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# TRIVENI

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INDIA'S LITERARY AND CULTURAL QUARTERLY

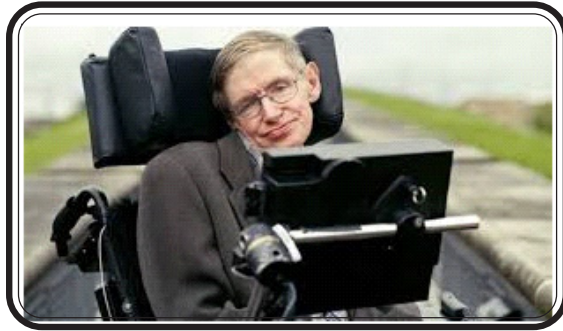


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Triveni Foundation pays tribute to eminent scientist Mr. Stephen Hawking whose faith in Science was truly astounding.

# TRIVENI

## INDIA'S LITERARY & CULTURAL QUARTERLY

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## TRIPLE STREAM

### THE MEASURE OF GREATNESS

D. Ranga Rao\*

In the calendar of world literature April of the year 1564 is a landmark month as the wonder boy of English and world drama was born in that month. The boy was William Shakespeare.

Shakespeare has been called the greatest dramatist of the world. What constitutes greatness is the question. The Oxford dictionary defines the word 'great' as being used "to describe a quality which is admired by many as being the best". Naturally superlatives are used when many such qualities are most admired by many more.

To make a general assessment in the fast forward mode of the great dramatist. Shakespeare as a youth walked into London, the right place for him at the right time, to make a living. The plays of the scholar playwrights like John Lyly, Thomas Kyd, Christopher Marlow, Robert Green and others were being staged during that time in London. Shakespeare had no formal education. He had "little Latin and less Greek" and had not passed through the portals of Oxford and Cambridge universities. But he was a natural genius who was intuitively tuned to playwriting,

gifted as he was with poetic and dramatic talents.

The established playwrights of the day excelled in the exposition of a passion or mode of their choice and were applauded by the audience who were happy with sentiment and melodrama. Shakespeare belonged to a noted Company of actors and was an actor himself with a passion for the stage. He knew the pulse of the people and produced plays of superior quality in all aspects of playwriting, histories and comedies of love and romance. He won the appreciation of the audience and also the jealousy of some of the scholar dramatists. About this time Shakespeare sprung a surprise by publishing his narrative poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of the Lucrece*, poems of lyrical beauty, full of youthful exuberance. These poems were followed by his Sonnets. To cap this all he enjoyed the patronage of the gallant Earl of Southampton, who recognized Shakespeare's merit. His early history plays were truthful and his comedies *The Comedy of Errors*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As you Like It* etc. were "sunny and sweet", witty and delightful.

It is said that environment makes a man. Shakespeare started his career in an age of poetry and drama and proved himself a successful dramatic poet with an ability in the use of imagery and fluent in versification. He freely borrowed material from many sources, adapted, polished and refined them and produced his brand of writing which looked original. He made the stage his world and populated it with imaginary characters who appeared natural and living.

The London playgoers realized that this new dramatist presented them with a fare finer and more delicate in sentiments and superior to what they were used to earlier. Shakespeare's canvas was wide and large, colourful and more entertaining both in form and content. His History plays and early comedies were master pieces. Shakespeare was now the creative force, the dramatic mode and ruler of the dramatic world. He went on producing histories, comedies, tragedies, romances with ease and unfailing brilliance. In his literary career which lasted for twenty four years he produced 37 plays of different genre with an astonishing verve, sometimes producing two or three plays in a year.

The "thousand souled" Shakespeare's dramatic personae were kings and queens, lords and ladies, heroes and villains, princes and paupers, sages and idiots, clowns and fools including the half human half beast Caliban. His characters spoke and acted as in real life. The

dramatist fed the superstitious Elizabethan audiences with ghosts and witches, fairies and elves and other airy nothings who played an integral role in the plots. The characters expressed every mood and feelings, love, hatred, joy, sorrow, ambition, jealousy, melancholy, patriotism, pity, mercy and every mental condition the human flesh is heir to. The dramatist made the audience laugh and cry, shed tears, think and speculate, hoot and shriek to their heart's content in their response to what they saw and heard on the stage. The comic spirit came to Shakespeare as naturally the tragic feelings. The characters show how a person grows and changes as his age advances.

Shakespeare gifted the world with characters like Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, Lear, Lady Macbeth, Cleopatra, Iago, Shylock, Falstaff and many others of significance. The soliloquies of Hamlet, Macbeth's hallucinations as a result of his ambition, Othello's exposition of his jealousy, Lear's emotional and angry outbursts, Antony's funeral oration, Shylock's appeal to recognize him as a human being and many other passages in his plays reveal the dramatist's intellectual vigour. Shakespeare is at his best when he mingled the dramatic and lyrical elements.

