

DREAMS LANGUAGE BARRIERS
GOVERNMENT LABOR IMMIGRATION
STATE VIOLENCE REFORM RALLIES
DEPORTATION BORDER PATROL HOPE
CONGRESS ILLEGAL ALIEN SENATE
UNDOCUMENTED ECONOMIC RAIDS
GUEST WORKERS AGAINST LAW
DEBATE YES WE CAN CROSSING THE
DESERT SURVIVAL LOW-PAID JOBS
BROKEN SYSTEMS WOMEN WORK VISAS



SPEAKING ON immigration domestic violence

Being an immigrant survivor is...

১৯৯০ সাল - সুখের আশায় শুরু করেছিলাম বৈবাহিক জীবন। কিন্তু অসৎ মায়ের বখে যাওয়া সন্তানকে বিয়ে করে বিপর্যস্ত হলো তিনটি জীবন। এভাবে অনিশ্চিতভাবে চলতে চলতে সখীতে পদার্পন; সখী আমাকে নিশ্চয়তার প্রদীপ জ্বালিয়ে দিলো, এখন আমি পরিপূর্ণ, খুজে পেয়েছি জীবনের প্রশান্তি, নিশ্চয়তা। এগিয়ে চলুক 'সখী' শত অসহায় মানুষের সাহায্যে।

जब मुझे अपने दुखभरी शादी से छुटकारा मिला, मुझे शांति मिली। जब मैं U.S. को आई, इस देश ने मुझे सहायता और रहने की जगह दी। मैं अपने आप को बहुत खुशकिसमत समझती हूँ कि मैं इस देश में अन्तरवास हुई हूँ। बहुत इसे पाने में सखी ने बहुत मदद की। मैं उनपर बहुत अभारी हूँ। और मैं अपने वकील तलार इसकालीयान की बहुत धन्यवाद देने चाहती हूँ।

being courageous enough to walk away from the known, with faith in yourself that you can conquer the unknown.

It is

harboring a hope for freedom and a brighter future. triumphing over every "ism." praying for your children to succeed. being empowered to make choices. possessing a belief that life can and should be better.

- Bincy Jacobs

In the journey of this world, I feel that I can't walk anymore.

Even after trying so much, I am trapped because of my immigration problems. All the worries are making me crazy. With my two children, I am in a dire situation. My eldest son will go to college in 2007 but his studies will come to a close for not having any legal papers. I am requesting to Sakhi that they provide any help with immigration that's possible for me and my children to survive.

I truly am helpless. I want your help.

~Anonymous

মানুষের ক্ষণস্থায়ী জীবন যুদ্ধের সন্ধিক্ষণে আমার জীবনের উত্থান পতন সত্ত্বেও বেচেনে থাকার সংগ্রামে আমিও একজন বীর সৈনিক। চলার পথের কন্ট্রাকীর্ণ জীবনকে মাড়ায়ে পদদলিত করে আমি আমার চারটা সন্তান নিয়ে সুদীর্ঘ পথকে আলোকিত করার জন্য চলেছি সৈনিকবেশে। জীবনের ঘাত প্রতিঘাত প্রতিহত করে আলোর সন্ধানে আমি যুদ্ধবীর; বেচেনে থাকার জন্য বীর সৈনিক। ইনশাআল্লাহ, এ যুদ্ধে হবো বিজয়ী, সখীকে সাথে নিয়ে।

Immigration is a heart-rending experience (the dusty streets of ancestral towns, the childhood playmates, memories of shared joys and sorrows, the sweet dreams of early youth, and the breathless anticipation of unrealized promises), but the new soil offers itself whole-heartedly to the alien roots. **Grab me... own me ...be mine. A time will come - maybe many, many years from now, when I will be totally yours.** Until then, I will keep my hopes alive.

~ Ghazala N. Afzal

Shamila Malik is a volunteer with Sakhi who trained with us in June 2005. In April 2006, Shamila courageously spoke about her immigration status at a forum on immigration reform in front of hundreds of audience members. With her permission we have reprinted an excerpt of her speech (below left). In this issue of Bol, Shamila also goes on to share another facet of her story (below right).

My name is Shamila.

I am a student at the College of Staten Island of the City University of New York (CUNY) system. I am a single mother of a wonderful son, Yasar. I am the proud older sister of Abbas who is currently serving in the U.S. Army in Iraq.

I moved to New York City from Pakistan when I was six years old. I grew up in Brooklyn, and now live in Staten Island. I am a proud New Yorker and I feel American. Unfortunately, our broken immigration system has left me without any immigration status.

