

## Seva: a dialogue with heritage material

Daljit Ami's new documentary film 'Seva' intends to open a dialogue with cultural heritage from different perspectives. The 27 minutes long film seems to elaborate a line of Guru Granth Sahib, "*pio dade ka khol ditha khzana, tan mere man piya nidhana*" (When I opened and gazed upon the treasures of my ancestors, then my mind was filled with real wealth.) The film's fulcrum revolve around that heritage is to be transferred to future generations.

Multiple ideas and practices about history and heritage move simultaneously in the film. They seem to compliment each other but at times they contradict each other. Juxtaposition and overlapping create an order of ideas, which seems to underline the importance of dialogue at every level. Here shadows, shift-focuses, silhouettes, reflections and panning to both sides facilitate to link the material aspect to philosophical dimensions. The story of eroding heritage unfolds on cerebral plain of the audience. Ignorance and natural erosion of material are not the reasons of heritage loss. The references of Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt and reports of international organizations bring design of destruction to the fore. The filmmaker facilitates audience to ask this question. The subtle massage of peace flashes in viewers' mind and logic of war comes under serious question.

Throughout the film, the filmmaker, through camera is in constant eye-to-eye contact with the audience. Preservation and conservation of heritage emerge as efforts of greater common good. The issue is larger than traditional boundaries of ideology, geography and religion as handing-over the heritage material to future generations is most important. It means preservation should be impartial and unbiased which will enable future generations to generate better scholarship. Ami feels that we owe heritage to next generations.

*Seva* is rich in detail and cinematic language fills the gap of unsaid, thereby, audience gets involved in the thinking process. Viewing becomes a creative experience as film keeps the cerebral fluid functional. Ami says, "I treat audience as fellow travellers on a creative flight. I try to leave maximum space for audience to think and imagine." He adds, "Despite the limitations film viewing is not a one way traffic of ideas. Audience has to understand, decode and reflect in their own diverse ways." *Seva* deals with specifics, which can be equally relevant to different people living at different

places in different times. Film easily travels from facts to philosophy and leaves much for the audience. Five case studies punctuated with textual reminders help to link the local with global scenario. These ideas find an interactive platform in digital sphere through, *Seva*.

Daljit Ami is presently working with Day and Night News as editorial consultant. Earlier he has made documentary films like; *Born in Debt*, *Zulm Aur Aman*, *Karsewa*, *Unearthing Unfamiliar* and *Not Every Time*. With *Seva* he has returned as a filmmaker after a gap of six years. Common thread in all his films remains the same; *Sarbat da Bhala* and call for dialogue.

### Filmography of Daljit Ami

1. *Born In Debt* (2001)
2. *Sudarshan: an Institution of Simplicity* (2002)
3. *Zulm Aur Aman* (2002)
4. *Anhad Baja Bajey* (2004)
5. *Karsewa* (2004)
6. *Unearthing Unfamiliar* (2004)
7. *Not Every Time* (2006)
8. *Seva* (2012)