

ISSN 0041-3135

RNI No. 25269/57

# TRIVENI

(Estd : 1927)

INDIA'S LITERARY AND CULTURAL QUARTERLY



Vol: 87

JUL.-SEP. 2018

No. 3

Rs. 20/-



Raja Ravi Varma Self-Portrait



A woman with a tray of fruits



Saraswathi

**TRIVENI**  
INDIA'S LITERARY & CULTURAL QUARTERLY

VOLUME: 87

JUL.-SEP. 2018

NUMBER: 3

**Founder Editor:**

Kolavennu Ramakotiswara Rao

**Former Editors:**

Dr. Bhavaraju Narasimha Rao

Prof. I.V. Chalapati Rao

**Editor:**

D. Ranga Rao

**Advisory Board:**

Dr. Prema Nandakumar, Trichy

V. Sivaramakrishnan, Mumbai

Manoj Das, Pondichery

M.V.R. Sastry, Secunderabad

N. Sitarambai, Hyderabad

**Printer:**

Prof. Y. Sreedhar Murthy

**Publishers:**

The Triveni Foundation (Regd.)

12-13-157, Street No. 2,

Tarnaka,

Hyderabad - 500 017.

Ph: +91-40-27014762

Email: trivenijournal@yahoo.com

Website:trivenijournalindia.com

**THE TRIVENI SYMBOL**

*Padma* (the Lotus) represents the purity of love, *Jyoti* (the Flame) the light of Wisdom and *Vajra* (Thunderbolt of Indra) the splendour of power.

**TRIVENI** is devoted to Art, Literature, History and Culture. Its main function is to interpret through English the creative writing in different languages of India to the people of all States and to the world outside.

Original articles pertaining to literature, art, history, culture and of general interest (other than political) are considered for publication in **TRIVENI**. Articles should be brief and typed in double space, on one side only. **The soft copies of the articles can be emailed to trivenijournal@yahoo.com.**

<b>Individual Membership:</b>	<b>India&amp;Nepal</b>	<b>Others</b>
Annual Membership	Rs. 200/-	(US \$ 20)
Life Membership	Rs. 2,000/-	(US \$ 200)
Donors	Rs. 5,000/-	(US \$ 500)
Patrons	Rs.10,000/-	(US \$1000)

<b>Institutional Membership:</b>		
Annual Membership	Rs. 500/-	(US \$ 50)
Life Membership	Rs. 5,000/-	(US \$ 500)
Donors	Rs. 10,000/-	(US \$1000)
Patrons	Rs. 25,000/-	(US \$2000)

Annual subscriptions will be effective for one year from the date of receipt (i.e. 4 issues). Remittances are to be made in favour of **TRIVENI FOUNDATION** by Money Order, Bank Draft or Local Cheque (A/c. payee) on any Scheduled bank in Hyderabad. No out-station cheques can be accepted.

## ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Sri. M.L. Swamy**, Engineer in Chief, Retd, A.P.: Presently in USA

**Sri R. Prabhakara Rao**, IPS (Retd.). Former Director General of Police, Andhra Pradesh

**Dr. V. Kondal Rao**, Chairman, Jayanthi Trust, Hyderabad.

**Sri M. Gopalakrishna**, IAS (Retd), Hyderabad.

**Sri A. V. Appa Rao**, Chief Engineer (Retd.), Hyderabad

**Dr. Vijay R. Kolavennu**, San Francisco, USA

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Prof. Y. Sreedhar Murthy**, Managing Trustee

**Sri. B.N. Murthy**, Secretary & Treasurer

**Dr.A.P. Ranga Rao**, Member

**Prof. P.S.Sarma**, Member

**Dr.J. Bapu Reddy**, IAS (Retd.), Member

**Prof. G. Surender Reddy**, Member

**Sri A. Venkat Rao**, IPS (Retd.), Member

**Sri.V.Vijaya Kumar**, Member

### TRIVENI QUARTERLY

#### Advertisement Tariff

	Per Insertion	4 Insertions
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Title cover page</b>	<b>Rs.20,000</b>	<b>Rs.60,000</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Title cover each</b>	<b>Rs.10,000</b>	<b>Rs.30,000</b>
<b>Inside Full page</b>	<b>Rs. 5,000</b>	<b>Rs.15,000</b>

Payments may please be made to **TRIVENI FOUNDATION**  
12-13-157, Street No. 2, Tarnaka, Hyderabad - 500 017, Ph: 27014762.

## CONTENTS

	Page No.
The 'Raja' Of Indian Painting	6
Classic Art	9
The Crisis In The Classroom	10
Unnava Lakshminarayana's 'Malapalli'	12
Pleasure Immeasurable	16
Edgar Allan Poe's And Tagore's Stories . . .	17
Home Without Walls	21
Birth Of Knowledge	22
The Folk Temples And Veersaivam	25
Pathless Truth	31
Modernity In India - A Brief Account	32
A Wish So Great	35
Global Language-A Boon Or A Bane?	36
Lilavati Hospital	39
Lavi	40
Amitav Ghosh's 'Ibis Trilogy': A Study	46
Golden Article reprinted from Triveni 1930 on Samuel Butler	49
My Old Friend	61
Book Review : 1. Ramanuja Darsanam	62
2. Dance of Satan	62
& Other Poems	62

## TRIPLE STREAM

### THE 'RAJA' OF INDIAN PAINTING

**D. Ranga Rao**

Man has been expressing himself artistically from time immemorial with whatever tools he could lay his hands on to achieve his objective. As time passed his mind and hand too progressed from rock paintings to the present day digital painting. Greek mythology, religion and the Bible influenced the early attempts in the West which resulted in flat two dimensional paintings.

Giotto the painter of the 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century revolutionised the art by blending glorious colours and light skillfully for the first time bringing out the three dimensional effect akin to nature. This remarkable improvisation was taken up by the mighty men of art, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, followed by master painters of other nations. These great men of art revealed to the world their discovery of a new meaning to what they saw around them. They executed their ideas by painting portraits, still life, landscapes etc. bringing out effects of perspective and light, their imagination sharpened by their second sight which fascinated the viewers. Some unconventional artists of the later day like Picasso and his admirers who thought that

art and nature were different shocked art lovers with their version of art.

Generally speaking painting is a three dimensional visual language which expresses ideas and emotions, moods and sentiments of life and nature. The painter reveals himself in a sensitive manner in accordance with the pulsations of his heart through the strokes of his brush. Reading a poem, listening to music and observing a painting exhilarates one's mind. Great art has no barriers or frontiers and the thoughts of these men of genius are universal in nature. Hegel defined painting as one of the three romantic arts, the other two being poetry and music.

Coming to the Indian scene the art of painting is equally old, if not older, and has its roots in religion, mythology, folk arts, Sanskrit literature, court life and nature. Vatsayana of the third century A.D. laid down a few postulates covering the art of painting dealing with aspects like appearance, perception, feelings, grace, similitude and brush work to be taken care of by a painter. The Indian painters followed the precepts ever since.

Emperors, kings and rulers of various dynasties of the country including the British administration encouraged and promoted the art, perpetuating their own glory in the process. Various schools of painting of murals and miniatures flourished till modern times.

With this brief and cursory 'look back' we now focus on a great name in the annals of Indian painting noted for his aesthetic appeal and one who delineated on the canvas Indian sensibility and culture with grace, beauty and dignity in a classic style whose only 'ism' was realism.

Ravi Varma (1848-1906) of the royal stock was the son of Ezhumavil Neelakantham, a Sanskrit scholar with a thorough knowledge of Ayurveda and Umayamba Tharapurathi, a poet. Ravi Varma was born in Kalimanoor palace in the former princely state of Travancore, now known as Kerala. He married Bhagavathi Bayi and had two sons and three daughters. The present royal family of Kerala is the direct descendants of Ravi Varma's granddaughter, Sethu Parvathi Bayi. The British Government honoured him with title "Raja" in 1904 in recognition of his genius as painter.

Young Ravi Varma was interested in painting from his boyhood and received training from noted painters of the day including a Dutch painter, Theodor Jenson. The British government also encouraged him and he soon won awards and medals.

His paintings were exhibited in Vienna and in Chicago where he received accolades and laurels. Some of the beautiful looking, bejewelled and traditionally dressed women of elegance and polish seen on his canvases are his close relations. His spiritual quest to bring divinity down from heavens resulted in his portraying gods, goddesses and characters and situations from epics and mythology in his paintings. His paintings of divine beings convinced people to believe that divine personages look like what he painted. He managed to place these divine beings in the drawing rooms and pooja rooms of common households all over the country by establishing his lithograph press in Bombay. No other Indian painter aroused in the common man such reverential interest for the art of painting as he did. He remains great inspite of some of his detractors branding him a 'Calendar artist' which he was not. Ravi Varma has the credit of introducing oil painting with a blend of European style in the Indian context and stands on par with great names like Rubens and Rembrandt, Raphael and Titan of the West.

Readers of Tiveni had a look at Sakuntala one of Ravi Varma's paintings in the previous issue, living in the hermitage of rishi Kanva, pausing to steal a glance at her lover king Dushyanta (not in the picture) under the pretext of removing a thorn that 'pricked' her foot. What an imaginative pictorial presentation of a sensitive and romantic situation by the artist!

To take a glance at a few more of his paintings. The artist's royal background is reflected in most of his works particularly in the portraits of women and men. His portrait of the women on his canvases stand for dignity, decorum, charm and nobility, with an expression of contentment. The drapery, jewelry, the waist bands, the rings on fingers, the necklaces, ear drops, nose studs, the bangles, the hair style, the auspicious bindi on the brow, the poise and manner of posture and men with their typical headgear, buttoned long coats, trousers or dhothis speak of the sure touch of artistry as well as the importance the artist gave to details depicting them with fidelity. Some women of Ravi Varma are long legged, like Parvathi in the painting *The Descent of Ganga* but the overall impression is one of harmony. It was Michelangelo who said "little things or trifles, done to perfection, build up into great things". Leonardo da Vinci told his pupils "Paint the face in such a way that it will be easy to understand what is going on in the subject's mind".

His painting of Sarswathi, the goddess of learning and fine arts reveals the architect in the painter. The divine lady sits in a typical classical statuesque posture playing her Veena. She wears a crown and ornaments adorn her neck, wrists and ankles. The unforgettable bindi adorns her forehead. The posture she assumes is one of comfort and balance. Two of her arms are engaged in holding the Veena and playing the strings while the other two in

holding the string of beads and the Veda. A full grown peacock with its glorious long tail stands at her feet looking up at her listening to the strains of music. There is a tree in full foliage behind her and a stream to her left with a lotus in full bloom. The sky is clear and bright and a structure far behind at the back. The lady of learning looks at the viewer with a hint of a smile on her face with a serene expression making the scene complete. She is a part of the elements of nature.

Now *The Descent of Ganga* from mythological lore. The concept and presentation vie with each other in the working out of this theme. The concept is lofty and the delineation splendid. Goddess Ganga is being received by Lord Siva so that she may give peace and plenty to the people. The rest is the fertile imagination of the artist and his masterly handling of the event. The scene is high Himalayas and the vast expanse all round. Lord Siva wearing only his tiger skin stands looking up at Ganga, hazily visible while flowing down, with his legs apart to gain stability and firmness to withstand the tremendous pressure the cascading Ganga would create when she reaches him. He has placed his two arms on his waist to further strengthen his stance so that his body would not wilt at the great impact. His other two arms are placed behind his back holding the trident for additional support to maintain his balance. The serpent around his neck, the divine consort Parvathi looks on leaning endearingly on her lord's vahana, the

handsome looking milk white Nandi. The person responsible for this divine act, Bhageeratha, stands in all humility in anxious expectation of the descent of Ganga. It is for the viewer to ponder over this scene of classical elegance of the portrayal by the painter.

To conclude, John Ruskin said "it is the aim of the best painters to paint the noblest of things that can be seen by sunlight"

"A Thing of beauty is a joy forever"

\*\*\*

## CLASSIC ART

( A tribute to Ravi Varma, the great painter)  
(Inspired by the painting published in the previous issue)

**M.G. Narasimha Murthy\***

Here we stand in this hall of fame, @  
Spellbound by the inspired art  
Of the matchless painter, Ravi Varma,  
Genius of the finest skill.

Vibrant pictures of classic art,  
Of exquisite beauty, so lifelike,  
For ever charming, for ever fresh.

Here is no distortion, no nightmare  
Of tortured figures and twisted shapes:  
No weird shadows of abstract art,  
But vivid portraits unsurpassed,  
And wondrous visions of epic scenes  
And eminent figures of legends past.

Valiant men of virtues rare  
And amorous women, ever modest,  
Subtly sensuous, never vulgar,  
In different postures and varying moods,  
Glow with life on his bright canvas -

A lovely woman in moonlit night;  
A fond mother, suckling her babe;

A lady with a mirror, combing her hair;  
A woman in a temple, offering alms  
And heroines of renowned tales -

Damayanti with the royal swan,  
Conveying to Nala her message of love;  
Shakuntala penning her letter on a lotus leaf;  
Sad Draupadi, going to Keechaka,  
Hesitantly, with a jug of wine;  
Here stands Sita, blushing bride,  
Watching Rama, break the mighty bow;  
There on the seashore, Rama aims  
His deadly arrow at the ocean's King;  
Ravana's sword, dripping with blood,  
Severs brave Jatayu's powerful wings;  
Krishna, Pandava's envoy in Kaurava's  
court,  
Pleads for their kingdom's share.

Splendid scenes of romance and war  
And thrilling moments of amazing deeds.  
Here is India's legacy of enduring fame,  
Priceless creations of transcending art !

---

\* Principal (Retd.) Hyderabad

@ Art Gallery in the famous Jaganmohan Palace,  
Mysore City, Karnataka.

## THE CRISIS IN THE CLASSROOM

**Prof. Sachidananda Mohanty\***

We often hear of the crisis in education and identify the usual suspects: uncaring parents, a mercenary and indifferent state, commercial-minded private institutions, powerful industrial empires that try to save their souls by the creation of educational wings proudly sporting their names and lineages, teacher-politicians and their patrons. and grant-giving bodies that do not discharge their responsibility adequately; and when they do, do not ask of the recipients enough accountability.

We seldom hear of the real crisis, the crisis at the heart of all education, namely the crisis in teaching and the battle in the classroom.

Many of us think that the crisis in education will go away if we were to take timely measures. After all, we celebrate Teacher's Day; colleges and universities boast the UGC scales; we do have Academic staff Colleges; the number of national institutions devoted to research, policy planning and accreditation in higher education is increasing day by day. And yet, we keep hearing of the crisis in education every now and then.

The crisis in teaching in contemporary India is compounded of various factors but these however are not

integral to the crisis I have in mind. The researcher who disdains classroom teaching as an avoidable distraction and merrily flies around the national and international seminar circuit, the pedagogue who refuses to read or study anything new in the field and follows the slogan: 'old is gold'. The teacher who thinks that educational innovation and syllabi reforms, indeed lesson planning and course completions, are plainly unnecessary to his creative genius are equally part of the problem, but they are not endemic to the problem.

We must fathom greater depths in order to find the real causes when we think of the many ways we can be a good teacher in the next millennia. Certainly, mastery of the newer approaches, ICT driven educational technologies, the use of digital media and so on can help. They are necessary but not sufficient conditions for effective dissemination of knowledge in the classroom context.

The real crisis of teaching is the crisis in the classroom. The crisis may be dramatized by the choice between two models essentially; the Socratic model [Socrates taught: 'know thy self'] and the model of Macaulay. Macaulay, the English educationist had famously decried native

languages and education in colonial India and advocated English education instead; sadly we are, for the most part, following his footsteps. Whatever else we may have done none of the educational planning from the 'Wood's Despatch' to Macaulay's Minutes, the major educational commissions chaired by luminaries like Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and Dr. D.S. Kothari, have done enough regarding the ongoing debate. Socrates remains a symbol, a lip service opportunity, a dream and a mantra. Ivan Illich's goal of deschooling society is only an ideal. Sri Aurobindo's important proposition in the essay 'A system of National education' in the first decade of the 20th century that the first principle of all true learning is that nothing can be taught, if the teacher being not an instructor but a friend and a guide, remains an elusive and utopian aim, and the Mother's radical view of 'No school' in the Auroville experiment, far too idealistic and disconnected from the real world.

Best teaching it seems to me cannot take place in the absence of a radical revision of pedagogy and the art of teaching in the classroom.

The time hallowed lecture method, sanctified by Thomas Gradgrind in Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* must give way to the teacher as a fellow enquirer and not a repository of knowledge and wisdom. The verbal narcissism of a teacher before a captive audience, the learning with a notebook or an iPad and the teacher at the podium must be replaced by real dialogues

in the class room where problems and issues are articulated, discussed and debated in a respectful but egalitarian manner with the teacher as facilitator. Thanks to the decline in reading habits and the ever present Google and Wikipedia, even the lecture method has lost much of its sheen.