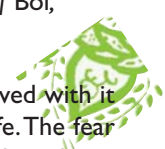
My grandparents were both U.S. Citizens and eventually my mother was able to get a green card. Unfortunately, I was too old to be included by the time my mother and my two youngest brothers, Haroun and Abbas, got their immigration papers.

I am frustrated that I am studying hard in school but cannot get a job when I finish because I do not have working papers. By this summer, I will be certified as an Emergency Medical Technician but will not be able to help anyone with my new skills. I am scared every day of my life that I might be sent back to a country so different from everything I know. I am scared that I might not be able to survive. I cannot begin to think of trying to raise my son in Pakistan where he would not have access to medical care, to education or to any kind of real future.

My dream is to one day become a Physician's Assistant so that I can dedicate my life to helping those in need. I want my son to grow up in this land of opportunity. I need the laws to change so that I can follow my dreams and my son can follow his.

Thank you.

Editor's Note: According to data from the Current Population Surveys (CPS) gathered between March 2000-2002 and the 2000 Census, roughly 65,000 undocumented immigrant students who have spent 5+ years living in the U.S. graduate from high school each year. An Urban Institute study of data collected by public colleges and universities in California extrapolates that approximately 7,000-13,000 of these students go on to enroll in public colleges and universities. The DREAM Act works to address the problematic immigration status for this population in two ways: 1) offering an economically-viable route for financing a higher education at in-state tuition rates, and 2) creating an opportunity to achieve permanent residency by obtaining higher education, serving in the armed forces, or performing significant amounts of community service. Supporters of the act contend that benefits extend not only to individual students but also to entire communities since college-educated and legalized immigrants contribute to a strengthened workforce and economy – with a corresponding decrease in social service needs. Critics assert that this act not only grants amnesty to undocumented individuals, but it also places them in direct competition with U.S. citizens for higher education. The current form of the DREAM Act was reintroduced in the Senate in late 2005 and has been introduced in the House earlier this year.



I know what fear is. I lived with it for 10 years of my life. The fear that the system would catch me and deport me was only one kind of fear. I also lived with another kind of fear in my life. A sick feeling that you can get your head slammed into the wall if the breakfast wasn't served on time. That you can get a black eye if the clothes weren't properly ironed. A feeling that lurked behind every wrong move. I had constant nightmares of losing my teeth.

Fear is the other name for domestic abuse, for helplessness, for hopelessness. It is as ugly as it sounds. Domestic violence is paralyzing. But Sakhi gives domestic violence a new name....independence, help and hope. I know because I have survived and have

conquered this fear.

- By Shamila Malik



Dear Reader,

I'm delighted to bring out our second issue of *Community Bol*! Once again, the contributions of the *Bol* crew, Sakhi staff, interns, and volunteers have been amazing - but to me, not surprising. After all, I encounter their generosity of time, energy, and spirit on a regular basis. However, I have been very pleasantly surprised by the quantity and range of responses we received from community members on the question of how immigration and domestic violence intersect in their experience.

Another exciting component of *Bol* this time is that it reflects conversations with colleagues and leaders in both the domestic violence and immigration fields. These dialogues are shaping our own work at Sakhi and are crucial because immigration remains a divisive issue - even within our own communities.

I'm also very happy to include in this issue responses readers sent in to the question "What does survivor mean to you?" which we raised in the previous *Bol*. Thank you. And I hope to receive and read more - more answers, more questions, more dreams and more reflections from you and yours. (Do send the postcard on!) I hope that the reflections in *Bol* will help to further dialogue that is taking place and encourage it where it is not. Your voice is critical in this discourse. Raise it, write it - in other words, *Bol*! I look forward to hearing from you.

Bix Gabriel

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Bol-etin Board!

What does survivor mean to you?

Since 1962, I have worked in Mental Health. Regarding dealing with the violence in families, I have witnessed tremendous attitude change. Earlier by the community, it was considered as shame and woman's problem. In the Indian community, I still experience it. I hope with the organizations like Sakhi, Women's place and education it will help the victims to seek help.
~Usha Awsare

A CHANCE TO MOVE ON
AND FULLY LIVE YOUR LIFE!

~Anonymous

I REALIZED
the ending of the
worst nightmare
and the beginning
of a new dream.

I FELT
the strongest will
to "live life"
against all odds.

I KNOW
my tomorrow
will be better
than my
yesterday.

Who am I?
- A SURVIVOR.
~Anonymous