A careful study of his plays reveal a deep interpretation of human life in all its shades with faith in humanity, his exquisite sense of beauty and love of nature. He exhibited the Elizabethan life truthfully,

realism being his hallmark. In this process he universalized his characters. It is this talent that made the critics say that "he was of his age and also of all ages" and that his characters have qualities common to every age and "can never be dated".

All this glorification does not mean that he was without faults. But the grandeur of his achievements is so impressive that his lapses are ignored. His distracters pointed out his defects and went to the extent of placing him in the second rank of dramatists. But the majority opinion is all praise for his intellect, thought process, fertile imagination, his humanity, his joyous and spirited disposition and called him a demi god.

After all is said and done one has to accept the fact that Shakespeare cannot be compared with other dramatists but with himself. One can safely apply some of the statements his characters make to himself and say that he stands among the dramatists *constant as the northern star; of whose true-fixed glory, there is no fellow in the (dramatic) firmament and that age cannot wither or custom stale 'his' infinite variety.*

Shakespeare, in short, was born for immortality.

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## PASSION

**Dr. Kumarendra Mallick\***

Wearing the glasses of Tagore  
can one see another sky  
that he saw beyond the stars,  
or the divinity the tip of his quill charted  
in hitherto unheard musical words?

With the hammer and chisel  
of Michelangelo can you or I  
design the contours of lovely David  
or paint dreams on Sistine Chapel  
with his delicate brush?

Word has a meaning, if chosen  
from the lexicon, but what if  
taken from heart? It is then  
a living truth that breathes,  
has a song and is eternal...

Eternal is the sound of the chisel, too  
that awakes the dream fast asleep  
in the stone in to an imagination  
to live beyond all space and time...  
passion has no death, art too has no end!

---

\* Director Grade Scientist, NGRI (Retd.)  
Hyderabad



## LONG AND GLORIOUS NINETY YEARS JOURNEY OF TRIVENI

**Prof. Y. Sreedhar Murthy\***

I am privileged and honoured to stand before you and make a presentation about Triveni Journal, India's Literary and Cultural quarterly in English. *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.

Its Symbol, *Padma* (the lotus) aptly represents the purity of love, *Jyoti* (the flame) the light of wisdom and *Vajra* (thunderbolt of Indra) the splendour of power.

As many of you are aware the Journal *Triveni* founded in 1927 has successfully completed nearly 90 years of glorious service to the literary and cultural fields and to the cause of Indian renaissance and national integration. This was possible mainly due to the individual contributors to the journal who include philosophers, intellectuals and eminent personalities like Sri Aurobindo, Jinarajadasa, Jiddu Krishnamurthy, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Right Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastry, Sri Chakravathi Rajagopalachary,

Dr. K.M. Munshi, Sri C.P. Ramaswami Iyer, Sri V.K. Gokak, Dr. K. Srinivasa Iyengar, Sir Alladi Krishna Swami and many others. It is often said that contributors of the articles to a journal are the litmus test papers for its evaluation. In this respect *Triveni* is unparalleled and has no peers in India.

Sri. P.V. Narasimha Rao, former Prime Minister of India who himself was *Triveni's* ardent supporter, contributor and a well-wisher, wrote to Prof. I.V. Chalapati Rao, the former editor, "Glad to know that you are keeping *Triveni* going. I always remember *Triveni* because in my formative years, it had a decisive effect on my thinking and instilled in me the spirit of patriotism more than any other journal or periodical".

It is gratifying to mention that among the many pre independent premier journals of India serving the interests of Literature, Arts and Culture like the *Modern Review* (Ramananda Chatterji), *The Indian Review* (G.A. Natesan), *Hindustan Review* (Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha), *Bharathi*, *Swarajya*, *Janmabhoomi* etc., *Triveni* has survived the vicissitudes of time and is still in circulation. The continuous publication of *Triveni* can be attributed to the support it received from different parts of India in

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\* Professor of Geophysics, OU (Retd.) & Managing Trustee, Triveni Foundation

particular and from the world over in general as evidenced by the articles published in the journal quarter after quarter every year. I would like to mention three important individuals who contributed immensely to the running of *Triveni* and also ensured that it always followed the lofty moral and ethical values for which our country is respected all over the world. These three gentlemen are, Sri Kolavennu Ramakotiswara Rau, Dr. Bhavaraju Narasimharao and Prof. I. V. Chalapati Rao

Let us recall the thoughtful words of the Founder-Editor, the late K. Ramakotiswara Rau, a literary journalist with a vision. A few months after the inauguration of the journal, he wrote in September 1928 :

"*Triveni* seeks to interpret the Renaissance Movement as reflected in the various linguistic units of India. The Editor is an Andhra, and is in close touch with literary and art movements in Andhradesa. But he is anxious to publish detailed accounts of similar movements in other parts of India... He makes an earnest appeal to scholars in other linguistic areas to write about literary and art movements, with which they are familiar. Translations of poems in different Indian languages into free verse will be particularly welcome. *Triveni* will thus lay the foundations for that inter-provincial harmony and goodwill which is the prelude to a federation of Indian Cultures . . ." Obviously, he has stressed the national character of the journal.