The Socratic Method must begin early, right from the elementary level with the kindling of the child's curiosity. Knowledge must not be regimented by disciplinary boundaries. The teacher must discover himself or herself as a Renaissance personality who treats all provinces of learning as his or her own ethically endowed and intellectually empowered, such a teacher is an example both in words and deeds. Collegiality is a creed and a necessity both to the colleagues in the field and to the learners who are under their charge. When examples are set, evils such as plagiarism will be a thing of the past.

The real crisis is indeed the crisis in the classroom. The next decades will witness the crisis in sharper focus. We must change our pedagogy quickly. By restoring Socrates to the class room, we can aspire to be effective teachers. We need to look within and put the house in order even as we ask for institutional changes and meaningful interventions from outside. Unless we can come up with this new teaching protocol in the classroom, all reforms will remain chimeras.

**Courtesy: Sri Aurobindo's Action, Jan.2016**

## UNNAVA LAKSHMINARAYANA'S 'MALAPALLI' THE HARBINGER OF A NEW DAWN

**Dr. V. B. Rama Rama Rao\***

Unnava Lakshminarayana wrote *Malapalli* while serving a jail sentence as convict 6657 during 1920-21 in two parts. In 1935 two more parts were added. This work, considered a mega epic in Telugu was later abridged by Maruvuri Kodandaramayya and published by Sahitya Akademi. The present text under study is the abridged version.

Unnava had the Mahabharat in his mind and he called the parts cantos. Part one centres on Sangadas, Ramadas's son. With his death the second part Ramanaidu begins. The third part is named after Takkela Jaggadu, the assumed name of Venkatadas, Ramadas's second son. He dies at the end and the fourth part is named after the central character Ramadas.

Ramadas has three sons and one daughter the youngest being the infant son. He is humble, coming from the untouchable caste of mala dasaris, wandering minstrels of the fifth caste. Ramadas is devout and contented, always thinking of the higher things of life and seeking the company and enlightenment from mystics like Tungadurti

Buchayya garu. In his interior monologue Ramadas tells himself:

"... 'the worldly' is only a step to the 'other-worldly'. It all depends on how one uses the step. A ladder can be used either to reach heaven or to go down into hell."

He thinks that his son, though virtuous has not found stability.

Sangadas is a close friend of the landlord Choudarayya's son, Ramanaidu. They are progressive. They attend the Aadiandhra Convention at Bezwada and are seen eating "untouchable food". Sangadas is devout like his father and he believes in justice and wishes to fight injustice. He has his own dialectic. He has a long dialogue with the president, Venkata Reddy, of the convention before the meeting.

"It is my opinion that the entire Hindu society has to be reconstructed, Though we cannot work for the welfare of all, the measures we adopt for the welfare of the child should not be detrimental to the welfare of the mother. Besides this if everyone were to attempt to work for the welfare of small societies the larger one might suffer as it's problems get pushed into

---

\* Retired ELT Professional, Solapur, Maharashtra.

the background and are neglected. Efforts that are not directed towards the welfare of society as a whole, soon come to nothing.”

He re-iterates to the president what he had said earlier to his friend Ramanaidu:

"*Dharma*, the sacred law always demands sacrifice. Socrates drank poison to carry out the sacred law. Jesus Christ was put on the cross. Prahlada had to go through so many trials. Harischandra sacrificed everything he had. Amara was beheaded. A disciple of Ramanuja went blind...Tilak the great was imprisoned for life. There is no sacred fire with out the killing of a sacrificial animal and of all the animals for sacrifice is the selfish one." By the time Ramanaidu and Sangadas returned to their village, the labour trouble with the farmhands demanding a rise in their wages intensified. Choudarayya kills Sangadas when he organizes a strike of the farmhands at the time of harvesting his crop. Sangadas dies with the last words "We will win."

Money bags, caste power, corrupt and inept judicial system and an alien rule brought misery to the poor untouchables. Beastly power leads to violent rule. Violence forges ahead. But, among the thinking, a realization dawns, that hard work must be paid just wages.

The *Hindu Dharma*, the Hindu way of life and the Hindu faith would make the

world a happier place to live in. The novel progressively leads us to realize this. There are episodes in this novel that present vivid contrasts. In matters of love, there are two pairs Jyothi and Appadas and Mohanrao and Kamala. While the former just sacrifice themselves in sublime love that transcends the physical, the latter drive themselves to unforgivable sin. Towards the end, however, Kamala realizes her folly and in expiation dies serving her own son and husband as a domestic help. Mohanrao, a totally transformed man, gives away all his money to the Vijaya College.

Jaggadu in the third part is none other than Venkatadas, Ramadas's son. He does not believe the story of Prahlada. He does not feel that dacoity is wrong. Disgusted with the heartlessness of the rich he comes up with dialectic and a model of bringing in equality by robbing the rich and feeding the poor. He calls his burglaries *dharma kannaalalu*, just burglaries.

"Burglary in the house of anyone, who accumulates more than what he needs, and hoards it with out it useful to others, or anyone who is spending money on wrong things is lawful burglary. This kind of service to the world is called the service of Thirumangaiyyalwar according to the elders and the learned ones. I am the theorist. Garimella Gangaraju is our guru. Ours is Thirumangaiyya gothram. Our Rishis are Thiru Mangaiyya , Kancharla Gopanna and Sarva papadu... People are getting enlightened. The tyrant's power can

not go on. Perhaps your god wants this tyrant to continue for he builds temples and celebrates in praise of your god. Your god is corrupt. He accepts bribes. Perhaps he has to be sacrificed along with all the snakes. If he wants to stay on he should become selfless. Your god teaches that one should follow the law with out expecting any reward. In stead he rewards as per the deeds of the past births. If it is so who is greater, you or your god? Your gods must be rid of the vampires of the wealth."

Jaggadu's vision is no vision because of the violence involved in it. His is only passion. In contrast, his father has a vision, drawn from the tenets of our *Dharma*. The *Sanatan* army raised by Jaggadu kills one of the British officers and creates a lot of trouble for the officers. In spite of Jaggadu's commitment to his cause, he could not escape the law. In the court he tells the judge about his concept of justice. When the judge asks him if he is a philosopher he tells him that, if a philosopher is one who tries to put an end to the belief in Vedas, he is one. He ends with a peroration:

"At the beginning of the creation there was nothing like right or ownership...Everyone had to work ...Everyone was rich and there was no poverty. There was a heaven on earth. Then Eswar came. He said the whole world was his. ... With a large number becoming poor, some have become rich. Riches for the rich and poverty for the poor has come to be taken for granted... The rule that comes in

handy to the rich is the law. Everything else is crime. ..This sweat and blood of the poor man is the rich man's wealth, this, the *Drama* of the current era... It has been my very sincere attempt to establish the empire of the gods again on this earth... If the rich do not change their behaviour, the poor will change the very laws and establish heaven on earth. To make this law, this Dharma win, we will accept compassion, truth and cleanliness as our means."

Badly wounded and almost towards the end of his life, Jaggadu is allowed to see his father. He asks his old father as to how he played his part in the play that is coming to a close. And Ramadas tells him:

"Yours is a new play. The rules of the play are yours too. You have trodden a new path. I'm the one who has taken the much trodden, ordinary path. I cannot say that yours is not a correct path - It remains to be seen where it leads if everyone were to follow it. Even your way is bound by principles. There principles are sublime many people wonder whether it could not be difficult to put them into practice." It is no wonder that those tribals, sanatans, who have been targets of cruelty and misrule believed in Jaggadu as a saviour.

Wickedness and villainy are present even among the rulers. The henchmen of the Christian missionaries coerce the poor untouchables making use of the Criminal Tribes act. We learn through Kannappa, the

jail mate of Ramadas, about the pathetic condition of our people under the system of justice as administered by the Whiteman in those days.

Ramadas of Part Four is the ultimate winner in the win that his son predicts at the moment of his death. With the money that Jaggadu has stored, a college comes up. Balance is restored. In the struggle between the good and evil, good could withstand tribulation. The just always would emerge victorious.

*Malapalli* has a tolerant understanding and a joyful view of life drawn from the ethos native to our land. A societal awareness and a humanistic approach tempered with realism firmly rooted in our ancient native wisdom are the common points in Ramadas. Both approximate to the condition and stature of a Sthitaprajna.

Writers in the advanced West have been dallying with anti-heroes, trying to glorify weakness and human frailty to which the spirit of the times is no small contributing factor. The electrifying power of our sustaining meta-narratives is thoughtfully harnessed by Unnava making

his characters all of a piece with our classical heroes with unswerving, unfaltering commitment to dharma and karma, thus elevating themselves to the highest peak of personality achievement envisaged by the Oriental mind. Samadrishti leads an aspirant to become a sthitaprajna. Ramadas has in him the celebrated positive qualities of our traditional nayaka: dhirodaatta. What matters is being a dhira. The capacity to come out of the encircling gloom of fading values comes only out of a self-acquired equanimity. .

The highest literature anywhere in the world has carried the message of truth and goodness in its myriad hues and variations. The noblest minds down the ages have been conveying the same message, in our Mahabharata, Ramayana and so on. Saints and Sants bless us to endeavour just to be justly human. Unnava's Malapalli initially had to face rough weather under the alien rule but that proved to be for the good of both the novel and the novelist. All is well that ends well. We have the first epic scale novel in Telugu in Malapalli. Nativism has the primacy in the universals of literature produced anywhere in the world.

\*\*\*

## PLEASURE IMMEASURABLE

[GaNanaateeta Sammodam Telugu Original by Dr.C.Narayana Reddy]

**R.R.Gandikota\***

Long since I  
Got draped of  
Sun's warmth...  
Blossoming  
Body shriveled  
By biting cold..

Mutually opposites  
Scorching Sun,  
Biting cold ,  
Entwining these  
In body formulae  
Delight indescribable.

As I speak high  
Of summer and winter  
The rain behind the  
Passing cloud  
Descends suddenly

Questioning "what of me"  
By drops delight  
Over my head  
To my pleasant surprise.

I murmured quietly  
"No way less  
Like heat and cold  
Of summer and winter  
You have your own  
"Existence Exposure",  
In days of bathing  
The Good Earth".

Delighted at my words  
The clouds above  
Drenched me down  
With a torrent of  
Blessed Ambrosia.

---

Retd. Principal, M.S.N.C, Kakinada

Anything in Right Measure  
In Nature , Pleasure Immeasurable.

\*\*\*

## EDGAR ALLAN POE'S AND TAGORE'S STORIES -A STUDY.

Dr. Dilip Kumar Chatterjee\*

Death, the most unequivocal transition from the known to the unknown and the shadowy boundaries between life and death have long been the fascination as well as preoccupation of all great writers in the East and the West. Nineteenth Century American writer Edgar Allan Poe's (1809-49) *the Premature Burial* and Rabindranath Tagore's *The Living and the Dead* are prime examples exploring this mysterious terrain. Both the stories evince their interest in conferring death-like status upon the living to heighten the effect. Here is a critical and comparative study of the stories which may bring out the distinctive features of the two great masters in world literature.

Nineteenth Century American writer, Poe's story *The Premature Burial* is a catalogue of suppositious occasions on which an unfortunate person thought to be dead, was buried alive. Greater part of Poe's story covers the details of case histories of premature internments most of which he read in the journals and in the newspapers. He gives the details of the case histories only to illustrate his thesis: "We know that there are diseases in which occur total cessations of all the apparent functions

of vitality, and yet in which these cessations are merely suspensions, properly so called. They are only temporary pauses in the incomprehensible mechanism. A certain period elapses, and some unseen mysterious principle again sets in motion the magic pinions and the wizard wheels."

After presenting this elaborate theory Poe illustrates it with the example of a thin story at the end. But before that he mentions the case of a premature burial that takes place in the neighbouring city of Baltimore. In this case history he tells us that the wife of a lawyer of eminence was once seized with a sudden unaccountable illness. No one suspected even her family physicians had reason to suspect that she was not actually dead. The lady was deposited in the family vault and after three years when the vault was opened it was found that she had endeavoured to arrest attention by striking the iron door of the vault. While thus occupied, she probably swooned or possibly died through sheer terror of being entombed alive.

Poe cites three other cases of living inhumation in *The Premature Burial*, one in France in 1810, two others in 1831 in Leipzig and in London. These case histories of reports of premature burial which cover

---

\* Retd. Prof. of English, Kolkata

almost the whole of the first part of Poe's story are rather disjointed pieces and do not satisfy a critic of Poe. His irritation rings out clearly in the following remark: "When Poe begins *The Premature Burial* in this way and continues for several pages with talk about the horror of premature burial and about its frequency, we feel something is wrong. He is addressing us directly immediately, attempting to put us into a frame of mind before his story begins; it is difficult for us to resist boredom or annoyance."

Thus in Poe's story the narrator first presents the nightmare vision that follows cataleptic trance and then connects it to the scene and circumstances of this happening. The incidents, alternating between illusion and reality, have a theatrical import. However, the whole experience the story presents is comic.

In Poe the theorizing far outweighs the story - the heavy theoretical discourse limits the scope for the development of the narrative and character and incident become insignificant. Here the dramatization of the narrator's situation is merely a pretence; the authorial voice becomes a little overdrawn and tedious unlike the brief openings of his major Gothic tales. The narrator here is an unidentified person whose presence is not felt by the reader - he is strictly a reconnoiter and renders an eye-witness account of the incidents.

Tagore's story, *the Living and the Dead* on the other hand, though exploits the Gothic potential of death of Poe's story, is less sensational possessing a greater thematic depth. What saves Tagore's story from being merely a Poe-like horror story is its stark realism of the tragic plight of a young widow who in the eyes of everybody is dead although she is as much real as any other human being.

Unlike Poe's, *The Living and the Dead* of Tagore does not present a dream fantasy. It is more a realistic and a terrific rendering of the tragedy of a Bengali widow called Kadambini. She lives in her in-laws' family, the family of Sharadashankar Babu, Zamindar of Ranirhat. She had no one truly to call her own - no husband, no son. Her brother in law Sharadashankar's son, was the apple of her eye. All the pent up affections of a widow she poured on the child until suddenly, one monsoon night, she died. For some unknown reason, her heart stopped beating.

For fear of police trouble, her body was dispatched without undue ceremony straight to the cremation ground. But after a while, Kadambini regained her consciousness and found her lying on the unlit pyre in deep darkness of a cremation ground. Her first thought was that 'Yama's house of death must be so dark and lonely, nothing to see, or hear, or do: only to sit awake forever in the void'. But how long she could sit alone in this void? She has to

return but where? She is no longer alive, why should they take her back? She reasoned herself that her presence would bring bad luck to the family as she has been banished from the world of living - 'I'm my ghost now', she says. She compared her present solitariness in this dark desolate, remote place of death. 'I have no place in human society', she felt convinced. I am nothing but a fearsome evil presence, - my own ghost'. She could not overcome this traumatic experience although she got a temporary shelter at her childhood friend Jogmaya's House.

The story reached its climax when Kadambini returns to her in - laws under the cover of darkness. Her sudden arrival caused immediate commotion through the whole family, the maid and the mistress of the house both fell down in a dead faint. Even the child, the apple of her eye, told her to go away. Kadambini pleaded pitifully: 'Didi why - are all of you so frightened to see me? See I'm what I really was.' When her word fell on deaf ears she picked up the bell-metal bowl and struck it against her forehead again and again. Blood spurted from the wound. Her service as an aya, above all, all her motherly affection for her darling 'khoka' was forgotten by all the members of the family. Yet in her desperation she cried, 'See, I'm alive'. When Sharadashankar begged Kadambini with folded hands: 'Since you have left this life, break off these earthly bonds' assuring to arrange a better funeral rite for her; Kadambini could not stand these words,

she ran out of the room screaming 'I'm not dead, not dead, I tell you', and drowned herself into a backyard pond. 'Kadambini was dead, to prove she had not died'. The challenge of this final sentence brings out the intricate interplay of death and non-death which is missing from Poe's story. The symbolical richness of the story is achieved by the powerful image of rain pouring down all night suggesting that the whole of nature seems to be participating in the young widow's tragedy through intermittent rain.

The dying words of Kadambini are fraught with the pain of self-recognition and a great awareness of sheer selfishness and cruelty of the world she lives in where the dead is given much more importance than the living. Tagore's story, thus occupies not only the interior landscape of the protagonist in her struggle to come to terms with herself but also with the society where a young widowed woman finds no entry to her family only because she was supposed to be dead and taken to the cremation ground to be burnt.

Selection of appropriate title also plays an important part in short stories. Title of two stories under our discussion are also different because Poe's *Premature Burial* is not Tagore's *Premature Burning*. While Poe describes the mental agonies of a person who is getting obsessed with the fear of being entombed alive and his ecstatic joy of recovery from it, Tagore depicts not the joy but the tragedy of a woman-her

traumatic experience in her own family just after she is taken to be dead and cremated. That is why, the title of Tagore's story *The Living and the Dead* is more appropriate than *Premature Burning*.

In Tagore's story in addition to suggestion, the association plays a significant part in the creation of the mood, atmosphere and the ultimate effect. Tagore makes the setting contribute directly to the effect. The setting harmonises with the character of Kadambini she is as lonely, as desolate, as the cremation ground. Tagore seems to suggest that she gains her freedom not in her family but in the desolation of the cremation ground. The recurring image of darkness reinforces the tragic gloom in the story.

