

TEENS and TWENTIES

A diamond never grows old
— Author

Alexander Pushkin is one of the most creative of all Russian literary luminaries, and modern Russian literature, without reproach, indeed starts with him. Pushkin's unique style of expression and use of language, glorified in its simplicity and depth, acted as a precursor — no premonition the establishment of a distinct identity in Russian literature, especially in poetry — for later day exponents in Leo Tolstoy, Maxim Gorky, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Nikolai Gogol, Ivan Turgenev, et al. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to portray a calibre in the stature of Pushkin within such short space and time. Nevertheless, the author would like to take the privilege of paying his personal dues to this phenomenal talent of creative literature.

Pushkin is the beginning of all beginnings
— Maxim Gorky

Alexander Pushkin was born in Moscow on 6 June (Old Style), 1799 of an old aristocratic Russian family. In those "days of old, and the days of gold", it was a tradition amongst families of the established Russian society to employ foreign tutors, especially French tutors, for the education of their children. Thus, Alexander, and his brother and sister, learned to talk and read in French. The French literature had a further influence on the little Pushkin as he had free access to his father's fabulous library which was studied with an excellent French collection. Besides, Pushkin's father was a lover of the arts for which reason little Pushkin had the privilege of meeting the intellectual elite of the day. All these were to imprint a profound image in the mind of Pushkin. However, the "Russian" spirit that immortalized Pushkin came neither from his father's library, nor the foreign tutors, but from two women — Pushkin's grandmother, and his nurse Rodionovna.

With Arina Rodionovna, Pushkin's old nurse, Pushkin spent hour after hour in his childhood listening to Russian folk and fairy tales. Pushkin's grandmother's estate, near Moscow, was another place where the "Russian" spirit formed its impression in the mind of the little Pushkin. During the summers, it was here that Pushkin spent a lot of time talking with the peasantry and having the chance of gaining first hand experience on the life of "toiling" people.

When speaking of Pushkin, the word "magic" seems more apt than skill
— Alexander Tvardovsky

"A genius has to be born; one cannot become a genius". Barring very few exceptions, the morning usually shows the day. At the age of twelve, in 1811, Pushkin was sent to the

From Russia with Love: ALEXANDER PUSHKIN

by Asrarul Islam Chowdhury

Imperial Lyceum at Tsarskoye Selo (which was later renamed Pushkin), an aristocratic boarding school for boys, opened that year under the patronage of Emperor Alexander I. During his days at the Lyceum, Pushkin developed his prodigious in poetry. He was very happy at the Lyceum and the memories of his school days there remained sacred to him throughout his life.

style of Aristotle and Voltaire, it nevertheless had an old Russian setting and was eloquent in its expression of Russian folklore. The poem was a turning point in the history of Russian poetry. It broke away from the two dominant trends in poetry in the then Russia, classicism and sentimentalism. With "Russian and Lyudmila" Russian poetry found a distinct new cult. The poem

During his association with the Green Lamp, an underground branch of a society called the Union of Welfare, Pushkin wrote some political verses, of which, in particular, "Ode to Liberty" arose the anger of Alexander I. Pushkin's poetry, romantic and rebellious as they always were, made him a messiah to those who took part in the The Decembrist Uprising of 1825. This unsuccessful uprising found its precursor in the Napoleonic invasion of 1812 which arose a sense of individualism throughout Europe against all autocratic and reactionary regimes. The Emperor, suspecting Pushkin's involvement in the uprising, ordered Pushkin to permanently settle on his estate Mikhailovskoe in the province of Fakov in 1824.

Pushkin's days of exile was actually a blessing in disguise for Russian poetry. The exile



Russian Genius - Alexander Pushkin

Courtesy: Britannica

Indeed, some of his best known poems are inspired by it.

Pushkin's first publication was his verse epistle "To My Friend, The Poet" in 1814. The old Russian romantic poets were the main influences in his initial years of writing. It was in 1820, at the tender age of 21, that Pushkin cemented the belief among the Russian literary circles that a new star had risen over the horizon, a star by the name of Alexander Pushkin, through his "Ruslan and Lyudmila" which was actually written during his days at the Lyceum. Although it was a romantic poem, written in the

dictated so much acclaim that Zhukovsky, a mentor of Pushkin, presented Pushkin's portrait to the victorious pupil from the defeated master.

Pushkin is one of those creative geniuses, who, while working for present, are preparing for the future
— Vissarion Belinsky

A prodigy, especially one in literature, who gives birth to a new trend, is usually ahead of his time-zone and is seldom understood or appreciated by the people of his own time.

