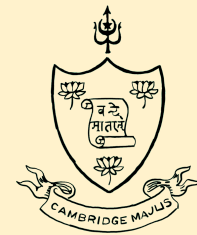


Minutes – The Cambridge Majlis, Michaelmas 2023-24

On the 19th October 2023, the Majlis was honoured to host Dr. Ankur Barua of the University's Faculty of Divinity for our inaugural 'Chai & Chat'. The chai - courtesy of the generosity of Cambridge's own Urban Chai - flowed freely, and the conversation fared equally well. The topic at hand was a capacious one: religion and faith in South Asia. There are few more qualified to speak on this than Dr. Barua. He rooted the conversation with verve and tenderness in his own experiences of the topic as a child in Assam. Which is to say that he was not really speaking about himself at all - instead, Dr. Barua was speaking of the (somewhat) bewildering and (entirely) enchanting palimpsest that is faith in South Asia. The above sounds high-falutin, but - on account of the warmth and lucidity of the speaker, the comforting chai and the ever-present Majlis spirit - an easy rapport was soon established in the St Catharine's College JCR. The event soon became an engaging back and forth between Dr. Barua and the audience. After a certain length of time it was felt that even this barrier ought to be dissolved, and general conversation ensued. It was particularly delightful to see several new members of the Majlis in attendance, and even more so to see them engaged in vigorous conversation with various Majlis mainstays. I had in a fit of early-term pessimism imagined the event to last little more than an hour; in actual fact, we were forced to shepherd our crowd out of the room after 120-or-so minutes. Religion in South Asia is at the same time an inescapable and an elusive subject; this event succeeded in shining the smallest of lights on it. To this we owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Barua and our audience that evening.

fsehgal



Freddie Sehgal

Secretary, The Cambridge Majlis 2023-2024