As an ideal story *The Living and the Dead* does neither have a variety of characters nor profusion of incidents. Although there is little space for development of character Tagore has effectively portrayed the psychological crisis in the life of Kadambini, her trauma, her tragic struggle to know whether she is alive or dead, whether she is an illusion or reality. Tagore takes into account the psycho-dynamics of her situation and her response to the situation.

Suggestion and dialogue that contribute to the intensity of effect are all employed artistically in Tagore's story. Unlike Poe, Tagore's address to the readers is not direct and overdrawn. Tagore's story

is thus more powerful than Poe as it offers a perfect artistic rendering of a woman's tragedy experiencing an unbridgeable gulf between the living and the dead.

*The Living and the Dead* explores Tagore's attitude to death more realistically than Poe and in his story the emphasis tends to be more sociological as well as psychological rather than metaphysical. Tagore's is a sympathetic presentation of a widow's mind where social and humanistic questions are involved.

Tagore's story presents a human landscape of suffering and cruelty of the human situation which is missing from Poe's *The Premature Burial*. Tagore champions the dignity of the woman's character that refused to surrender to the society seeking salvation through death. Tagore's story raises questions about the social taboos and the mindset which relegates widows to sidelines. Here Kadambini's death is undoubtedly a silent protest against society. Reading Tagore's story one can form a precise idea of the young widows in Indian society. But Poe's story does not problematise any social issues as does Tagore's. Tagore's story has further dimensions. Tagore is silent and he does not pass any Judgement directly. He just presents with the unobtrusive detachment of an artist the atrocities perpetrated to a Hindu widow.

'Poe illuminates dark corners of experiences but' as Peter Jones puts it, 'he

does not invite us into them or lend them his moral approval.' His story bears no conceivable relation, either external or internal to the life of any people and it is impossible to account for it on the basis of any social or intellectual tendencies or as the expression of the spirit of any age. Poe

writes exclusively of a 'dream world' which has no point of contact with our own but Tagore's story challenges this assertion and it succeeds in securing for the narrative a degree of dramatic immediacy to make it a unique creation unmatched by Poe in world literature.

\*\*\*

## HOME WITHOUT WALLS

**Kumarendra Mallick\***

I love this old dilapidated home,  
the walls of all restrictions,  
all superstitions and old beliefs  
have fallen off...

The wind of freedom, so refreshing  
and so cool, from lands I didn't visit  
blows from all directions; what a bliss!  
the distant flowers I can breathe here.

No envy, no greed and no anger  
create a dark dungeon to enclose me,

---

I can see the birds that sweetly sing  
flying in and flying out as butterflies.

The rains I welcome, the storm I embrace,  
the old thoughts I push aside,  
the new ones eagerly I gather  
and all around me morning flowers  
blossom.

The dilapidated hut is my palace,  
silence and solitude provide me music,  
the morning and the evening  
open and close the gates to my paradise!

\* Sr. Grade Scientist NGRI (Retd.) Hyderabad

\*\*\*

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.

– Chinese Proverb

## BIRTH OF KNOWLEDGE

T.N. Dhar 'Kundan'\*

Knowledge is a child who grows and evolves in various directions with the passing of the time. A question arises as to who his parents, father and mother are. Answer is simple. The child is an abstract entity and so the parents too have to be abstract. My experience tells me that this wonderful child has a robust but magnificent majestic father called the Mystery. His mother is sweet and delicate featured known as Curiosity. When these two combine, the child knowledge takes birth. When the curiosity comes across mystery, it tries to know it in detail. It tries to figure it out and fathom its depths. Thus begins a long period of courtship. In course of time the two unite and produce knowledge. Let us take the example of the fallen apple, which was seen by Newton. This phenomenon was the mystery and the curiosity in the mind of Newton. At some point the two combined and gave birth to the child named gravitation. Curiosity of knowing the mystery of nothingness, in the minds of Indian sages of yore, produced an amazing child called Zero, which in course of time revolutionized the science of Mathematics and Philosophy.

The greatest mystery perhaps was the body of a living thing, humans, animals, birds, insects and the like. When the curiosity of the man entered into a long period of courtship with this and eventually caught up with it, a number of children were born named Anatomy, Biology, Zoology, Physiology etc. Similarly the marriage took place between the human curiosity and the mystery of vegetable world and the flora. Their marriage produced a sweet child called Botany. Looking at the open bright sky during the day and the night the curiosity of humans came across the mystery behind the stars, the moon, the sun and innumerable galaxies, their movements, orbits and inter relation as also distinct features of each of them. The result was the wonderful twins were born, which came to be known as Astronomy and Astrology. There are a number of beautiful damsels, all known as Curiosity. So is the case with muscular, strong and attractive band of youth, all called the Mystery. Over the past number of millennia, these two have fallen for each other and their wedlock has given us innumerable children with different names but collectively called Knowledge. Be that as it may.

---

\* Writer, Bengaluru

The peculiar feature of these children is that when they are born they have a particular form and name but in course of

time they grow in multidimensional ways, adopt different forms and names and are nurtured and brought up by many foster parents. They reveal their traits and features to different people in different ways and present themselves as a puzzle or a riddle of various hues. Sometimes their growth is fast and other times slow but growth there is always with the passage of time. These children grow and with their growth they present some more mysteries, more complex and more complicated. These mysteries are again confronted by the ever green curiosity of human brains and the result is the birth of many more children categorized as knowledge or perception or understanding.

Apart from the mystery surrounding the body of a living being, there are mysteries related to the heart, the mind, the intellect and the soul of a human being. While the mystery of the body dealt with a gross entity, these mysteries concern the subtle aspect of the human existence. These mysteries attract the curiosity of a higher level and of higher logic and reasoning. The two together create a unique child called philosophy of the spirit, which represents the subtlety and inner realm of the self. The mystery here starts with three inter-related questions, who am I; who my creator is and what is our relation? Now the curiosity to know the answers to these questions matures into giving shape to a number of theories, the children known as 'Jnana' or awareness. The children are of different kinds and they are given different

names. When the Self and the Creator are perceived as different, the child is named as 'Dwaita' or duality. When the two are perceived as one the child is called 'Adwaita' or non-duality. The two children have grown into mature adults and have their own reasoning and logic to establish their genuineness. The curiosity is madly in love with these children and why not? After all she is their mother and has given them birth. She, therefore, sees them sometimes with form and attributes, 'Saakara, Saguna' and sometimes without form and attributes, 'Niraakara, Nirguna'. These differences in perception do not matter so long as the curiosity is satisfied and the faith and belief in these children, 'Jnana' leads to bliss, the ultimate goal of all seekers of truth.

The mystery of the human mind attracted yet another curiosity and the two together gave birth to a child christened Psychology. He grew to reveal the functioning of human mind and the thought currents in relation to the outer world. He explained the four stages of the thought known in Indian scriptures as 'Para, Pashyanti, Madhyama, Vaikhari' the journey from the subtle to the gross. This created the need to exchange ideas and have communication, which in turn produced a medium, called language. Languages were used orally and in writing. The curiosity to write it down gave birth to scripts, first the pictorial ones and eventually the phonetic ones. Sound was another mystery and together with the curiosity to unravel its

multi-dimensional features it produced a number of children and these children matured into full fledged knowledge of different subjects, topics and disciplines, both in the realm of Science and Humanities.

Curiosity had some cousins called Necessities. While Curiosity discovered knowledge, her cousin created inventions. We often say that necessity is the mother of inventions. Truly so; while the curiosity unraveled the secrets of the mystery surrounding the nature, necessity found the ways and means to meet the requirements and challenges confronting the humans as a result thereof. Curiosity discovered why the Sun burnt and heated us, why the cold made us shiver and why the rain drenched us. Necessity invented shelters, clothes, and other items to protect ourselves from these vagaries. Necessity turned out to be more fertile than Curiosity. It gave birth to innumerable inventions, small and big. It invented means of communication and transportation, items of succor and nourishment, ways of rest and recreation, things of comfort and luxury and gadgets of all hues for a variety of uses.

Mystery has strange characteristics. One aspect of it is understood and unraveled, a number of other aspects raise their heads and the mystery deepens. Even

so Curiosity does not lose heart, patience or the resilience to go after it. This unending feature relating to the play of the mystery and his curiosity results in multiple discoveries. The wiser a man gets the more curious he becomes to know a lot more. He scans the nature, marshals the facts and draws conclusions that hold good for a period of time till newer facts come to light and replace the old ones. In this unending game of search and research and removing the veil from the secrets, a prominent part is played by the logical arguments and didactical reasoning. Sometimes and particularly in the sphere of the soul and the spirit, instinct and intuition also play a decisive role. At this auspicious time a different damsel called Faith courts the mystery and gives birth to the knowledge of far reaching consequences, which endeavours to describe the indescribable, portray the formless and to give shape to the infinite. This moment is the moment of reckoning when curiosity is finally satisfied and mystery gets demystified. This is the moment when faith takes over from curiosity and reason and Supreme Truth replaces the mystery. The curiosity gets merged into that, which so long was a mystery and what follows is the Bliss, the destination of all Saints and Sages, the aim of all seekers and the chosen deity of all devotees.

\*\*\*

## THE FOLK TEMPLES AND VEERSAIVAM

R K Devarakonda\*

The Siva temple in Ayinavolu, about 15 kilometers from Warangal railway station, is a famous folk temple visited by both rural and urban people. It is said to be constructed in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. The deity in the village, Mylara Deva, is an incarnation of Lord Siva. The Siva Linga in the temple came to be known subsequently as Mallikarjuna Swamy or Mallanna. Ayyanna Deva got Ayinavolu village as a gift from Chalukya Kings. He turned the village into a great military centre.

During the Kakatiya rule also Ayinavolu village was a military centre. According to Kreedabhiramam, Kakatiya rulers installed their deity of war Elamma Devi or Ekavera Devi and worshipped there. With spacious compound convenient for dances of valour, the temple was constructed during the time of Kakatiya Rudra Deva earlier than Thousand Pillars Temple. In Kreedabhiramam there is an account of Myalara deva and the *Jatara* for him at Ayinavolu.

Although less significant architecturally, in certain aspects it is in the typical Kakatiya style. Around the East-facing temple there is a long fortress-like compound wall with beautiful gateways like the Kakatiya *Thoranam*s. On the gates are lotus architecture, although structurally less elegant than the *Thoranam*s in Orugallu. On both sides there is sculpture of females carrying the gate of the *Thoranam*. At the entrance of the temple there is a mandapam with ten pillars and ceiling.

While the peak of the temple is in Chalukya style, the architecture of the multiple pillars of the main temple is in Kakatiya style. The sanctum, the inner temple and mandapam for prayers or dances invoking Lord Siva are square type. Around the temple is an elevated platform for *pradakshinam*. The platform below the ceiling somewhat resembles that of Thousand Pillars Temple. As part of the decoration above are sculpture of lotuses.

In the sanctum is the idol of Mylara Deva called Mallanna holding *dhamarukam* with right hand and a trident with his left. On his right side is Golla Kethamma and on his left is Balija

---

\* Prof. of English (Retd.) Kakatiya University, Warangal

Medalamma. On half of the lower part of Siva Linga are Mallanna, Kethamma and Medalamma symbolizing their merging with Siva presented as Linga of Brown stone. Khandelaraya was said to have married a Golla caste woman and another of Baliya caste. Hence the two castes lead the Jatara of Mallanna.

Oggu priests wearing loose trousers with jingling bells and upper garment with colourful glass beads stitched, wearing a tight cap on the head and holding a trident in hand will be dancing with frenzy of devotion. Several other types of frenzied dances signify folk culture in defending Saivam. The folk devotees fulfill their vows with various folk offerings in puja signifying valour.

In course of time the Kakatiya rulers developed the temple of Mallanna as a centre inspiring valour of the soldiers. Ganapati Deva and Rudrama Devi, were said to have visited this temple frequently. A special battalion of soldiers were bodyguards for the king in the war, having taken an oath that they were ready to lay down their lives in the battle. If the King died in the war, these soldiers would kill themselves because of loyalty. The warrior spirit of the loyal soldiers to defend the king would subsequently appear to have been present in the devotees of Lord Siva, called Veera Saivites prepared to defend Saivam from attacks by other religions like Buddhism, Jainism and Islam.

During the time of Kakatiya Empire the Mallanna temple inspired soldiers for battle to conquer other empires. It would also signify defending Saivam against onslaughts by other religions, demonstrating the supremacy of Lord Siva among gods. Like the special force of soldiers in the olden days who would swear loyalty to the king and be prepared to die in the process, the Veera Saiva devotees of Siva in subsequent times would be ready to sacrifice themselves upholding Saivam. Veera Saivam advocates castelessness in devotion to Lord Siva.

Before embarking on wars with other Emperors, the Kakatiya rulers would worship Ekaveera Devi. There would be dances of valour on the star-shaped elevated platform opposite the main temple. The pillars of the temple are decorated with lotus-shaped engravings and creepers. Although somewhat damaged, the ceiling is supported by a score of pillars. Jayapa Senani was said to have been asked by King Ganapati Deva to regularize the war dance 'Prerana' or "Perini" dance-form, famous today as *Perini Siva Thandavam*.

The style of construction of the compound wall of the temple resembles the military construction with two compound walls, the outer wall taller and the inner wall closely shorter, both joined on the top with huge stone walls. It was probably to enable the soldiers for watch, keeping vigil overnight moving between the two walls without being observed by the enemy. In

between the walls there was a space to enable light and air to enter inside. Under emergency circumstances the soldiers inside will be ready to attack the enemy. Devotees move through this path between the walls to go to the sanctum to fulfill their vows. Outside the temple is the idol of Lord Hanuman.

The Kakatiya kings and queens were great devotees of Mallikarjuna Swamy or Mallanna visited the temple at Ayinavolu. The temple is thronged by thousands of devotees of Veera Saiva caste and others worshipping Siva. The visits by the Kakatiya rulers to the temple is evident from stone inscriptions and other historical accounts over the centuries. The annual Jatara there was a spectacular event, the air reverberating with chanting of mantras and Veera Saiva religious programmes and homams performed by priests and participated by folk devotees. The thronging of devotees is climaxed during the Sankranti season.

#### KOMURAVELLI MALLANNA TEMPLE

Another folk temple near Warangal thronged by devotees is that of Komuravelli Mallanna built to inspire valour among soldiers. It is about 40 kilometers from Janagaon railway station. The deity famous in this village, known as Komuravelli Mallanna, is worshipped by devotees from far and wide during a *Jatara* from Sankranti to Ugadi.

In the temple, on either side of Mallanna are seated his consorts Golla Kethamma and Balija Medamma as in Ayinavolu. Small temples of Ellamma, Pochamma and Anjaneya are seen. Mallanna is war deity, an incarnation of Veerabhadra, of Lord Siva. In order to fulfill their vows, devotees offer curved whiskers signifying valour. For the frenzied devotees of modern times, swinging to dance and song, the Mallanna temple in Komuravelli inspires valour among Veera Saivites, the defenders of Saivam in folk style. Ayinavolu, Komuravelli and Kuravi temples are great centres of Veera Saivam gaining momentum when Saivam was under attack by other religions. Veera Saivam helped instill Saivam among common people of all castes. Veera Saiva caste devotees have been vibrant activists in defense of Siva.

In Komuravelli Mallanna Temple, the front-door West-facing, the sanctum of Mallanna is situated on the hillock. The front side projection of the temple rests on four square type pillars. The idol of Mallanna with his two consorts is made with traditional clay material. In the four hands of the deity holding a trident with one, a sword with another on the right side and on the left with *naagastra* in one and a vessel in the fourth. Overhead is the seven-headed hood of a serpent. The tall idol of Mallanna is awe-inspiring.

In the temple complex are the smaller temples of Veeranjaneya,

Pochamma, Ellamma, Veerabhadra and Kalika Devi. Generally devotees take bath in the pond before the temple and go inside the temple in wet clothes. During the three-month Jataras of Komuravelli Mallanna there will be ceremonies like "Veerabhadrapalleram" and "Agnigundam". Devotees walk on fire with frenzy. The temple reverberates with "Bonaalu" and "Archanalu" when the visitors will be frenzied with devotion. During the *Jataras*, Oggu dancers belonging to Kuruma and Yadava communities will be dancing rigorously. Thus at Komuravelli Mallanna temple cultural performances of the Kakatiya times have continued.

#### KURAVI VEERABHADRESWARA SWAMYTEMPLE

Another folk temple is Veerabhadreswaralayam, in Kuravi, about eight kilometers from Mahaboobabad railway station. The temple was constructed in 850 AD by Chalukya Bheema Raju. Subsequently it was part of Kakatiya empire. Many warriors were born in this region. Lord Veerabhadreswara was worshipped as an incarnation of Lord Siva. After coming to power, Kakatiya Betharaju got the temple constructed. Betharaju-II was said to have got a huge tank dug up at Kuravi.

Since ancient times Girijan warriors used to participate in wars. They constructed temples and worshipped the

warrior deity Veerabhadra in a spirit of valour. The temple at Kuravi gained prominence since it was the place for the first war camp of Kakatiya rulers. All Kakatiya rulers from Betharaju to Rudrama and Pratapa Rudra were said to have performed rituals of valour in the temple of Veerabhadra.