Pushkin, Alexander Sergeyevich
Born: 1799 Died: 1837
Russian author, best known works include verse-novel 'Eugene Onegin' (1831), tragedy 'Boris Godunov' (1831), poetry 'Byronic' lyrics, narrative poem 'The Bronze Horseman' (1833). Also wrote short stories cycle, 'Tale of Belkin' (1830). He had a great influence on subsequent Russian literature.

left him alone and it was during this time that Pushkin came under the "spell" of the two English poets, Byron and Shakespeare, an influence which was later to be blended by the "magic" of Pushkin's mind and the indigenous style of Russian literature, culture and history. "The Prisoner of the Caucasus", "The Gypsies", "The Fountain of Bahchisarai", "The Bridgegroom" and numerous other poems were written during the exile years. But above all — for which reason Russian literature should see the exile years of Pushkin as a blessing, not a curse — it was during this time that Pushkin started work on his central masterpiece "Eugene Onegin". Eugene Onegin, in the words of another Russian realist maestro, Maxim Gorky, is woven by the threads of typical Russian social relationships, exotically at the heart of the Russian way of life.

(Pushkin) is what a Russian might perhaps be after two hundred years of development
— Nikolai Gogol

After The Decembrist Uprising of 1825, the new emperor, Nicholas I, aware of

Pushkin's immense popularity, allowed Pushkin to return back to Moscow in 1826. Pushkin answered the emperor in the affirmative that he would have taken part in the uprising had he the opportunity to do so. The emperor, bewildered at Pushkin's honesty, granted him a full pardon, but put him under strict censorship and was constantly kept under observation by secret police. Nevertheless, 1829-36 is a period which marks the full flow of the genius of Pushkin, or more broadly speaking Russian literature. Tales of the Late IP Belkin (1830); Mozart and Salieri (1831); The Queen of Spades (1834); The Captain's Daughter (1836); etc. were produced during this period. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, another Russian literary virtuoso, was extremely influenced by The Queen of Spades.

Pushkin married Natalya Nikolayevna Goncharova in 1831 and settled in St Petersburg where he took the grand task of writing a history of Peter The Great. Although Pushkin did not enjoy the court atmosphere, he forced himself to get accustomed to it for the sake of his wife, whom he madly loved, although she did not have the intellectual capability of appreciating her husband's genius. The glamour of court life attracted her more than Pushkin's "magic". Meanwhile, life was becoming

intolerable for Pushkin, and a vile campaign of slander was being fought against him by a group who did not like Pushkin's popularity, and proud and independent spirit. In those days, a man was considered a coward if he refused to fight a duel if challenged to do so. Finally, on 8 February 1837, Pushkin was challenged to a duel to defend the honour of his bride. Pushkin was defeated and wounded. Two days later, on 10 February, Russia fell short by only one soul, however, that soul being one of its most creative ones ever.

May God grant that another will love you like I did!
— Alexander Pushkin

The single most distinct feature of Pushkin was his vast knowledge of global literature, especially French and English. Pushkin was well ahead of his time. Love, freedom of man, and freedom of the mind were the essential ingredients of his inner philosophy which, undisputedly, have made him universal and kept him young. Pushkin, the poet, will never grow old to those who have already met him on this vast ocean of time, and also to those who are yet to do so...

Sounds of the Earth to the Little Green Men

by Rumana Tasmin Khan



Schmecker Left corner. Some parts of it fell on Jupiter

JUST before man's landing on the moon celebrated its ten years, in the year 1977 two space-crafts were launched — destined for the stars. They were named Voyager 1 and 2. Each of them carried a disc containing information about ourselves, mostly recorded sounds. The life form that will encounter one of these spacecrafts first will be greeted by sixty human languages recorded in the discs. They shall also listen to music from our different cultures to comprehend our differences. At the same time they shall understand our united effort to present them with the "Sounds of Earth", representing us, our civilization. However abstract the sounds may appear to the aliens, we shall be known to exist at a corner of the Milky Way.

