language simple and easy to understand, and his analysis insightful. I remember he had come to Pune for Tanvi's 'barsa' just after covering Kargil war, and that was the time when I really understood the dangers of the pro-

fession. His career took a completely different trajectory after that. I continue to be amazed by the wide spectrum of people he comes in contact with - people about whom we would only read newspaper articles are his dinner guests!! In spite of all this, he remains down to earth, and still enjoys his cup of milk with Bournvita (no cream!) and simple home-cooked food, specially if it is prepared by Neha! Here's wishing Nitin dada an even more fulfilling professional journey, and a long , healthy and happy life!

**Vaishali K. Gokhale**  
(Sister - in - law)

# My definition of rest is when I am totally committed to my work

That is the perfect definition I could come up with. A man who would not rest till he achieves what he had originally planned, it's a tough act to follow when I personally know this generation would hesitate to work for an extra hour. Having spent 12 years of my life in Guwahati, there was not much I could comprehend. We had a study room where there was a computer and a dial-up internet connection (one which had to be connected to a modem), we would see him working on it and typing with such speed and finesse, I thought he must have had some superpower (also the style of typing is similar, so now I know where I get it from)

Watching him write articles with in-depth analysis and I am not talking about 1000 words, this is 3000-4000. This comes from practice and commitment to the cause, no matter what the circumstance. Of course if you ask him what he went through in Kargil, Sri Lanka (Eelam War) and the insurgency in the NE, he wouldn't want to talk about it because that was his job. Surprising that being in the same house, I don't know the full story. But that's for him to discuss or share. One person who has been a pillar of strength has been my mother and his better half and I am sure he wouldn't have achieved what he has without her guidance and moral support. He often credits her for keeping him grounded, taking decisions together and being there for him through thick and thin. The only person in the family who loves to click photos and is a selfie expert. To do what he does, not sure anyone can match his level and commitment with the intention of seeing it through to the end. People seldom ask me about why I didn't want to take over from him, the answer is always the same from my side- I can't do what he does! I won't be able to achieve what he has even if I hire 10 people, and that is the truth. I can only learn from him, innovate and carve my own



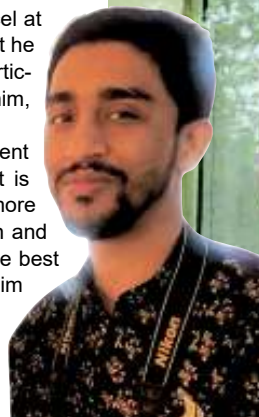
path. 60 years is a milestone and having seen him work tirelessly throughout and still continuing, I am sure he wouldn't like to rest anytime soon. Lot of things to learn from him but the one thing that I will definitely take with me is the tenacity to achieve and conquer heights, no matter the adversity.

He has been an inspiration to me and even though I don't show it, I respect him for what he has achieved and what he has encouraged us to do while juggling professional responsibilities. A man who gave us freedom to excel at whatever we chose, I can clearly say that he has had an influence in our lives and particularly mine (people say I am a lot like him, although I would disagree)

In-depth knowledge and commitment to work has been his strength and that is something which can't be taught. To more years of seeing Nitin Gokhale on screen and off it (at home, IYKWIM), wishing him the best of luck and unconditional support to my and my mother for the rest of our lives.

Baba, as I call him- You are the best at what you do and what you have continued doing.

**Utkarsh N. Gokhale (Son)**



## Those were the days

An accord was signed between Rajeev Gandhi Govt. and All Assam Students Union in 1985. There was big euphoria all around in Assam. Amidst this situation landed yours truly in Guwahati all the way from Pune, alone with no acquaintance in Guwahati, especially Maharashtrian. I distinctly recollect that the first Maharashtrian family I came across was Gokhale in Chini Kutti area. In the very first meeting the whole family made me so comfortable to feel like one of their family member. One of the major reason was their eldest son Nitin. Those were the days when telegram used to take 5-6 days to reach Guwahati from Pune and getting Trunk call matured in 3-4 days, having family like Gokhale's was a big support for youngster like me. That's how my friendship began with Nitin and flourished as we were of same age and kind of rebellious in nature (Nitin ignoring parents wish to join army and carving out carrier in journalism and I left the comfort of family and city like Pune and opting for Guwahati posting) bonding was natural. As I remember him, he was very dedicated and passionate about his work and though crease lines were permanently formed on his forehead, he really used to enjoy his

work. Looking back I feel privileged to be a part of his journey during those formative years and share his progress on professional as well as personal life. Since I left Guwahati in 1989 we were always far away from each other and fully engrossed in our journeys and met only on few occasions, the friendship remained always in our heart that the connection was never broken. Today he has completed 40 years in journalism and so well known for his expertise on defence that he attracted threats from an embassy of major power and recently the hackers is the testimony. However I still remember the Nitin furiously typing an article/story on his red coloured portable typewriter for "The Sentinel". Although we are celebrating his success of last 40 years, we should not forget the major contributor to that success, his better half Neha, who stood rock solid behind him rather with him through thick and thin during this journey. Long live my friend, with huge wealth of experience in your domain, we would like to see many more contributions in the years to come. Be blessed and be healthy to pursue your passion.

**Chandrashekhar Kanade (Friend)**

### Best Wishes



Thank you for the invitation Neha. Will surely attend. Not believe that Nitin has reached that pinnacle so fast. Amazing journey with loads of hard work and congratulations to you too. I'm positive you have been the pillar of strength and all the sacrifices. Lots of best wishes to both of you!

**- Neela Gokhale**  
(Supreme Court lawyer)

### Best Wishes



Thank You for your kind invitation. I wish I could there personally. But due age and health I am not in position to travel at this point of time. Please convey our heartiest Congratulations and best wishes to Nitin whose career and achievements I had the opportunity to witness right from when he started his career as journalist in Assam and today he is a national figure and top defence analyst. I am really proud of him.

**L. R. Sailor (Friend)**