In the main temple could be seen the five-feet tall idol of Veerabhadra, an incarnation of Lord Siva, with several weapons in ten hands. To the left of Veerabhadra is the idol of Kali with trident in one hand, giving "abhaya" with the lower hand and on the other side with a lotus in the upper hand. To the right of the sanctum there is idol of Ganapathi and to the left is Lord Siva as Siva Linga.

Saivam in Kuravi reverberates in the air throughout the year, but more from Sivarathri to Ugadi. Devotees from all neighbouring states and from Telangana state will be visiting the temple of Veerabhadreswara with deep faith that they would be blessed with good health and get what they desire. Girijans turn up in large numbers at Jataras and other programmes. The temple is growing in importance in continuity of the religiosity of the Girijans and others devoted to Saivam.

#### VEERASAIVAM

While Saivam prevailed, some Kakatiya rulers initially patronized Jainism. But when there were attacks from the North

by other religions, they had to be prepared for conflicts and in the interests of the Kingdom, Saivism had to be changed into a new power. It had to be instilled with valour. Veera Saivism turned Saivism into a new force of devotion to Lord Siva as forward thrust with frenzy in self-defence. People and soldiers had to be prepared for self-sacrifice in the course of the mission to uphold Saivism. In consonance with that war-like spirit to spread Saivism, Kakatiya rulers developed the soldierly dance form *Perini Siva Thandavam*.

Kakatiya Soldiers and the sects of Mahesas, Pasupatis and Mailara Devas used to perform Siva Thandavam dance inspiring devotion to Lord Siva. *Perini Siva Lasyam* would be performed by men and women together, thus worshipping the Lord by music and dance. *Perini Siva Thandavam* is represented in the sculpture of Ramappa Temple of Lord Ramalingeswara. In recent times both Siva Thandavam and Lasyam are gaining importance in popular perception for perpetuating Saivism.

Saivism, although the most ancient and important aspect of Hinduism on the Indian Subcontinent, had to contend with other religions like Buddhism, Jainism and subsequently Islam. While keeping Saivism and Vaishnavam at peace with each other, Sankaracharya condemned Buddhism as the chief enemy of Hinduism and widely propagated Saivism traversing the length and breadth of the country. Sankaracharya

was the author of both Sivananda Lahari about Lord Siva and Bhajagovindam about Lord Vishnu. He insisted that all devotees of Hinduism should join in subduing the invading religions and promote Saivism.

After the shift from Jainism to Saivism by the Kakatiya rulers, the centres of Jainism turned into Saivism. Most of the Jain temples were changed into Saivism. Saivism had to withstand onslaughts not only by Buddhism and Jainism but also the Islamic invasions from the North. As in Kasi, in the South including Orugallu, there were Islamic attacks resulting in destruction of Siva temples. In order to subdue the invading religions, Saivism turned into the aggressive Veerasaivism.

The distinguished Telugu poet Palkuriki Somanadha who was said to be contemporary of Kakatiyas, was one of the earliest Telugu poets who brought Saivism close to the hearts and tongues of Telugu people writing about Siva. He wrote "Daripadas," couplets about Lord Siva in colloquial Telugu sung rhythmically, that remained in the hearts of common people. Belonging to Palkuriti in Warangal District, he wrote under the influence of Basaveswara of Karnataka who wrote Basavapuram. Veera Saivism was said to be founded by Basaveswara in the 12th century in Karnataka and subsequently continued by Palkuriki Somanadha in Telugu land as a movement with literary experiments. Basaveswara's Veera Saivism was said to be initially propagated by

Mallikarjuna Panditaradhya of Daksharamam in the Telugu region and taken up widely and developed by Somanadha in his writings. The idea of equality of all castes among the devotees of Siva maintaining that there is only one caste called "Siva caste" was stressed by Basaveswara in Karnataka and pursued in Telugu region by Somanadha more vigorously than Panditaradhya experimenting with new literary forms.

Like Basaveswara in Karnataka, Somanadha in Telangana condemned the Brahminical caste hierarchy, maintaining that among the devotees of Lord Siva, all castes are equal, and that there would be only Siva caste. In fact, Upanishads say that all humans are aspects of Divinity and that they should realize and uphold the good in themselves which stands for Divinity. However, traditional mantras written in ancient times by learned men and coming down the ages should be properly intonated for effect, whatever the caste of the person doing it.

Palkuriki used Saivism to awaken the common people. Like Bammera Pothana in Vaishnavam, Palkuriki in Saivism revolted against the established order in devotion to Divinity. Somanadha said that Telugu words also should be incorporated in the traditional Sanskrit texts in invoking Siva. Prayer to God will certainly be more effective if the devotee understands what he is saying. But traditional texts with profound meaning coming down the ages

cannot be erased, Properly intonating the traditional verses, the priest can explain the meaning to common people. Veera Saivites maintain that prayer to Lord Siva in colloquial language will excite the devotees as defenders of Saivism in spreading Saivism far and wide. *Basavapuram* is the first Veera Saiva treatise in Telugu inspiring people in devotion to Siva.

Initially Panditaradhya spread Veera Saivism in the Telugu region under the influence of Basaveswara of Karnataka. Palkuriki went beyond Panditaradhya in both the quantity and quality of writing as well as experiments in literary forms including "Daripada" or couplets in colloquial Telugu. Palkuriki thus gave literary significance to the colloquial Telugu of Telangana people while promoting Saivism.

Social equality of the devotees of Siva emphasized by Basaveswara and Palkuriki should be in consonance with the spiritual aspect of life. Human nature should be ingrained with spirituality. God will not discriminate devotees on the basis of caste, profession and social status. All humans are aspects of Divinity. Man should achieve self-realization about the essential divinity in himself to keep up good nature. As Chandogya Upanishad says, *Tattvamasi* (That Thou Art). Hence all devotees of God are equal in Hindu Dharma. All devotees of Siva should strive to uphold Saivism without claiming superiority for any particular caste. By adhering to the morals

of the spiritual lessons taught in the ancient Indian texts, the believers can live blissfully on earth. All the ancient Sanskrit texts on Saivism, instead of being rejected, should be rendered into colloquial Telugu to be easily understood by common people, and recited, thus spreading Saivism far and wide.

The contention of Veera Saivism that there is only Siva caste for all devotees

and that people of all castes are equal as devotees of Siva is unquestionable. Once it is taken for granted that all castes are equal, in-fighting among castes will be self-defeating like the in-fighting between Saivite and Vaishnavites. In Hinduism, the Supreme God is one, whatever the sects and sub-sects among devotees. All devotees of Divinity should realize this and maintain amity.

\*\*\*

## PATHLESS TRUTH

**Dr J.Bhagyalakshmi\***

Can you recall our togetherness  
When we shared everything?  
Be it pleasure or pain  
Philosophical thoughts or frivolous jokes  
Fun and frolic, trips and tours  
We shared them all  
In that world of ours, "I" meant "You"  
And the subject was "We".  
Never did a thought cross  
That there could be separate paths  
You go your way without uttering a word  
While I am stuck at the place we sojourned

---

\* Poet, Madanapalle

Now see the total chaos  
Uncharted path lies ahead  
Perhaps truth is pathless,  
But why on earth am I facing it?  
It doesn't sound good  
Nor does it look fair  
I can't even proclaim who wronged whom  
Only my inner voice tells me,  
"Gather your wits,  
there is darkness ahead."  
Can I hope for light after darkness?  
As for now,  
silence abounds here and around  
And your whereabouts not known.

\*\*\*

## MODERNITY IN INDIA - A BRIEF ACCOUNT

**Jayanthi Papparao\***

India, that is Bharat, believes from the ancient times that in the past, there existed not only rusted pieces of iron, but also diamonds and pearls that should be protected and preserved. Based on this belief, modernity in India took its roots in the scientific order of transformation. Modernity did not and does not take place in all the nations of the world in the same order and method. It took place based on the history of the pre-modern, past tradition, political and societal practices. India was under British rule and that was the history of the pre-modern times. The British ruled us for 190 years yet, India proved that India is India, that is Bharat, with its deep-rooted traditions and practices. Modernity in India took its roots around 1850, nearly a hundred years before our independence in 1947.

The salient concepts, features and characteristics of modernity are nationalism, secularism, egalitarian equality, humanity, deep desire for freedom, independence and democracy.

The people's movements in India for these goals rose like an oceanic uprising and continued from 1850 to 1947 till we

got freedom and independence with sacrifices, devotion and dedication. The movements began to create political and social awareness and consciousness amongst the people and made them participate actively in them. The people's movements and revolutions nowhere in the world continued for a hundred years since they abound with violence whereas in India they were non-violent Satyagraha with people's voluntary and active participation. The characteristics of modernity imbued with the people's movements took roots around 1850 A.D. The sepoy's revolt of 1857 was regarded as the first Indian independence movement and as such there would be nothing wrong if 1857 is taken as the dividing line between the pre-modern and modern in India.

This is the true history of modernity in India. But the British wrote an untrue history in their vested interests. In Europe, the renaissance movement arose in 15th and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries with specific objectives of liberty from religious beliefs and practices, humanity and discovering new worlds to market their surplus productions. The movement brought out immense transformation in the people's thoughts and living styles and standards for reforms. Modernity thus arose in Europe. The French revolution of 18th century, new political

---

\* Writer, Visakhapatnam

concepts and thoughts as regards political states and nations came up and it led to political awareness and consciousness for freedom, independence, equality and enlightenment and thus modernity took roots in Europe. The British made all efforts to bring about such form of modernity in India also in their vested interests. They setup business and marketing organizations, Christian missionaries, Anglo vernacular schools, industrialization, urbanization, use of the British goods and services and claimed that modernity in India took place because of their renaissance reforms.

European and British modernity is different from Indian modernity. They cut-off the pre-modern and made a new and fresh beginning for modernity. They built modernity on the corpse of the past and it stumbled slowly into complete material world. It means that modernity means living in material world with all its facilities and comforts. Indian modernity took its roots with firm belief that the pre-modern past had diamonds and pearls embedded in it that deserved to be protected and preserved as an inheritary past and ancient wealth invaluable and unmeasurable.

Some of the historical organizations, associations, people's movements that fought for freedom and independence are mentioned for convenience of understanding. British Indian Associations (1851), first independence war (1857), Indian National Congress (1885), Vande Mataram (1906-

1907), movement against Minto-Marlo reforms, Home Rule (1916), movement against Rowlat Act (1919), Bloodshed of Jalandhar (1919), Khilafat Movement (1920), Khaddar Movement (1921), movement against liquor (1921), Communist Party of India (1920), Simon, Go Back movement (1928), Salt Satyagraha movement (1930), Self-Satyagraha Movement (1940), Quit India Movement (1942)- roused political awareness and consciousness among the people for freedom and independence. From the soil, where the blood of Indians caused by the British flowed and where nonviolent satyagraha emanated from Indian side, Modernity took its roots in India and grew with the people's movements.

**Nationalism:** The first and foremost characteristic of modernity is nationalism. The British stated- India was not a country... Indians were not a nation, but a conglomeration of people of diverse creeds and sects. The middle class intellectual class retaliated vehemently putting forth the historical facts. The Indian historian, R.K. Mukherjee in his book-The Fundamental Unity of India (1914)-proved that their statement was baseless, untrue and was made with intolerance and hatred. Mahatma Gandhi pointed out-we were one nation with historical facts before the British came to India. H.T. Mazumdar, the Indian historian condemned their statement proving that the Hindu nation came into being in 1885 as a protest against British exploitation which gave rise to political

nationalism. [ H.T. Mazumdar- A grammar of Sociology- pp-264-265]. Indian National Congress was formed in 1885 giving rise to political nationalism. With such stone-age thoughts in their mind and heart how could the British give rise to modernity in India and in Indian peoples living with their renaissance reforms meant for intensifying their loot of India and spread of Christianity?

Freedom, independence and Equality: The British devoured the freedom and independence of India and treated Indians as slaves. James Mill stated that the Hindus like the eunuchs excel in the qualities of a slave (R.C. Majumdar-Historiography in Modern India, p-13). "What is empire, but the predominance of race" Lord Rosebury, formerly prime minister of England commented (James Joll- Europe since 1870-p-104). With such rock age and cruel thoughts in their mind and heart how could modernity rise in India under the British rule? When there was no freedom, independence and equality how can the question of modernity arise for Indians?

**Secularism and Rationalism:** The British made an act in 1830 allowing Christianity to spread in India. They began converting Hindus into Christians giving incentives in various ways and means and ill treated Hindus and Hinduism. They created intolerance and hatred amongst the people which ultimately led to sepoy revolt in 1857. Then how could modernity

arise for Indians under the British rule?

The British did not fulfill any conditions or requirements for modernity in India. Further, the renaissance reforms introduced by them were in their vested interests for intensifying their looting and spread of Christianity in India. The historical facts prove that their claim that the British laid the foundation for modernity in India was baseless, untrue and absurd.

The 1830 Act created agitation in the minds of the middle-class Indian intellectuals and they took up social reforms that grew as people's movements to end blind belief and practices, to eradicate discriminations and untouchability, to open Indian English schools by the Indians to check conversions of Hindus into Christianity and many similar reforms. Raja Ram Mohan Roy stood at the forefront of the movements. He established the *Arya Sabha* in 1815, *Brahma Samaj* in 1828, the modern concept of egalitarian equality that all are equal without any discrimination- was introduced. Hindu society was set up in 1848, Bombay Association in 1852, and Madras Hindu Literary Society, Madras Native Association and many similar Associations to awaken and develop Indian consciousness for true freedom and egalitarian equality. The modern concept that all are equal before the Act- was also introduced.

The most needed modern concepts of secularism - *Raghupathi Raghava Raja*

*Ram Eeshwar Allah tere naam- and similarly - Ram Rahim Ek Hai-* went deep in the mind and heart of the people and songs became the breath and blood of the Indian people. Mahatma Gandhi made that a standard of living for each and everyone in the nation, keeping in view the future of India and it was the historical contribution of Mahatma Gandhi.

The most modern historical concept of non-violent Satyagraha with which India got freedom and independence from British became a tool and weapon for improving democracies in the world.

The resolutions of the Congress Working Committee made at Wardah on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1942, were vast and widened modern democratic concept for universal peace. It was made in the context of quit-India movement. It demanded the British to quit India immediately to end fascism and racial discriminations for universal peace.

It is the true history of modernity in India and it took its roots for and from the people's movements for freedom and independence from the British on one hand and for social reforms and justice on the other.

\*\*\*

## A WISH SO GREAT

**Dr. C. Jacob\***

I want philosopher - teachers, lectures and professors,  
All engineers, doctors and even nurses,  
All politicians, patriots and rulers,  
All legislators, parliamentarians,  
All judges from top to bottom,  
All men in power public or private,  
All administrators at every level,  
I want thinkers, rationalists, logicians,

In every department and office,  
There must be the smell of philosophy everywhere,  
Every country must fill their lungs with scents and perfumes,  
And every man must breathe in peace and happiness all through his life,  
Then only man's dream of heaven can be inherited.  
Keeping Marcus Aurelius, the stoic philosopher - king of Italy once.  
That history has recorded of the entire world.

---

\* Retd. Dist. Judge Narsapur, West Godavari District.

\*\*\*

## GLOBAL LANGUAGE-A BOON OR A BANE

A. Mahesh Kumar\*

The expression 'Global Language' may give a wide range of meanings and interpretations. If the real sense of the term 'global language' is not defined properly it becomes a misnomer. It is certainly not as most people think a language spoken all over the world, a language recognized as an official language by all the nations of the world etc. All such notions are generally interpreted even by linguists which in turn is not what the expression 'global language' stands for in its true sense. The most appropriate definition of the term is that it is a language that owns a special status and plays a significant role in every country rather in most countries of the world. To gain a special status in a country does not mean that the language must be spoken as first or second or a foreign language but it should be the language primarily used as a mode of communication in most parts of the world. This is one of the significant characteristics of a global language. David Crystal elucidates the characteristics of a global language as follows: If there is one predictable consequence of a language becoming a global language, it is that nobody owns it any more. Or rather,

everyone who has learned it now own it- 'has a share in it' might be more accurate- and has a right to use it in the way they want.

The fact concerned with 'English as a global language' is its rapid movement spreading the wings like no other language has ever done till recently. In recent years, there is lot of confusion with the avalanche of expressions such as 'World English(es)', 'Global English(es)', 'International English', 'non-native varieties of English', 'International auxiliary English', 'International Standard English', 'World English', 'World Standard English', 'World Englishes', 'World language' and new Englishes being used by several scholars. However, in all the contexts the general notion of the subject is all about the special role of English language in the recent times that English has gained the special status for the people all over the world gave credence to it even though all nations do not use English as a first language or a second language. Therefore, the spread of English in the world is the most interesting linguistic study.