Ever since we started exploring other heavenly bodies of the solar system, the thought of discovering life forms "here and there" passed our minds. But unfortunately none of the other members of the solar family were capable of supporting life forms similar to us. With the rumours of some unexplainable incidents like viewing flying saucers and other coming by of shaggy, ape-like extra-terrestrial creatures, people were "lured" to conduct researches on alien life existence. Not only were novels written and movies made portraying the lives and societies of aliens, but the first pulsar signals (discovered in 1967, from the Crab Nebula) were thought to be signals sent from some intelligent "Little Green Men". But this far none of such fantasies have been proved to be true. Only recently, when more and more stars are being discovered with planetary systems and water bearing planets are being detected, the existence of life elsewhere is be-

ing taken seriously. It takes more than an energy source and presence of water to generate life in a planet. The planet must have an abundance of elements that are essential for life. For this reason life on Earth is carbon based, carbon being the fourth most occurring element in Earth's crust. The way existence of silicon and ammonia based life in planets were shown in Gene Roddenberry's "Star Trek" or the popular series "The X-files" may not be a fiction at all. But, supposing life on earth to be ideal, the chance of those "exotic" life forms being true is yet minute.

Some of the planets discovered, beyond our solar system, had high temperature and pressure. It is impossible to have life similar to our flourishing under those circumstances. However, life forms equipped with special mechanism like the vasodilation and vasoconstriction of our capillaries may rule those planets. Besides all these conditions for life to originate, there is one about a planet's encounter with supernova, collapsing red giants and radiation sources.

In infinite space with billions of stars and planets there is a good chance that other lives exist, struggling in the midst of all these conditions. But many more reasons stand between us and the others from reaching each other. Only if the intelligence of those lives is equal to or advanced than us, can we expect to establish communication with them.

In the past radio astronomy was widely used for attempts to establish communications with other worlds. But then came launching of space probes. Now scientists are switching on to telescopes outside the earth and sophisticated software to monitor them all from home. But if the

earth is too far away from the other planets there may be an energy barrier in between to obstruct our radio signals. On the other hand, our message may take too much time to reach the planet, and by then they all may be gone.

In 1980 Dr. Carl Sagan in his book COSMOS, discussed on the "percentage of the lifetime of a planet marked by a technical civilization". This concept introduced us to the topic widely talked about years of evolution and scientific development to come to the stage of calling ourselves part of a technical civilization. Yet, we are more busy fighting within ourselves than devouring ourselves to understand the language the universe speaks in. If we are to destroy ourselves only after a few decades of usage of radio astronomy, the life expectancy of civilizations such as ours will become very low. So we shall probably not have any "standard" life form to communicate with.

Right now we humans are engaged in a struggle, trying to prevent self destruction. While some of us enhance our few decades old technology to reach out to the stars, the rest are left to fight against hunger, poverty and self extinction. If we fail to solve the problems within our countries, how can we unite to explore our farthest horizons? None of us would like to believe in a future where beings from another world will land on a dead earth to learn of our prospering civilization ending up in self-extinction. Instead we dream of one where we ourselves shall greet unearthly beings in our mother languages. Overcoming all such limitations is our final frontier. We must survive to prove the existence of the "Sounds of Earth" to the "Little Green Men".

Kids having Fun in Dhaka

by Sarah Cullom

one who will entertain you in exchange for a couple of dollars. There are huge movie theatres, shopping malls, department stores, video game arcades, coffee shops and dance clubs. When I came here as a foreigner, I wondered what the young people who have energy to burn, money to

spend and transportation to get anywhere do for fun. Being of a western mind, I asked myself how they entertain themselves in a poor Muslim country where they do not have access to the luxuries of the industrialised world.

These were burning questions for me, so I decided to

with the movies than my friends in America are because the movies come out on video here as soon as they come out in theatres there.

However, life is not always so exciting, my friend, Sharaan, age 22, pointed out. "Remember," she said, "we wanted to go out, but we couldn't think of anywhere to go. We found ourselves driving about for no rhyme or reason. Yes, I did remember that time, but I realised I was lucky to at least have a car to cruise the city when I spoke with one of my cousins, Lubna age 16; she is not yet old enough to go out alone with her friends.

Even so she does not seem bothered by her limitations. She excitedly told me, "My cousins, we're all really close; we get excited when there's a wedding. It is our chance to dress up and be glamorous. We put on our best jewellery; we put flowers in our hair; we put makeup on, lipstick, eyeliner.

It's great. Then we go and eat and talk and look at people." However, not all my cousins think Dhaka is such a great place. Another one of them, Farah age 18, said, "I was so bored I had to get a part time job at a local NGO I wouldn't go crazy."

On Friday afternoons the favourite thing to do, for older and younger kids alike, is to go on a picnic. They pack some beef curry and salad or just some sandwiches and chips. They drive out to a park or to someone's farm outside Dhaka and play games, hike around, take pictures or just lie on some blankets and listen to music, but no matter what, kids of all ages have fun with their family and friends.