---

\* Assistant Professor, Dept. of English and Humanities, MVGR College of Engineering, Vizianagaram

In Britain, around 1000 AD, an Anglo-Saxon document by the title Colloquy of Aelfric, the abbot of Eynshyham

in Oxfordshire, was written. The expression-Colloquy- is a dialogue between a schoolmaster and his students who were associated with the monastic schools in Western Europe. The students used to learn Latin and Aelfric-one of the students of the school and the writer of Colloquy-mentioned that he glossed the Latin words of the dialogues into Anglo-Saxon equivalents. It is the result of the earliest recorded English conversation in History. The following opening lines of the work shed light on the prominence given to Latin and the observation of their own linguistic problems.

The quote below is cited in an article 'A thousand years of English', David Crystal, Sydney Morning Herald, 1999.

We children ask you, master, to teach us to speak correctly, because we are unlearned and we speak badly' what do you want to say?' asks the teacher. What do we care what we talk about,' reply the students,' as long as we say it right'.

Pupils used to read Latin at meals and on occasions when they joined in service oriented programmes. The rules were very strict in monasteries with respect to correctness of spoken Latin. Any error committed by the pupil would be viewed seriously and they were subjected to punishment. During that period English was distinctly a budding language when nobody would have imagined its glorious future surpassing all other popular tongues like

French, Latin, Greek, Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, and Italian. "The birth of a language is never an event like the birth of a baby, one moment silent and passive residing in a comfortable womb, the next moment crying, flailing, thrashing about - a noisy newcomer to a strange and brave new world."

The success of a language is directly proportional to the success of its users. Latin was the international language in all the countries that were under the reign of the Roman Empire. A language getting an international recognition is not based on its syntax, cultural heritage, values, literature or form but based on the people who use it. In fact it is not based on how many people use but based on how dynamic and powerful those users are. The major contributing factors for the spread of English Language on a global front are the following four domains: Politics, technology, culture, economy. The political power is the most dominating factor that leads to the growth of English language to other nations. In this context, the pivotal contribution for the rise of English language happens to be the British colonization across many countries in the world.

There was a wide spread misconception that British Isles have been monolingual. Tracing the evolution of English language it is understood that British Isles have been multilingual. According to Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation written around 730,

the quote below is cited from "The History of English Language"-David Crystal for BBC VOICES Project Website, November 2004. "This island at present ...contains five nations, the English, Britons, Scots, Picts, and Latins, each in its own peculiar dialect cultivating the sublime study of Divine Truth."

The legacy of English language began when it arrived in England from the Germanic family of languages. It had taken a great linguistic leap from the other counterparts including Dutch, Faroese, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Icelandic, and Gothic. The earliest inhabitants of the land were Celts and their language has survived in the varieties of Irish languages. Julius Caesar, the Roman Emperor, invaded British Isles in fifty five BC. Around hundred years later during the reign of Claudius, he could control the southern part of the nation. English language initially began to spread around the British Isles. Further it moved to Wales, Cornwall, Cumbria and Scotland. In the year 1066, Norman invasion happened and many nobles from England shifted north to Scotland. The arrival of nobles in Scotland brought great linguistic changes in the region. Later, the British conquered Ireland in twelfth century as-well. All the above movements were measured only at the local level (within Europe) but English language has not showed its influence at a global level till the end of sixteenth century. The British Empire was the largest empire in the history of the world and it had attained

global power from about early seventeenth century till the end of nineteenth century. At its zenith, it was often described as "the empire on which the sun never sets" conveying the idea that the Sun was always shining on one of its territories. As a result of this legacy, its culture, language, traditions, religion and ethos were widespread among the British Colonies.

In the context, it is essential to throw light on the most significant question 'Is global language a boon or a bane?' Surprisingly, the answer is both Yes and No. It is like two sides of the same coin. The following are the predictions of the positive and negative effects of English as a global language.

Positive Effects:

- World problems can be addressed, comprehended and resolved at a faster pace.
- In spite of various differences among Nations, Cultures, Sects, Religions, Regions, and belief systems among humans- only a common language can unite people towards marching ahead to a new paradise on earth.
- Accepting, assimilating and adopting cultures is possible with one language and as a result people broaden their horizons in all spheres of life.
- Common language can create fresh opportunities in various domains including education, business, travel, industries etc.
- Fosters mutual respect and promotes a

platform for international intelligibility along with social equality.

Negative Effects:

- Languages become endangered resulting in chaos in the world.
- People lose their identity, culture and many valuable resources (e.g. literary texts) of the world.
- Speakers of the world language dominate and dictate others in all spheres of life.
- People become mechanical and lead a mundane life without creativity and novelty.
- World loses all great treasures of inheritance.

\*\*\*

## LILAVATI HOSPITAL

Gopal Lahiri\*

In front of the mirror  
Sunrays scissors through the colourless  
paintings  
Falling in stripes  
The narrow suture, the dead tissue  
Behind the pastel blue curtain,  
Coils and uncoils the memories.

Tetanus shots and the aftercare of bleach,  
Blood clotting  
Antibiotics and dressings,

---

\* An earth scientist, bilingual poet, writer, editor,  
critic and translator, Mumbai

The slow drip, the slamming of heart,  
Curve out trend lines.  
A day full of stories of the past  
The long tube searching for breath,  
The other cells  
Wafting in the aroma of medicine.

This time, this is the time  
I will search the old caesarean scar  
Listen to the wind hurl pellets of rain  
At the glass window  
Facing the distant creek.

Time is not as different as it was.

\*\*\*

## LAVI

Suresh Kumar\*

Sanu started walking back home. All the way he kept on thinking about his daughter and what old Panditji said about her. The image of his daughter being a widow came alive in his eyes. The thought of her being Thakur's concubine nauseated him. He felt like crying and hitting himself or abusing old Pandit for what he said about his daughter. It was almost afternoon when hungry, exhausted and worried Sanu got back home. Frustration and desperation could be read on his face easily but he didn't say anything. He burst into tears seeing his baby sleeping unaware of her future. When his wife asked him repeatedly about his sadness, Sanu told her what Panditji said about their daughter. Pandit's prophecy disturbed his wife Mangla and mother Natho. After a long discussion on the child's future it was decided by the family members that their newly born child should be left to God's mercy. Next day the village elders gathered at Sanu's house to attend *namakarna samskar* (naming ceremony). After a few considerations the newly born was called Lavi, meaning lacking something.

The Parents were lost in the care and upbringing of their first child. And five

---

\* Asst. Professor, Dept. of English, Govt. College Ani, Himachal Pradesh

or six summers passed like this. They could not think of Lavi's education as there was no school in the surrounding villages. Only some high caste rich boys were sent to the missionary school in Shimla. So it was decided that the girl should be trained for domestic, agricultural work and cattle rearing till her seventh or eighth year and would be married after she attains puberty. One day while going to work in Thakur Maan Singh's field, Sanu happened to meet Magni of the adjacent village Palth. Both Sanu and Magni had a conversation in a formal way. After a while, Magni started to express his grief for being childless. He was very unhappy to say that he married four women but none of them could present a son for him. He expressed his regret in famous ironical pahari saying, 'one who has gold has no ear, and one who has ears doesn't have gold to make an ornament.' Magni was more than sixty five years old. He was asthmatic so he was struggling to breathe normally. Magni told Sanu that he had five acres of land, gold ornaments, brass utensils, and lots of woolen clothes but had no use for them. Tears came into his eyes when he said saying, 'There is no heir of my property. It will go to the strangers. I want a son to look after me, my property and to keep my progeny alive. I shall be happy if I could have even a deaf or dumb son.' Sanu was sympathetic

towards Magni as he was well aware what it does mean to be childless. Sanu suggested that Magni should marry once again and should pray his Ishtdev to bless him with a son. Sanu further suggested Magni that he was rich enough to offer a goat's sacrifice to please the local deity. Listening to all this, Magni was happy that his riches was well known among kolies, the people of his own caste. But he simply added with a sigh that he had already offered three or four goats but these scarifies could not please the local deities and he still was childless. Sanu was impressed to listen this. He was surprised that among koli community some people are rich enough to offer four or five goats to local deities and feed hundreds of people four or five times but he could not say anything. Noting Sanu's gesture, Magni began to say: "You know, Sanu, for a man his real wealth is his child. Gold and land do not keep a man's progeny alive. It is the son who keeps his father's name in the world. And a man who can't have a son is unfortunate and must be cursed. I have preserved my gold and land for a woman who can beget a son for me". Sanu was listening to all this carefully but had no words to speak in front of wise and prosperous old Magni. Seeing Sanu silent, Magni mumbled something and turned to say a bit loudly, 'Is there any marriageable girl in your relation?' Sanu's eyes were filled with sympathy for Magni but he was sorry to say that he could not find any marriageable girl for him.

After a short silence, Magni turned

towards Sanu: 'Listen dear Sanu, I heard that you too have a daughter. Do you?' Sanu was startled to listen to this but controlling himself he said: 'Yes but she is just a child'. 'How old?' Hiding his curiosity Magni asked. Bewildered and confused Sanu could not understand what Magni meant. So he said in very low voice: 'I don't know it verbally but must be of five or six years. She is very dear to her mother and grandmother so still unweaned.' Magni brought a pretentious smile on his face and said: 'Sanu, you know that I am an old man who has seen many forms of life. So you should take my words seriously. First thing is that a woman is never too young to marry and too true to trust. Always remember, however, pampered and dear a girl may be but she should not be kept unmarried in the house. It attracts evil eyes and causes pollution if she attains puberty in the parental house. You know that even rich Thakurs marry their daughters before puberty. Why because they are highly cultured and deeply religious people. They know that keeping a girl unmarried in the house for many years is a sin. Now you too think Sanu marrying a girl after puberty does not mean that she can escape the hardships and pangs decided by God. So it is better to marry a girl off as soon as possible. An early marriage will give her an opportunity to set her own house and have children in young age to support her in old age'. Sanu found it logical but he could not even think of his daughter's marriage. Controlling his emotions, Sanu moved his head in affirmation. After taking Sanu in confidence,

Magni asked him whether he can offer his daughter to him to save his pedigree. Sanu was struck dumb to hear these words. Magni's words fell like hammer blows on him. He felt like catching the sick old man's collar proposing a marriage with his little daughter. But he could say nothing and got up to go. 'You take your decision and send message to me. But don't discuss the matter with your wife. She will discourage you by her pretentious love for her girl. You are a man Sanu, so stay steady and firm if something happens like this. After all it is the matter of your dear child's future. I promise that your daughter will be looked after well at my place. She will get fresh food, milk, butter, clothes and shoes but not the left overs from Thakur households. And as a young woman she will get the comforts of a queen'. Magni's words made Sanu feel embarrassed but he could do nothing except cursing his fate. Realizing Sanu's dilemma, Magni bade good bye to him saying, 'All right you go now, you may get late for work. I know Thakurs are task masters and they do not listen to a koli worker'. Saying this, coughing, Magni got up to go. Sanu went his way without greeting the old man. All the way to Thakur's house, Sanu was thinking about his helplessness and Magni's proposal. Sometimes he felt like hitting the old man for making fun of his poverty and coaxing him to hand his daughter over to him. But he could not decide what to do. Finally, he planned to insult Magni by refusing to offer his daughter to him and telling him that he should save his gold and money to spend on his funeral. But suddenly

he remembered that his daughter Lavi was manglik. His anger left him and he was clamped by a gratuitous fear.

It was almost evening when Sanu reached home. After eating his dinner, he went to bed where his wife and daughter were already sleeping peacefully. It was mid night but Sanu could not sleep. His mind was hovering all around old Magni and his words. Seeing him tossing, his wife asked: 'Why are you so upset tonight? Why can't you sleep?' Heaving a cold sigh Sanu turned to his wife and started to say in a very low voice: 'Today I met Magni'. Half in sleep, Sanu's wife said carelessly: 'What did he say? Why are you thinking so much about him?' Sanu was silent. He had nothing to say. His wife advised him to sleep and not to give importance to what the old man said to him. But it was not easy for Sanu. He started to say again: 'You don't know that he wants to marry our Lavi to get a son by her'. Startled Sanu's wife got up and asked angrily: 'He has lost his head now. He keeps on talking about marriage, that skeleton. Why doesn't he keep fire ready? He wants to marry our Lavi...' 'Why does it affect you if he wants to marry our Lavi?' Sanu asked his wife in a cracked voice. 'Are you yourself? Lavi is delicate, unweaned child? Can you hand her over to that sick old man?' said his wife. Tears came in Sanu's eyes. He all but wept: 'You are right dear. Do you think Lavi is a piece of your heart alone? You know well that I can't think of giving even her hair. But why do you forget that our Lavi is manglie? And

you know what happens to a manglie'. There was an acute silence, neither Sanu nor his wife spoke but spent a sleepless night.

In the morning, Sanu and his wife got up early to discuss the matter with Natho, Sanu's widowed mother. Natho listened to Sanu and his wife carefully but she was not upset or worried anxious about it. Rather, she scolded them for creating fuss early in the morning. She asked in harsh tone - 'Are we Brahmins or Thakurs to think much about widowhood? You know the marriage of a widow is not a problem for us Kolies and also for Chamar. Don't you know my aunt Rajjo had eight or nine marriages after she lost her first husband? Who will stop our Lavi?' She further added that if a rich Koli like Magni is ready to marry Lavi we should not refuse: 'There is nothing wrong about it. You know he is old and sick and sure to die after two or three years. You ignorant fools. Don't you know that his death will minimize the effects of Lavi's evil stars and she will no more be an inauspicious woman? She can be married to any man later, after the old man's cremation.' Natho's logic struck both Sanu and his wife but they found it difficult to give their child to an old man in marriage. Finally, they decided to discuss the matter with Jogi, Lavi's maternal uncle, another elder and well wisher. Like Natho, Jogi too could not find any harm in Lavi's temporary marriage with Magni. After a serious discussion, finally, it was decided that Lavi should be married to Magni to minimize the effects of evil stars. All the

relatives were happy to go to the wedding feast of rich Magni. Sanu and his wife were disturbed to imagine the scene. They consoled themselves: "What they were doing is just for their daughter's future. Why should they curse themselves. They are not selling their child for money".

Everyone was worried how a little girl who still sucks mother's nipples and sometimes wets the bed can be married to an old man. Everything was left to God. Holy Thursday was decided for a simple wedding. On the Thursday evening, Lampa, an old village man and Magni's distant cousin was sent to Sanu's house with some of the ornaments and cosmetics for their bride. Lampa was attended and served well by Sanu and some of his close relations. There was feast of suzi halva, potato curry and chapattis. All the twenty five or thirty people present in Sanu's house attended Lavi's marriage, ate to their heart's content and kept on swaying here and there. Lavi unaware and indifferent to the gathering was lost in her games with other little children who were attending her marriage. It was in late night that exhausted, she slept in her mother's lap. Sanu called Lampa to put auspicious golden ring on Lavi's finger. The ring could not fit her little thin finger. So the gap was covered by red thread. The child was sleeping carelessly and unaware of the happenings. But her mother had no blood to circulate and no tears left to shed.

On the Friday morning some wedding songs were sung by the village

married women and then all the guests were served lentil, rice and ghee. In the afternoon, Lavi was given customary bath by her maternal aunts. A very simple ceremony was performed and just a few mantras were recited in the open field by Kashi Nath Shastri. Holy fire was burnt to ensure that Magni could be counted as Lavi's first husband according to shastras. Lavi was given new clothes and then wrapped in red shawl she was taken to Magni's house on her father's back. The caravan of about eleven or twelve people was received well and attended respectfully by Magni and his relatives. After some reciting mantras, some other rituals were performed and Lavi and Magni were accepted as a couple according to dharma. Everyone was happy and a fat goat was slaughtered to serve meat for guests. All the vegetarians were served with rice, different curries and ghee. All guests were happy to eat delicious food and see Magni's rich keepings. Everyone wished that that Magni should have been a young man but... In the late night, the celebration took the form of singing and dancing. The village boys and girls sang some folk songs and danced on the cadence of local drum. Lavi was served sweets, milk and butter. She was happy to see so many people singing and dancing. After watching the people dancing, Lavi as usual slept in her mother's lap. People were dancing in one room. Deep in sleep Lavi was handed over to Magni and his two wives Gangi and Beli. Exhausted, Lavi kept on sleeping without knowing anything. After spending a night with strangers unknowingly, Lavi got up at

her usual time in the morning and enquired about her mother and started weeping. Magni and his two wives tried to convince her saying that she had gone to bring a bundle of grass for the cow and will be back shortly. Not ready to listen to them, Lavi started screaming loudly calling her parents: "ijji (mother) and baba (father) frequently. Some of the guests also tried to pacify Lavi by giving her the toys and eatables but Lavi could not be controlled. Seeing the child crying, an old woman suggested that Sanu and his wife who just said adieu should be called back as the girl was too terrified. As per the suggestion, a young boy, Parma was sent to Sanu's house to call him and his wife back. Sanu and his wife got back to Magni's house. It was only after seeing her parents that Lavi stopped crying. Lavi was with her parents in one room. Finding Magni alone in the next room his wives scolded him for marrying a small girl at a time he should visit shrines and pray for peace. Magni tried to console them saying: 'You know well why I married this little girl. Try to understand that this crying girl will beget me a son one day to carry forward my legacy and perform death rites for you both. Is there anything wrong about it? Care her as your own womb otherwise get ready to die without any ritual and become witches.' They were silent.

It was the winter season, cold chilling air, sleets, thunders storm accompanied by hale and fog were frequent in remote Shimla hills. This season was troublesome for Magni as he was asthmatic.

One day while sitting in front of his burning hearth, Magni said to himself: 'This weather is dangerous for me. There is often dense fog outside and I fear I can die of suffocation. And if I die God knows what will happen to my land and property. Every piece of my land, and every stone and slate of my houses will be sold by the nephews of these old women.'

Magni kept on receiving frequent asthmatic attacks. One day it was snowing heavily. There was terrible dark outside. Magni, struggling hard for breath fell unconscious. Local vaid (alchemist) Heitya declared Magni dead. All the villagers and relatives were stunned and shocked to see the most influential koli laying dead. Magni's relatives were informed of his death in the night amidst the heavy snow and the chilling cold. The villagers came to guard the dead body till morning. Lavi was deep in sleep and was unaware of the happenings in the house. Some people advised that Lavi should be brought to cry

for her husband and put a few drops of tears on his dead body. Though, old in age after all he was her husband, her dharma and her God. Everyone was confused. Finally, an old man Chandu suggested that Magni had two wives to cry and wet the dead body with tears. It is true that Lavi was his wife but she was too young to understand all this. Moreover, there is a danger in bringing her near his dead body. His ghost may try to possess her as he died with a strong desire for a son by her. His soul was restless and worried about his gold and land he left behind. He further suggested that if his ghost attacks her she may die and if a virgin girl died like this, who can save the whole village from her ghost? There may be some more deaths. Finally, Chandu's advice was followed and sleeping Lavi was taken to the adjacent house of Mansa. The villagers lifted the dead body and started walking towards funeral ground while Lavi was brought back to her house by her father in his lap to wait for another marriage.

\*\*\*

The CNN photographer John was told that a twin engine plane would be waiting at the airport. Arriving at the airport he spotted a plane warming up outside the hangar. He jumped in & said: "Lets go." The pilot happily took off. Once in the air John told the Pilot: "Fly low over the valley so I can take pictures of the fire on the hill."

Pilot: "Why?"

John: "I'm the photographer for CNN. I need to get some close up shots."

The pilot was strangely silent for a moment, then asked: "So what you're telling me is you're not my flying instructor?"

Life is Short.

Always Ask, Never Assume...

Source: Internet

## AMITAV GHOSH'S 'IBIS TRILOGY': A STUDY ROLE OF OPIUM IN AMITAV GHOSH'S 'IBIS TRILOGY'

**Deepa Bavanasi\***

For the past two decades Indo-Anglian Literature acquired a new change and life. The exploring thoughts on Colonization, Decolonization, Recolonization and Neo-colonization demonstrate the study of migration, diaspora and rootlessness in the works of talented second generation of Indian Writers. Among the second generation of writers, Amitav Ghosh has occupied a pinnacle place. Each of his books is driven by his commitment to certain personal opinions and his own specific views. In the present study, an effort has been made to reach out to the substance of *Ibis Trilogy* written by Amitav Ghosh. It is a post-colonial critique of the imperial exploration of the people of Asia. Two major historical phenomena act as a backdrop to the plot of the 'Ibis Trilogy'- 'The Great Experiment' which involved transport of indentured labour from India to work on the sugar plantations of Mauritius and the trade of Opium between India and China. The British played a significant role in both of these. Ibis Trilogy has three novels-*Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of*

*Smoke* (2011) and *Flood of Fire* (2015). The story is set in the first half of the 19th century. It deals with the trade of opium between India and China run by the East India Company and the trafficking of coolies from Calcutta to Mauritius. The trilogy gets its names from the ship, Ibis, on board which most of the main characters meet for the first time. These books are not easy books. They are fat and dense books. Each book of trilogy is quite different from the other. It is not like one long book divided into three books. The series is high on research. Ghosh went to many places in China, Hong Kong and Singapore to go through many books and documents in libraries. It all started in 2004. It was a very different and difficult research. The themes of these books are free trade, the opening up of China to the outside world and migration. The first two books, *The Sea of Poppies* and *The River of Smoke* deal with the events leading up to the first opium war. The third book, *The Flood of Fire* encompasses the military and non-military events revolving around the war, where in English East India Company backed by British naval support wages a limited war against China, eventually arm-twisting the middle Kingdom to accept a trade deal that favoured the British. Let us examine each book of the trilogy.

---

\* Research Scholar, Dept. of English, ANUCDE, Guntur, AP, India

### **Sea of Poppies:**

*Sea of Poppies* is a story of troubled people. It is set prior to the opium wars, on the banks of holy river Ganges and in Calcutta. The characters in the novel are like Poppy seeds that outgrow the field as if they form a sea. It is a story about understanding, common and ill-fated people. Deeti, a simple lady is introduced at the very beginning of the novel. She is a dutiful mother and a house wife. Her husband Hukum Singh is a crippled man who works at Ghazipur opium factory. Deeti is given opium at the time of her marriage so that her brother-in-law could consummate the marriage in place of her infertile husband. Deeti begets a daughter, Kabutri, from her brother-in-law. After the death of her husband, she prepares to go through sati ritual but a well-wisher of Deeti, Kalua, comes to her help. He rescues her and they elope and stay together. For the conventional villagers this is not acceptable. As both of them cannot return, they become indentured servants on the Ibis, the ship. The Ibis becomes a refuge to the people who are troubled for one reason or another. Ibis' destiny is a tumultuous voyage across the Indian Ocean to the Mauritius Islands. The people on the board are array of sailors, coolies and convicts. As they sail down the Hooghly and into the sea, their old family ties are washed away. They view themselves as ship brothers, who will build whole new lives for themselves in the remote Islands where they are being taken. The other people of deprived sects on the ship are Neel, Paulette, Ah Fatt and

others. All of them share a common past disrespect. Paulette, the orphaned French Botanist who passes as a coolie and Neel, an Anglophile Raja, who is wrongly sentenced to a penal colony on Mauritius. The panorama of characters makes this novel as a master piece in the fictional world.

### **River of Smoke:**

The next novel of Amitav Ghosh is *River of Smoke*. In September 1838, a storm blows up on the Indian Ocean and the Ibis is caught up in the whirl wind. When the seas settle, five men have disappeared-two lascars, two convicts and one other passenger. Among the survivors are Neel, Paulette and Deeti. The other ships are also caught in the same storm-'The Anahita', a vessel carrying opium to Canton and 'The Redruth', which is on a botanical expedition, also to Canton. This novel is woven on the warps of history with woofs of individual lives. It is the tale of a city-the city that is called Canton in the years that led to the first opium war that shocked China and caused its awakening. China is exposed to the modern western ideas and practices. The imperial mission of civilizing the natives in the colonies, teaching them the gospel-of Jesus and of the free trade, and of making the world a better place for themselves was the central factor in this novel. In *River of Smoke*, Seth Bahram can be seen as an ally and commissioner Lin Zexu as an antagonist of the imperial powers. Opium, the powerful economic force, was a very potent drug. It

controlled human brains and leads to addiction. Those who controlled the production and supply of opium also controlled its slaves. Opium became the medium of strengthening and expanding the Empire, as it was behind the generation of huge revenues that went into the Empire building. Chinese did not want none of British products. Opium became the medium of change when it was insidiously inserted into the Chinese market, legally and later, against the law of the land. Lion Zexu was appointed imperial maritime commissioner in 1838 to stop the opium war (1839-42). The addicts of China suffered a lot. They wanted opium. So the Chinese emperor made a war against the British but the war ended with a shameful defeat for the Chinese. This defeat opened China to the Western influence and resulted into its modernization. Free trade was the excuse that the English merchants gave to explain away their unforgivable conduct. They had the license to exploit under the banner of free trade.

#### **Flood of Fire:**

The Third book of the Ibis trilogy is *Flood of Fire*. It deals with the fortunes of the travels on board after China's defeat in the opium war. It is 1839 and tension has been rapidly mounting between China and British India following the crackdown on opium smuggling by Beijing. With no resolutions in sight, the colonial government declares war. One of the vessels requisitioned for the attack, 'The Hind', travels eastwards from Bengal to

China, sailing into the midst of the first opium war. The turbulent voyage brings together a diverse group of travellers, each with their own agenda to pursue. Among them is Kesari Singh, a havildar in the East India company who leads a company of Indian Sepoys; Zachary Reid, an impoverished young sailor searching for his lost love, and Shireen Modi, a determined widow en route to China to reclaim her opium-trader husband's wealth and reputation. *Flood of Fire* follows a varied cast of characters from India to China, through the outbreak of the first opium war and China's devastating defeat, to Britain's seizure of Hong Kong. It is a beautiful novel in its own right, and a compelling conclusion to an epic and sweeping story.

The trilogy involved tremendous amount of research of the novelist on Opium war. Ghosh says that he loved every character that populates the trilogy. He enjoyed writing about all the characters. The Ibis trilogy is not a lineal series, we can read any of the books as stand-alone novels as well. Ghosh says that there is a sense of loss with the end of the series, but argues that he will not miss any of the characters. "They are always with me. They have become an important part of my life", (interview to *The Hindu*, *The Beginning of an End*) says Amitav Ghosh. Post the trilogy, Ghosh is working on a couple of non-fictional projects, one of them dealing with research he undertook for the series.

Golden Article reprinted from *Triveni* March\_April, 1930

## SAMUEL BUTLER: THE SINISTER PROPHET OF RENAISSANCE

K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar \*

*Satire has always shone among the rest,  
And is the boldest way, if not the best,  
To tell men freely of their foulest faults,  
To laugh at their vain deeds and vainer  
thoughts.*

I could not better introduce my readers to the author of the immortal "Erewhon" (Anagram for Nowhere) than by quoting the above lines from a wise poet on the function of that form of literature to which "Erewhon" belongs. For Samuel Butler, (to be distinguished from his illustrious namesake, the author of "Hudibras") was foremost and first, as writer and as man, the satirist prophet of modern democracy. He tried more than anyone else in his own generation, and as much as anyone afterwards, to rouse his countrymen from the colossal complacency of their social and religious torpor, and though he was not heeded for many years, he had in the end the satisfaction of seeing his life-long, unremitting labours, not wasted, but seriously appreciated. English literature could boast of many satirists through the centuries: but so far there have been only two who were impelled to write

and say what they did by no spark of malice, no inborn hatred of humanity and no questionable interests of self-aggrandisement. One was Swift, the creator of Gulliver: the other, the subject of the present sketch.

Samuel Butler's life career synchronised more or less with what has roughly been labeled as the Victorian Era. Born in 1835, a few years before the coronation of that august Queen, he lived throughout the heyday of her long and glorious reign, and died just as England was coming to realise that she had indeed lost her aged and good Queen, in 1902. Butler was thus an atom of the Victorian Age and felt profoundly the rhythm of its swing and tasted in abundance the sweets of its prosperity. But, almost alone among his compatriots, he had the penetrating hawk-like vision to gauge and expose the callous respectability and smug virtue of his age, whether in the sphere of religion, education or politics. He was in this respect what his great continental contemporary, Henrik Ibsen, was to the Scandinavian countries. In the words of George Bernard Shaw, he too had, like Ibsen, "the same grim hoaxing humor, the same grip of spiritual realities

---

\* Former Vice Chancellor of Andhra University.

behind material facts, the same toughness of character holding him unshaken against the world.”

It is perhaps true to say that in Butler's works the literary artist, a very considerable one though he undoubtedly is, is all but obscured by the social satirist and philosopher. But at the same time it is impossible to conceive a greater indication of lunacy on the part of some of the academical historians of English Literature than the wanton exclusion of the very name of Samuel Butler from their hallowed studies of Victorian Letters. Undergraduates promenading in the quadrangles and halls of Universities have been and still are kept in religious ignorance of the work of the man who did more to liberate the soul of youth from the short-sighted shackles of convention, tradition and age superiority, than did Washington to free his country or Luther to curb the abused power of Rome. When Butler's devastating satire, "The Way of All Flesh", was published in 1903, it might justly have created a sensation in literary, social and ecclesiastical circles. On the contrary, it just disappointed one's most sanguine expectations. "It drives one almost to despair of English Literature," wrote Shaw, shortly afterwards, "when one sees so extraordinary a study of English life as Butler's posthumous "way of All Flesh" making so little impression. Really, the English do not deserve to have great men." Moreover, the deservedly popular "English Men of Letters Series" has not yet given us a volume on Butler, though many lesser men

have been apportioned distinguished places in its array of authors. Not that there is no "Life" of Butler: we have it, an indubitable work of genius, in Mr. Festing Jones's "Life."

Within the limits of this brief study, any attempt to give details of Butler's life would be grossly ineffectual. It would corrupt and crumple what should otherwise be a holy study. Suffice therefore to say that Samuel Butler very early in life produced a series of audacious books soaked in what was called irreligious and unorthodox speculation, in which he apparently made common cause with Charles Darwin and his theory of Evolution. His translation of Homer for the benefit of the working classes may also be mentioned, to give an idea of the incessant state of his intellectual activity. He wrote essays on a variety of topics, putting forward tantalising theories and fighting with his pen, unabashed and undismayed, the multitudinous army of his detractors and critics. He set to prove in one of his pamphlets that the author of "Odyssey" was a Sicilian woman, and somewhere in one of his novels he remarked that the real author of "The Iliad" was a clergyman. These are odd vagaries and he had his share of them like most men of genius. But over and above the flippancy of such innumerable tracts, he erected a few marble edifices finished with the highest art, the most careful and scrupulous sincerity, and certainly with unimpeachable honesty. It is on account of these products of his towering genius that he will ultimately take his place among the world's immortals.

The sincerity and seriousness of purpose of the author of "Erewhon" are writ large on the painting by Goggin, hung in the National Portrait Gallery. It is of course not a lovable face, -in the ordinary meaning of the phrase. There lurk beneath it passionate and all-consuming fires-fires that repel with insurmountable energy-fires that glow in their radiance and alarm us with their intensity-fires, so to say, fiery. Nevertheless, a truer and a keener understanding of his personality is possible: it is welcome too, for it will endear Samuel Butler to ourselves as the ambiguous lover of humanity, who loved in contradictions, -with pity, with unconcern, with malignity, -who loved in spite of his mockeries, in spite of the cruel twists of his satire that pointed towards his brethren with an unerring aim at every unexpected turn. In short, Samuel Butler was no "demonic imp": he was not in any sense a Mephistopheles: it was and is and will ever be possible to love him, to find in him a safe guide, a tolerant critic, a tried and trusted friend.

As an essayist Samuel Butler holds a unique place in later Victorian Letters. The few volumes of his collected essays, in particular his "Note Books" and that fascinating book, "Life and Habit", give ample proof of the sureness of his touch and are testimony in themselves as to how subtle a master of the craft of the essay Samuel Butler really was. "Ramblings in Cheapside", "The Humour of Homer", "Thought and Language", and indeed many

more equally fine specimens of his work are a perennial delight to the ear and no mean feast to the reader's fancy. The severity of his facial expression, so predominant in Goggin's portrait, is unsubstantial. He talks gaily, simply, directly. One can almost feel the soft tread of his steps and be alive to the peering glances of that severe countenance while reading the delightful, the unforgettable "Ramblings in Cheapside." The whole essay is a fantastical illustration of the ludicrous doctrine of 'metempsychosis or transmigration of souls.' He says with the candour of conviction: "And we meet instances of transmigration of body as well as of soul. I do not mean that both body and soul have transmigrated together, far from it: but that as we can often recognise a transmigrated mind in an alien body, so we not less often see a body that is clearly only a transmigration, linked on to some one else's new and alien soul." A very nice thesis to sustain this! Yet, he has no difficulty in deciding who is who: one can but follow him and gaze bewildered at the gallery of his imaginary portraits. Hendel's body, he assures us, is now Madame Adelina Patey; the late Mr. Darwin lives, so he would have us believe, in Pope Julius II; Dante lives, but he cautiously adds, as an insignificant waiter at Brissago. And so the catalogue goes on. Surely an essay which stimulates our imagination to such extent as does this one, should be classed with the very finest specimens of literature. Butler's fame will endure, even if that should rest on his essays alone.

But the essays, brilliant as they are and finished with a placid perfection unattainable except by the most gifted, form only a minor part of this author's contribution to English literature. For his roaming, dazzling, almost capricious genius soared higher and higher, culminating in but three books, all novels if you will, or, as they have been more commonly called, satires. The first of these, "Erewhon", with which he electrified and exasperated the literary world, was published in 1872 and issued again by Mr. Jonathan Cape in 1902, with certain important additions. "Erewhon Revisited", a sequel to the above, was issued in 1901. (Cape) The last and greatest of all, "The Way of All Flesh," was, as already remarked, published posthumously, edited by his friend Mr. R. A. Streatfeild, in 1903. All these books are now available in 'The Travellers' Library,' the joint enterprise of Messrs. Cape and Heinemann. A more minute examination of the intrinsic merits that made such a triple distinction, not only possible of achievement but even inevitable, may not be here irrelevant.