Kids here live very different lives than kids in the west. Here the family setting is most appropriate for young teens; most of their activity involves other family members. For the kids who are in their twenties, they are given more freedom to socialise outside the home, but even they choose to stick with close friends and enjoy food and gossip within familiar homes. From what I have seen, Bangladeshis are lucky in that they have warm friendships and a good sense of humour — something no dollar can buy you.

interview my Bangladeshi friends and family to find out some answers. The first thing I asked was: what do people do on Thursday night? My friend, Aisha age 21, told me, "Usually a group of us go to dinner somewhere, and we take turns treating. This way no one goes broke and we get to try every restaurant in the city." She continued saying, "We don't always go to the expensive ones; sometimes we go to cheap places, but no matter what something funny always ends up happening. Either some guy serenades us or the waiter keeps messing up or something."

Another popular pastime here is renting movies. On any night of the week, you may find my friends watching a video. You would be surprised, here they are more up-to-date



Little Red Heart

Kazi K Arifat

I hope you appreciate this gift of love
This little red heart
Warm and living
It's not much really
I know that
But it's bigger than the oceans
Even though it's smaller than the sky
And it took my life away
To give you this moment of joy
But the smile which it caused
Gave me my life back
So if you appreciate
My little red heart
I'll really appreciate
Your appreciation.

Strange Similarities between Man and Comet

IN 1986, information derived from the space craft Mally enabled scientists to conclude that a comet consists of approximately 11 per cent of carbon. However, due to the pressure on earth, this figure translates to only 0.1 per cent.

It is generally overlooked that the elements contained within a comet and the elements present in the human body shows astonishing similarities. And moreover, the similarity is not merely confined to the types of elements present, but also the quantity in which they exist.

After careful observation of "Mally's comet," scientists Armond Desime of the Toledo University supplied the following information concerning a comparative study of the amounts of elements present within a human body and a comet demonstrating remarkable similarities:

This conclusive data readily points out the similarities be-

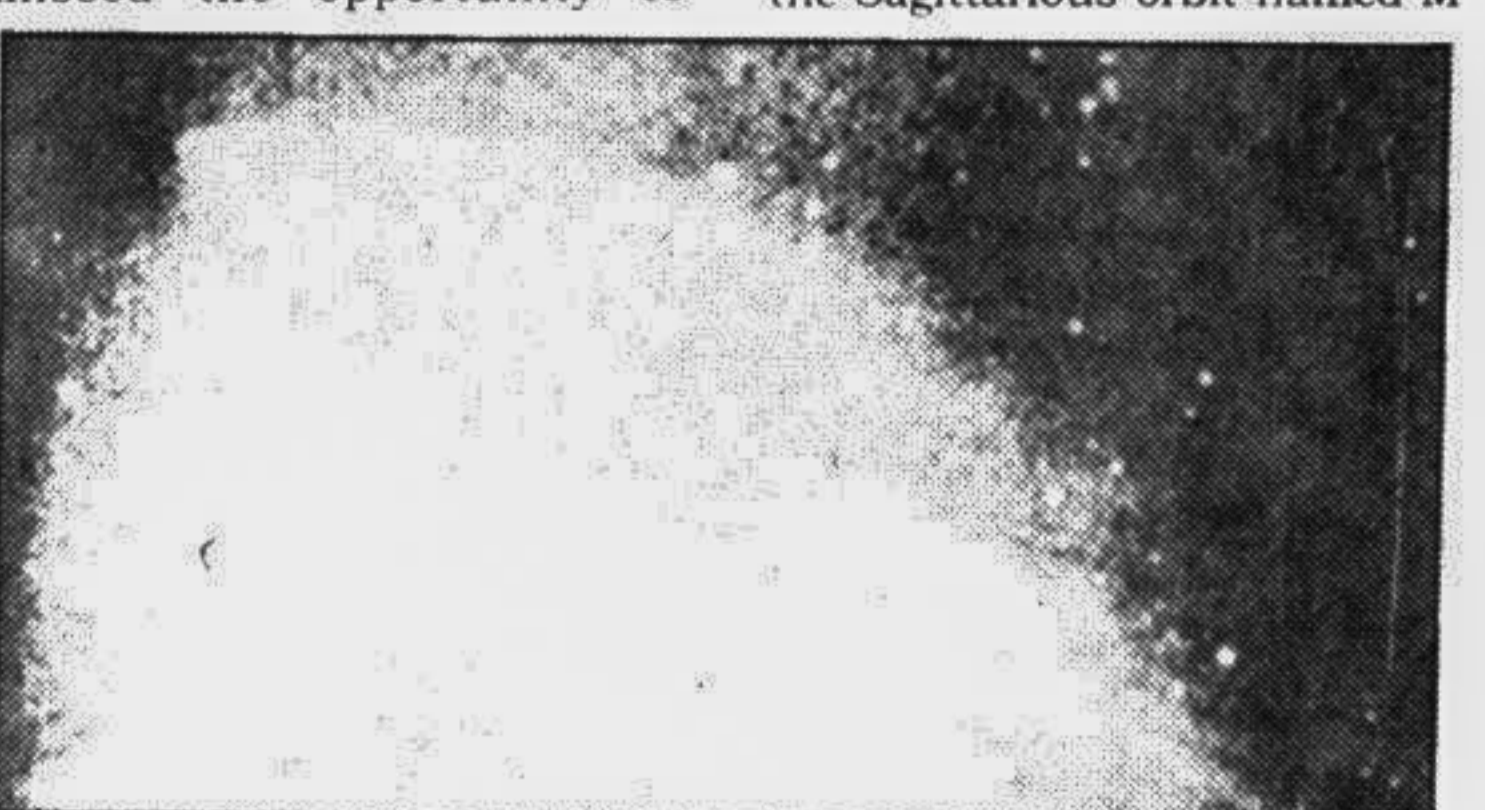
tween a man and a comet of all things, and in turn gives us insight on yet another bizarre scientific phenomenon.