In the Prefaces to "Erewhon" we are told that the celebrated firm of publishers, Chapman & Hall Ltd., on expert advice from their reader, rejected the MS. and that it was published after a short interregnum by Messrs. Trubner. But the profound fears of the talented reader proved utterly groundless, for, the book was acclaimed, immediately on publication, as worthy to rank with the world's greatest satires, and unquestionably fit to occupy a place

incredibly close to "Gulliver's Travels." To appreciate in full the multifarious implications of its satire, the book itself must be read and re-read many times over. It touches upon so many aspects of mid-Victorian life and deals its veiled attacks from so many angles of vision that the completest analysis will only make it the nearest approach to confusion.

The snobbishness and self-complacency of the missionaries, the self-defeating and degrading nature of modern education, the self-deceptive and illusory standards of the Church of England, the giant strides of Industrialism and the consequent imprisonment of ever greater numbers of men in sooty cities, the modern man's increasing dependence and parasitism on machinery-these and many other matters are viewed through the mercilessly dissecting medium of the author's satirical and ironical temperament and exhibited with ruthless candour in the scintillating pages of the book. The State of Erewhon (anagram for Nowhere) where everything is apparently topsy-turvy is, in fact, England itself. The following passage, purporting to explain away certain anomalies in Erewhon, exposes rather the national temperament of the English, and Butler lays his finger on the vulnerable spot indeed when he says: "The most glaring anomalies seemed to afford them no intellectual inconvenience; neither, provided they did not actually see the money dropping out of their pockets, nor suffer immediate physical pain, would they

listen to any arguments as to the waste of money and happiness which their folly caused them. But this had an effect of which I have little reason to complain, for I was allowed almost to call them life-long self-deceivers, and they said it was quite true, but that it did not matter." (E. p. 9) As if anything mattered! In the three hundred and odd pages that follow, the anomalies above referred to are pitilessly exposed to universal scorn through the innocently gay medium of his pungent, deadly satire. It is possible to admire "Erewhon" as a mere novel of rattling adventure: but the irony of the satire, ascetic in effect though condemnatory in form is no less important and in fact is of far greater intrinsic import than the chiselled prose and gripping narrative. This is only another way of saying that "Erewhon" could be enjoyed, probably with considerable profit, -certainly with present and reminiscent pleasure-by men of any age and in any position in society. This is the true test of immortality and "Erewhon" fulfils it as satisfactorily as any other masterpiece has done.

In the apposite language of the Rt. Hon. Augustine Birrel, the true task of the satirist is "to lash the age, to ridicule vain pretension, to expose hypocrisy, to deride humbug in education, politics and religion." That Samuel Butler strived for all these things and more, one alone of the three books will demonstrate. Having a keener eye and a more penetrating intellect than most men of his time, he discovered the hidden sores of materialist, complacent

England, and being also the rich inheritor of a rare indomitable courage, he had the surprising temerity to think things which few thought and say them in a way that no other man dreamt of saying. The present writer is inclined to interpret the following words of Ernest Pontifex, an autobiographical image by the way, as rather the unconscious translation, word for word, of the deep-set conviction of the author himself. Says Ernest: "There are a lot of things that want saying which no one dares to say, a lot of shams that want attacking and yet no one attacks them. It seems to me that I can say things which not another man in England except myself will venture to say and yet which are crying to be said." (W. p. 424) None could have measured his latent capabilities with surer self-confidence. And Butler proved as good as his word and resolution, and discharged his glorious mission uninterruptedly and unaided for near three decades, and only with the turn of the century, when death laid on him his icy hand, he brought his labours to a sudden termination. With regrets, surely: for his work was still incomplete, his last novel still unpublished, and the sum-total of his early promise still unfulfilled. Yet he had perhaps that inward satisfaction that somehow sheds its consoling influence in the end, the satisfaction that his work was entrusted to the charge of the capable hands of no less ardent a lover of humanity, no less carping a critic of its follies and foibles, -in the hands of his friend and disciple, Bernard Shaw.

The strange form that Butler's heroic ambition ultimately took has been stated in his own words: we have also in rather a dogmatic manner asserted that he laboured hard and reached almost the pinnacle of his ambition. But more than mere assertion, some amplification and elucidation are necessary to complete the picture. Which idiosyncrasies, for instance, in Victorian society, did Butler so ferociously object to? Was he or was he not justified in his downright condemnation? Was he impelled to thunder his denunciations by a force that destroyed, or rather by a will unconquerable, that even as it wished to destroy, foreshadowed also the impulse to create with the larger heart and the kindlier hand? These are questions for which convincing answers should be sought in his books alone. However, as far as the limits of this article would permit, one or two features of Butler's indictment may just be examined on the fringe.

Firstly about his attacks on society. These are scattered about the book in astonishing abundance, and the wisest criticism one might offer is that they are always pert and never commonplace. Here is for example his opinion of Ydgrun and the Ydgrunites: "They were gentlemen in the full sense of the word: . . . They seldom spoke of Ydgrun or even alluded to her but would never run counter to her dictates without ample reason for doing so; in such cases they would override her with due self-reliance and the goddess seldom punished them; for they are brave and

Ydgrun is not." (E. p. 177) Ydgrun is anagram for Mrs. Grundy and the Ydgrunites, the 'high Ydgrunites' especially, form the so-called bourgeois population in modern society. Apparently Butler laughs at the Erewhonians: in sooth, alas! he is only pointing the finger of scorn at his own countrymen. In "Erewhon Revisited" one can come across with the highly interesting character, Mrs. Humdrum, the very personation of Ydgrun. They would sacrifice anything to take the line of least resistance: the high Ydgrunites would. So much for the crazy slavery of the modern world that shilly-shallies with the stupid permutations of public opinion.

The vehicle of his satire being a novel, the outlets of free expression are necessarily much circumscribed. The satire is made out rather by implication and suggestion than by frontal gun and shot. Yet not seldom does the novelist throw off his mask, if only for moments, to indulge in some bits of carping criticism or display the glaring absurdities of a useless custom. He would now be, to all intents and purposes, taken up with expounding the Erewhonian principles of Law and Order, their remarkable views concerning death or their perverse customs accompanying birth; he would be devoting one full chapter to a minute description of some Erewhonian trials drenched in sheer idiocy, or he would be giving you a most scholarly account of the origin, the nature and the working of that most curious of the Erewhonian institutions, their Musical Bank system. But

the inveterate, invincible satirist will be there, as it were, in suspension, in embryo, ready to precipitate without a moment's notice a prodigious mass of bitter invective or eject with cruel un-expectedness a piercing, devastating reflection. Then would the effect be, in the poignancy of its suddenness as much as in the genius of its appositeness, ten times more profound and as bitterly vibrant. These for example: "What is the offence of the lamb that we should rear it and tend it and lull it into security for the express purpose of killing it? Its offence is the misfortune of being something which society wants to eat and which cannot defend itself." (E. p. 126)

"For property is robbery, but then we are all robbers or would be robbers together, and have found it essential to organise our thieving, as we have found it necessary to organise our lust and revenge. Property, marriage, the law . . . ." (E. p. 126-127)

The germs of the socialist are discernible in ample measure in the author who wrote these sentences.

Let us now pause for sometime over Butler's views on education. He devotes considerable space to this all-important topic in "Erewhon" and returns to it with renewed zest in his "The Way of All Flesh." The two chapters suggestively entitled "The Colleges of Unreason" in the former book, and the chapters in which Theobald's and Ernest's education is traced with

microscopic particularity in the latter, offer a comprehensive symposium of the author's views on education. His attacks are mostly covert and wound only on application. But once it wounds, the wounds are fatal. In the best tradition of the conventional grandfathers, he adds detail upon detail in giving a graphic description of the College of Unreason, its Professors of Evasion and Inconsistency, its extravagant schemes for the study of hypothetics and the rudimentary necessity for their gospel of Unreason. There is no remark in the chapters herein cited but has its pointed bearing on the subject in hand and its own miserable tale of woe to tell. Each statement is a miniature mirror wherein intelligent beholders see in rapid reflection the monstrosities of their own nature, in so far as they are members of modern society. In the Erewhonian Colleges of Unreason, the mainstay of the Professors and students was the study of an altogether superfluous hypothetical language, and the all-embracing scheme of studies included among other things extensive exercises in translation, year in year out, of exquisite specimens of Erewhonian literature into the barren and soul-blasting hypothetical tongue. One might laugh at the Etewhonians after a perfunctory first reading. But after all, are we any better ourselves, in spirit if not in letter? Further, with a note of disparaging mockery, we are told how a certain distinguished Professor of Worldly Wisdom remarked: "It is not our business to help the students to think for themselves . . . . Our duty is to ensure that they shall think as we do." (E. p. 222) A

malicious statement no doubt to be put into the mouth of a University Professor! And yet, honesty alone should compel everyone of us to concede that there is no country in modern society but is shamelessly unwilling to put the mark of unequivocal approbation on freedom of thought, exercise of individual judgment or embarkation in original enterprise. It is quite an incontrovertible fact, so Butler argues, that "our seats of learning aim rather at fostering mediocrity than anything higher", and with his caustic pen dipped in gall he adds: "They think they are advancing healthy mental assimilation and digestion whereas in reality they are little better than cancer in the stomach." (E. p. 226) Exceptions there might be and there are but the fact remains that the very greatest men of all nations and at all times have almost exclusively been recruited from those who never enjoyed a course of University training. Instances of Shakespeares, Shaws and Macdonalds are ample.

But the evils of modern education do not stop here. That originality should be stifled, enterprise blocked and effervescence stilled, are bad enough. But there are worse evils that cry for remedy with dumb mouths and mute entreaty. Our institutions, says Butler, not only fail to discharge certain duties of infinite import but do doggedly persevere to make the pupils committed to their charge totally unfit for life. Luckily for the world, they do not always succeed. The Principal at the Deformatory at Fairmead is only one of the

many, now labouring in the different parts of the world, highly exaggerated it may be, yet true in the very extravagance of its caricature. The Counsels of Imperfection, the Gambling book-making and speculation classes, the unshakable conviction of Principal Turvey that "It is obviously better to aim at imperfection than perfection" (E.R. po.157) and his ready willingness to translate his ideas into action-these, prima facie, seem absurd and ridiculous. But the satire implied is unanswerable. In "The Way of All Flesh" again, the utter inadequacy and demoralising nature of present-day education are illustrated and amplified by personal explanation in many stages in the story. One can stumble upon the following damning indictment very early in the course of the narrative: "A public school education cuts off a boy's retreat: he can no longer become a labourer or a mechanic, and these are the only people whose tenure of independence is not precarious-with the exception of those who are born inheritors of money or who are placed in some safe and deep groove." (W. p. 34) The moral of this sentence should come home with piercing poignancy to the mind of every unemployed educated Indian. It is University education as at present inefficiently conducted in India, aiming at no higher goal than that of turning but thousands of graduates every six months from the gloomy portals of Convocation Halls, that has led to this nation-wide calamity of middle-class unemployment, giving rise to an unsavoury spectacle witnessed in no other country in the world.

Turned out like inanimate machines from our knowledge factories, if I may be permitted so to style our Universities, Our graduates are branded 'gentlemen' for lifetime, which position has been too dearly bought to be thoughtlessly repudiated and proves the incorrigible old man on poor Sinbad's shoulders. The victim must perforce sink in degrees or sink whole. "Being a gentleman is a luxury which I cannot afford, therefore I do not want it." (W. p. 399) Such words might come from Ernest after the bitter experience of six months in jail, but such exceptional circumstances as transmuted the base metal of Ernest's calibre to one of Supreme gold are not the portion of every unfortunate young man. Of course, as the wise satirist himself admits, the sons of the rich are not affected by the venom of a public school education. But then the sons of the rich rarely distinguish themselves in school and college, and even if by stroke of miracle they do succeed in their studies, their money-bags have such potency that, not long after, they are comfortably placed in some position in life. The rich-by far the most of them, if you will-study not that they might acquire learning, for the thing is absurd in their opinion and impossible in any case, but that they might kill somehow the hereditary ennui from which there seems no escape. There is too the desirable possibility of an adequate development of a sense of one's own importance, which every scion of a plutocratic family looks upon as the sine qua non of his earthly existence. These are the reasons-if reasons

are necessary at all for any move on the part of the purse-proud-that drive them to the schools and colleges and make them mix with the poor, -the very poor they loathe with inward derision. But the humbler classes are moved and ruled by a more elemental passion every time they take a plunge into the abyss of modern education. It is with them a question of life and death: and more often, the latter, in a restricted sense, is served as their portion. They complain: nor have they the courage sublime "to take arms against a sea of troubles and, by opposing, end them." The edge of intellect has been blunted: like shadows shunned, they plod their weary way with numbed sensibility and amicable submission. All the mighty-mouthed exhortations of Samuel Butler have availed nothing.

Let us now turn from this gloomy picture to another and a more fundamentally disgusting feature of Victorian life. I refer to the relations then existing between parents and children. In one of the introductory paragraphs I had occasion to call Samuel Butler the pre-eminent liberator of the soul of youth from the vicious circle of outside interference. How far abnormal restraint of a child's freedom of movement can lead to a permanent paralysis of its intellectual power or even a grotesque distortion of the same, has been vividly sketched in his masterly novel in the delineation of the character and the tracing of the only too common career of five generations of Pontifexes; Butler and the late Sir Edmund

Gosse, two of the most ill-treated of children, have laid threadbare in their books the vain pretensions of Victorian parents, and it was largely due to their sturdy independence even in the midst of the redoubtable Mumbojumbo of parental autocracy that the present atmosphere of goodwill and co-operation has come with good grace to stay in our homes. To some it may sound nothing short of an infamous heresy to listen to Butler's rendering of the moral of 'Casabianca' that "young people cannot too soon begin to exercise discretion in the obedience they pay to their Papa and Mamma." (W. p. 142) That is the true rendering nevertheless. We have wooed one another long with lies and hypocrisy and self-deception. Let belated honesty come into its own. What, for instance, would one's feeling be when one realises the full implications of the following anecdote? Poor Ernest, when a mere boy, could not pronounce the word 'come' but would say it as though it were 'turn.' This was more than what his father, with his characteristic parental punctilio, could suffer. The storm was brewing for a long time and one Sunday it burst in all the fury of its accumulated horrors.

"Very well, Ernest," said his father, catching him angrily by the shoulder. "I have done my best to save you but If you will have it so, you will," and he lugged the little wretch, crying by anticipation, out of the room. A few minutes more and we could hear screams coming from the dining room, . . . and knew that poor Ernest was beaten.

"'I have sent him to bed,' said Theobald, . . . 'and now Christinia, I think we will have the servants in to prayer,' and he rang the bell for them, red-handed as he was."

And Theobald was a clergyman! The very extremity and stringency of their piety and affection drove these parents to such inhumanities. Samuel Butler, with the breath of absolute sincerity would have been the last person to deny that. He knew the enormous love that parents had for their children. What he so emphatically objected to and deplored were the wrong channels which this love was made to traverse and the perverse destinations it ultimately reached. What pungent irony is in this sentence, for example! "When Ernest was in his second year, Theobald . . . began to teach him to read. He began to whip him two days after he had begun to teach him." (W. p. 105) But the irony of ironies is that the irony is very little removed from pathos-the pity of it, O, the pity of it! And "all was done in love, anxiety, timidity, stupidity and impatience." (W. p. 105) And with what welcome result! Father and son became enemies for life. Would this have happened, had but commonsense ruled? No, it was not to be. Take again the instance of Gosse. The exquisitely amiable companionship that one gains by perusing the charming pages of his autobiography, "Father and Son", is in no small measure tintured by the tinge of divine discontent, the discontent emerging out of the outpourings of a soul that had suffered long

under the undue circumspection of parental vigilance. What a pang of remorse would not the reader experience when he lisps the complaining melody of a passage like this! "I was docile, I was plausible, I was anything but combative; if my father could have persuaded himself to let me alone . . . What a charming companion, what a delightful parent, what a courteous and engaging friend my father would have been!" How barren is a speculation of these 'ifs' and 'might-have-beens'! The grim reality alone mattered and engulfed them all, and over the waste held its imperial sway. But it is a far happier vocation to imagine Butler and Gosse looking down at the scene of their activities and sighing, not without regret, yet smiling with serene satisfaction that they had not worked in vain: one might fancy further how elevated they might feel in soul and how thankful for the mysterious ways of Providence.

No review, however short, of Samuel Butler's work would be complete without a passing reference at least to his attacks on religion as constituted then. His attacks are many and varied and are scattered in a thousand places in the volumes of his works. While it would doubtless be a gross travesty of truth to deny the higher spirituality and the sterner religious sense of Samuel Butler, he has reiterated times without number his conviction that Christianity, as preached and practised in the palmy days of Queen Victoria, was nothing more worthy of admiration, not to say reverence, than what

one might feel bound to show towards a convenient institution or organisation subservient to man's earthly needs. The theory of Evolution, the growing disbelief in miracles, the advancement in science and the pioneer work of Darwin and Huxley, sowed the seeds of scepticism and doubt in the minds of millions in Christendom as to the divine origin of the Bible and in fact on the very basis of Christianity. Reason gained the upperhand over dogma, and mystical sublimation came under the vigorous purview of science. People realised that "religion unilluminated by reason degenerates into an evil thing." Samuel Butler was acutely conscious of all happenings around him and with little hesitation threw himself on the side of Darwin, with all the zeal of his advocacy, though subsequently he fought against "the theory of Natural Selection" as, in his opinion, it attempted in outrageous manner the banishment of God from the Universe. This one fact alone should suffice to still the parrot-cry that Butler had no religion. The validity of his objections to the priestcraft of his age would be seen from the following: "Their priests try to make us believe that they know more about the unknown world than those whose eyes are still blinded by the seen, can never know-forgetting that while to deny the existence of an unseen kingdom is bad, to pretend that we know more about it than its bare existence, is no better." (E. pp. 163-164) In the preface to "Erewhon Revisited" and in some of the concluding chapters, Butler makes his religious position as clear as the

English language would allow: "I would say that I have never ceased to profess myself a member of the more advanced wing of the English Broad Church." (E. R. p. 10) Later in the book, Mr. Higgs, the originator of Sunchildism, the new religion of Erewhon, makes a statement of his opinions on religion which, *mutatis mutandis*, we are empowered by the author to apply to himself. The passage may be quoted in its entirety: "Our religion sets before us an ideal which we all cordially accept, but it also tells us of marvels like your chariot and horses which we most of us reject. Our best teachers insist on the ideal and keep the marvels in the background." (E. R. p. 267) This, we are told, is the position taken by the Broad Churchmen. This also, one might conclude, was the religious belief of Butler. In other words, he believed like Mathew in "a power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness."

I am afraid I have traveled far afield and that what was intended to be a very brief article has grown very longish. Before closing let us take one more glance at that sinister figure that has loomed through the decades as one of the greatest forces to have stirred society to its depths and sounded the organ pipe of a new renaissance. Equipped with highly-cultivated powers of observation and capable of a superhuman range of intellectual vivacity, he had, too, an uprightness of character that brooked no sham, no vain pretension, no hollow mockery but fought them and annihilated

them with unsurpassed obstinacy and vigour. Every vested interest he attacked with unprecedented violence; for every pining good cause he quite generously placed at its disposal the invaluable service of an indomitable spirit. "Everyman's work," he wrote, "is always a portrait of himself, and the more he tries to conceal himself the more clearly his character appears in spite of it." (W. p. 74) The satirist, the philosopher, the prophet, -he is discovered everywhere in his work, and perhaps he only is what ultimately matters. And Butler's works raise the veil off a marvelous person indeed. The prophet in him was greater than the satirist: and he was no mean artist either. It is idle and futile to say what else he might have been or done. There is quiet wisdom in the question of Mr. Jack Horner ('Stet') who commenced his essay on Butler in the columns of the "Saturday Review" with: "Why on earth cannot people take a writer for what he is and be happy with him, instead of either complaining that he is not somebody else, or else insulting him by pious exaggeration?" Let but the honest reader go through "Erewhon" and its successors and the delightful collections of his essays and then form what estimate he will of the author of these works. One feels sure that if Samuel Butler is approached with scrupulous honesty, he will in his turn discover unto the eager readers vast stretches of untrodden fields where refinement and gaiety, wit and satire, dance and sing like elves and honey-bees and create on very sordid earth a literal dreamland of fantasy,

sorrow-life itself. With the charming gifts of the true story-teller and the precious talents of a delicate artist, Samuel Butler has woven sustained narratives and polished them over with the excellence of a rounded perfection. Restrained in his sensibility but boundless in his generosity, supremely conscious of the proud part he

was to play for the amelioration of the down-trodden but sublimely indifferent to the fruits of his own labour and the empty applause of a half-crazy audience; Butler presented a magnificent example of happy contrasts, and truly therefore he was, in himself and in his works, a figure in history without a parallel, a figure sui generis.

\*\*\*

### MY OLD FRIEND

O. P. Arora\*

He opened  
the jammed door  
of the dusty, musty drawing room  
with his palsied hands...

I looked at those blooming faces  
shouting, howling, debating  
drinking tea after coffee after lassi...

I sat on the dusty sofa  
he was still searching his specs...  
Now nobody comes here...

---

\* Poet, New Delhi

The maid  
she too hasn't come for two days...

How are you?  
Fine, all fine.  
That was all.  
What does all babble mean  
when hearts are empty  
when hands are mired  
when words are tired?

I prepared two cups of tea  
he was happy  
his tears were mixing with his tea  
he didn't know...

\*\*\*

## BOOK REVIEW

**Sri Ramanuja Darsanam, Author: Dr M Varadarajan. Phone No.044-28440997, 9841884972. Pages. 72, Price: Rs.50.00**

This 55th book of the author Dr M Varadarajan contains 10 articles written on various occasions. At first glance, the cover page of the book displays the divine image of saint Sri Ramanuja of holy shrine of Sri Kurmam, in Andhra Pradesh, which is perhaps the only shrine for the Kurmavata in the whole of India. Befitting the image, the book was released in Sri Kurmam temple and the first article enlists the beauty of Lord's duty as Kurma, the Tortoise. Many intricate details were collated from the sacred 4000 hymns of Alwars, Poet Jayadeva's Ashtapadi and so on and these were presented with references in Telugu for the benefit of Telugu readers. The article concludes with an interesting note on the much needed reforms brought in by Sri Ramanuja at Sri Kurmam temple when He happened to visit on his return from Puri. One cannot help but wonder at the magnitude of the reforms brought in a 1000 years back when the social structure was not very conducive.

Sri Ramanuja was indeed God's creation and so are we too. If God's creation is so benevolent and so full of compassion, how will the God Himself be? Is He bound by limitations of reason in showing compassion towards the mortals? As we

read on the book, the second article titled "Bhagavad Krupa" answers all these questions in detail. The compassion of the God is explained drawing references from esoteric philosophical texts of greats like Sri Yamunacharya, Parasara Bhatta, Sri Vedanta Desika and so on. The author deserves full credit for presenting the high-end philosophies in lucid and simplified manner without compromising on the purport of the message.

An article on heroic deeds of Balaram and Krishna makes a very interesting read. The episode of Krishna tactfully avoiding a seemingly inevitable conflict among Balarama, Satyabhama and Himself is nicely narrated. Rest of the articles span on Thiruppavai, Kanchipurna and so on are replete with rich content.

The striking feature that stands out in all the articles is the ample references cited to authentic texts. The author leaves no stone unturned by embellishing each of the articles with lots of references to Puranic texts, which also makes them a true account presented in easily readable and comprehensible way.

This book is rich in invaluable information and thereby I request people to read this to enrich their knowledge base.

**Smt. Vaijayanthi Sampath, Chennai**

**Dance of Satan and Other Poems,  
ManasBakshi, Authors Press, New Delhi,  
2017, pages 128, Price Rs.295/--\$15**

ManasBakshi who published six collections of poetry (*In the Age of Living Death, The Welkin is Blue Yet in Agony, Now Because I Live Today, The Midnight Star and Between Flower and Fame*) has been acclaimed as a progressive humanist. The book under review came out in the year, 2017. Again, this is as his other collections, a book of cerebral poetry with cogitation and abstract thinking behind penning. His thought processes mellow in his poetry. The titles of his collections are suggestive of his anguish, psychological torment and disgust.

The dismayed poet wonders whether what the contemporary man is facing is the dance of democracy or the dance of Satan. The poet talks of two doorways.

The door that shows  
The way to a luminous inner world  
In ever one is ajar  
If we can nurture faith in human kind  
And devotion to the cosmic reality,  
Come, pray solidarity -  
Only the backdoor of Indian democracy  
Is wide open  
For political culprits  
To creep in, before people and plunder -  
For hoodlums, smugglers and rapists having  
a free run  
To rip the nation's heart asunder-

Limitless, unspeakable crimes  
Making buds forget a blooming smile!

Spared is none-  
From innocent Nirbhaya in Delhi  
To a devoted seventy-one-year Bengal  
based nun...  
What a shame!  
Dance of democracy  
Or, dance of Satan (p10)

Existence itself is an enigmatic resort. The  
horror is unbearable. The poet cogitates:

Why these pungent thoughts, delicate  
moments,  
Illusive motifs, enigmatic sequences?  
Don't relieve me of the day to day terms of  
living  
Meant for an incomplete sentence.  
(An Enigmatic Resort, p.26)

Human craving vitiates the living work of  
the whole life span. The thoughts are about  
the dwindling values of life and living  
Stranded  
Between  
A  
Straying  
Feather  
And  
Settled  
Dust  
Is  
Human  
Craving  
For

According to  
A life span  
Its agate - it is towards the latter that  
Living  
Worth (Craving, p.67)

Existence is a riddle. All the thoughts and actions of humans have nullified the belief in the Supreme Being. When the objectives of existence are only two - either to revive or relegate - it is towards the latter that man appears to live.

Who knows since when  
God has ceased to be  
A dividing line between  
Faith in man and a craze for crime.  
(Riddle, p.86)

When faith-based living is forgotten, we live the life of chance. So the poet declares that life is a chance. Each, either this or that -- is only once. We are reminded of the great poet of yester year who made this great declaration: "We are the hollow men, We are the stuffed men, Headpiece filled with straw."

It is for once  
Here, we all come -  
Life after death  
None can confirm;  
If it be at all  
Not in the same shape -  
Another form, identity  
A different landscape. (One Life One  
Chance, p.105-106)

Even living together as man and wife has lost its sanctity, its value and significance. Men and women have become hollow. That existence which looks to be the permanent actuality.

We act to defy (the norm) somehow till we die  
The after-effect of our mistakes Even ecology is  
Flows through the veins  
Of every night, we long for mending  
And also learn to override ...  
When we suffer then  
Is but a self-deceptive pride  
Dominant as the dark shadow of memory  
We're unable to hide!  
(Conjugal Vibes, p116)

Living is a rude episode of relinquished values in strife and absence of value consciousness as creatures with two feet. Bestly living, not human, human existence - becomes an actuality - always, everywhere. Even ecology is at stake - a disaster seems to be near at hand, inevitably. The thinking minds cogitate.

A loitering mind  
Facing the enormity  
Of ceaseless waves,  
Listening the violin  
Of the transitory wind;  
The sea at night  
Surging with its own  
Loneliness blind,  
The stars in their loneliness  
Awaiting the earth's morning profile;

The dolphins dancing  
 To the tune of enchanting waves  
 Know not what they face in the sound  
 Echoing from an unknown distance -  
 A teardrop frozen in silence  
 For a blot in transition:  
 Ecology at stake. (A Rude Episode, p128)

*If at all* signifies uncertainty, a disturbing and constantly tormenting doubt. This is how the poet concludes the collection now. ManasBakshi's humanism has taken a new dimension of viewing the contemporary human behaviour. More painful feelings, then, are ahead. God be with us all!

Remember me  
 When the sky will stop  
 Telling the story

Of a defeated soldier  
 Recalling his past glory,  
 Remember me  
 When static be the time  
 To still you between  
 A disastrous day  
 And a mournful night.  
 Remember me  
 When the soil  
 Of human substance  
 Will no more grow flower  
 In love's absence. (If at all, Then, p.130)

One feels after reading his poems which have come out till now that there is still a possibility for further furious explosions taking place. All that we can say is God be with us all!

**Dr. V.V.B. Rama Rao, Solapur**

\*\*\*

In 1994 Indian President Shri Shankar Dayal Sharma visited Muscat on official trip. When AI flight landed 3 rare incidents happened

1. Oman King never visits airport to receive dignitaries of any country - never . But the Oman king came to the airport to receive the President
2. When the flight landed the Oman King climbed up the steps and received the President from his seat .
3. After alighting the flight there was a car with the Chauffeur standing . But the King signalled the driver to move and he

himself drove the car and escorted the President to the Hotel suite.

Later when the reporters questioned the King why he broke so many protocols, the King replied "I did not go to the airport to receive Mr. Sharma because he was India's President. I studied in India and learnt so many things. When I was studying in Pune, Mr. Sharma was my Professor - that is why I did this" !

This is the power of being a teacher.

Source: Internet

## NEW MEMBERS

The following is the list of Donors/ Members who have joined the TRIVENI family during April-June, 2018. The TRIVENI FOUNDATION welcomes them.

**Patron:**

**Mr. Krishna Kolachala**  
USA

**Rs.10000/-**

**Annual Members:**

Ms. P. Radhika  
Ms. S Nabiya Banu

**Life Members:**

Dr.A. Raghu Kumar

## AN APPEAL

Journals like TRIVENI devoted to literature, culture, and human values cater to a limited number of intellectuals and are not to be considered as successful business propositions in any country. Its publication is only possible by the generous support of the cultured and enlightened readers. This earnest appeal is to solicit the patronage of philanthropic persons to enlist themselves as Subscribers, Patrons and Donors and extend their co-operation to the cause of Indian literature, culture and human values and/or help us in any way possible. We particularly request the members who enrolled earlier than 2005 to kindly renew their membership.

Donations to TRIVENI are exempt from Income Tax, Under Section 80G (2) &(5) of the I.T. Act, 1961.

Cheque/DD can be drawn in Favour of  
'Triveni Foundation' payable at Hyderabad.  
PAN: AAAAT1350R

Bank Details:  
Andhra Bank Tarnaka Branch  
Account No. 057810100029288  
IFSC Code: ANDB0000578  
MICR Code: 500011050

We also invite writers and the intellectual community to come forward with their articles and share their ideas, experiences with the readers of TRIVENI.



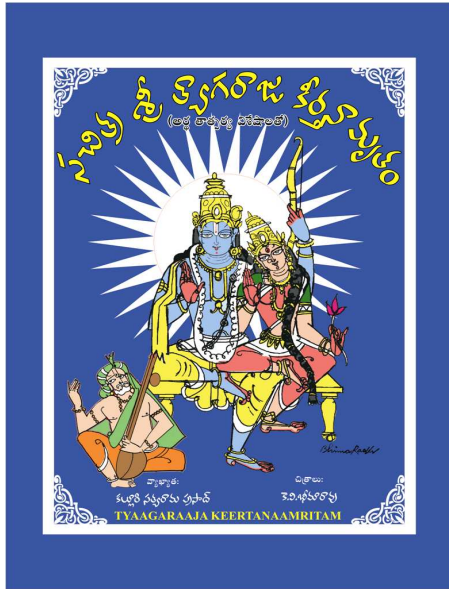
The Descent of Ganga

# SRI YABALURI RAGHAVAIHAH MEMORIAL TRUST

Culture Capsules -  
Parables for Healthy Minds  
Kharidehal Venkata Rao  
PB Rs.150/- (US\$15)

Sachitra Sri Hanuman Chalisa  
K Venkata Rao  
Illustrations by K.V. Bhima Rao  
PB Rs.150/- (US\$12)

## NEW PUBLICATION



Sachitra Sri Thyagaraja Keerthanamruthm  
K Satya Rama Prasad  
Illustrations by K.V. Bhima Rao  
HB Rs.1000/- (US\$50)

*Copies can be had from:*

**Sri Yabaluri Raghavaiah Memorial Trust**  
H.No. 1-104/1, St. No. 3, Bhavani Nagar, Nacharam, Hyderabad - 500076  
Phone: +91 - 40 - 27171383, 40155383 Website: [www.yabaluri.org](http://www.yabaluri.org)  
Email: [syrmtrust@yahoo.com](mailto:syrmtrust@yahoo.com), [syrmtrust@gmail.com](mailto:syrmtrust@gmail.com)

Culture Capsules - Art Of Living  
Prof. I.V. Chalapati Rao  
PB Rs.60/- (US\$5) HB Rs.150/- (US\$15)

Culture Capsules - Indian Renaissance  
Prof. I.V. Chalapati Rao  
PB Rs.100/- (US\$ 10) HB Rs.150/- (US\$15)

Culture Capsules - Ancient Wisdom Modern Insight  
Prof. I.V. Chalapati Rao  
PB Rs.100 /-(US\$15) HB Rs.250/- (US\$25)

Culture Capsules - Living Through Changing Times  
Prof. I.V. Chalapati Rao  
PB Rs.75/- (US\$10) HB Rs.150/- (US\$15)

Samskruti Sourabhalu Jeevana Soundaryam  
Y. Prabhakara Rao  
(Telugu Translation of Art of Living by  
Prof. I.V. Chalapati Rao)  
PB Rs.100/- (US\$10) HB Rs.200/- (US\$20)

Culture Capsules - College Teachers And  
Administrators - A Hand Book  
Prof. I.V. Chalapati Rao  
PB Rs.150/- (US\$15) HB Rs.300/- (US\$30)

What Life Taught Me  
Prof. I.V. Chalapati Rao- Autobiography  
PB Rs.150/- (US\$15) HB Rs.250/- (US\$25)

Culture Capsules - Flying Sparks  
Prof. I.V. Chalapati Rao  
PB Rs.150/- (US\$15) HB Rs.200/- (US\$20)

Culture Capsules -  
Golden Heritage of Indian Culture  
Prof. I.V. Chalapati Rao  
PB Rs.150/- (US\$15) HB Rs.200/- (US\$20)