"A new comet can be seen in the

beginning of next year". The appearance of another comet in 1999 should come as good news to those who missed the opportunity to

catch a glimpse of the comet Hiakutake. The new comet, Mell Bopp should be visible to the naked eyes throughout the latter part of March and till the end of April.

Last year, on the night of July 23rd, two well known American astrologers noticed an oval shaped constellation in the Sagittarius orbit named M



Comet looks alive and vibrant when it comes close to the sun

UNPACKED

only the entrance open. The top and the bottom of the crate too had been firmly nailed in.

The sack was adjusted within the crate. The carpenter now got into action. He brought the plank which would close the exit route. He placed it against the crate, adjusted it so that it tagged in with the rest of the planks. Then began the hammering. The nails were driven in with deft blows. Soon, the operation was over.

Then began the wait. Houdini waited till the sound of hammering ceased. He knew, for certain, that the people were now waiting to see his daring act.

He freed himself from the bonds set by the sack. He took some rest, after crossing the first barrier.

Now he knew, with the right amount of pressure, he could make the last plank, which had been nailed in, according to his instructions, to turn neatly along one of the rims of the crate. It would require very little effort.

The taste of impending triumph tickled him. There was no point in making the escape look quite so simple. So, in the style of a great artist, he made false knocks, let out cries of disgust, made them sound genuine, knocked at the sides of the crate with his knuckles. Finally, after fooling around, for quite some time, Houdini decided to break out. He pressed the plank, with a right amount of pressure. The plank

70. One of the astrologers was Allen Mell, who observed the comet from Mexico through a 16 inch telescope.

The other astrologer by the name of Tomas Beland studied its activities with a 17.5 inch telescope from Arizona. The fact, or rather the coincidence that both astrologers saw the comet on the M 70 constellations from two distinct locations simultaneously led to it being named after its discoverers. Hence the name Mell Bopp. The International Astronomical Union has referred to it as C/1995.

However, this comet is unlike most of its predecessors. For example, after months of careful observation, astrologers have learnt that while the breadth of a comet is usually 16 km, the Mell Bopp has a breadth of 36 km.

Mell Bopp is supposed to occupy the nearest position to the sun on the 2nd of April, 1997. The comet should be clearly visible on the north western sky in late March, and it should remain that way till the 14th of April. But the specific details are difficult to state since the course of a comet is always changing, and is therefore difficult to predict.

by - Paula Aziz
Source - Anandamela

whisked open. The wedge was big enough for Houdini to come out.

Hutton could not believe himself. His lower lip drooped, as he watched, with sheer surprise, Houdini coming out of the crate which Hutton had believed was unbreakable. With it came the realisation that he had lost the hundred pounds he had hoped to claim from Houdini.

Where had he gone wrong? Hutton did not know till he ran into Houdini in 1926, when the artist performed for the last time. Houdini volunteered to share the secret with Hutton, bared the duplicity which had helped him come out of the crate. Hutton bore the revelation with a grunt. And Houdini told him there was strategic planning in every one of the escapes he performed, that magic and he were poles apart. The truth was thus unpacked.

The End
Courtesy - World Famous Escapades