Nearly ninety years after they were written and 70 years and more after the attainment of political independence by India, these words retain not only their basic validity but the urgency of appeal. For, while the ultimate goal of a trans Indian Culture is yet to be fully achieved, the social ideals of interstate harmony and goodwill are more apparent.

Sri CLR Sastry, the great journalist, stated that he was greatly influenced by Sri Satyanarain Sinha of the Hindustan Review, Sri Ramakotiswara Rau of *Triveni* and Kedarnadh Chatterji of the Modern Review. He said "Although there were a few others who influenced me, these three were like the Everest, Kanchan Junga and Nag Parbat". Thus everyone who was admitted into *Triveni* brotherhood had unforgettable experience. Sri Kolavennu Ramakotiswara Rau was succeeded by Sri Bhavaraju Narasimharao garu. He passed away in the year 1993. He was so attached to *Triveni* that he named his Press after Triveni. He also named his children and grandchildren as Triveni.

We were very fortunate that Prof. I V Chalapati Rao was drawn into Triveni in the year 1992 and the mantle of the journal fell on the shoulders of this handsome and energetic man. The Managing Trustee Sri Vemaraju Narasimha Rao and Prof. I. V. Chalapati Rao left no stone unturned to continue publication of this journal against all odds and financial difficulties. They even contributed their

pensions to ensure continuation of publication of this journal. Platinum Jubilee celebrations in the year 2004 provided the much needed oxygen for further survival of *Triveni*.

I was elected as Managing Trustee in the year 2008. I had the good fortune of assisting Prof. I.V. Chalapati Rao and in the process I got to know many luminaries and eminent writers and scholars. During my fifteen years with *Triveni* many people from all walks of life helped us in bring out the journal by contributing articles and we stopped recycling articles of old journals. Now we are publishing old articles of luminaries as prized publications.

Keeping in pace with the changing technology we started accepting articles sent through email. *Triveni* has its own website. Mr. Ananda Rao put in great effort in digitizing all articles of *Triveni* journal from 1928 to 2004 i.e. 60000 pages

perfectly as part of *Triveni* Platinum Jubilee Celebrations in 2004. We are continuing to add subsequent issues of *Triveni* journal to this treasure of information. We have launched e-journal of *Triveni* sent to various readers of Indian Diaspora.

I am happy that Hon'ble Justice C K Prasad, Chairman, Press Council of India has agreed to release the Digital Volume of *Triveni*. Before I conclude I have to state to the community of journalists and writers that it is very difficult to run such a journal without their help. I request all the eminent writers to join as members of *Triveni* and extend their support to the great journal to complete 100 years of its existence.

[Extract of Speech delivered on the occasion of National Seminar on 'Ethics in Contemporary Journalism' and the release of CD on 90 years of *Triveni* on 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2017 at Press Club, Somajiguda, Hyderabad]

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The world has enough beautiful mountains and meadows, spectacular skies and serene lakes. It has enough lush forests, flowered fields, and sandy beaches. It has plenty of stars and the promise of a new sunrise and sunset every day. What the world needs more of is people to appreciate and enjoy it.

- Michael Josephson

## GANDHI - A REVOLUTIONARY ?

**Dr. A. Raghu Kumar\***

The very idea that Gandhi was a revolutionary in terms of Marxist description appears, at the outset, to be unthinkable. A preacher and practitioner of non-violence, an eternal seeker of Truth as God, an apostle of peace and an enigmatic opponent of modern civilization of the Western Model, can he be understood as a revolutionary on par with and in the great lineage of Marx and Lenin? Any Marxist trained mind would abhor the very thought and may also pooh-pooh such propositions as foolish and absurd. Even the Right wing intellectuals may ridicule such hypothesis as a figment of imagination. The pen picture of Gandhiji by almost all his friends and foes of his time, and even many later academics has always been that of a sober Gandhi, lovable or detestable as the case may be, but by no means a revolutionary.

Around three decades back, I read Lenin's article - "Leo Tolstoy as the Mirror of the Russian Revolution" which took a critical look at Tolstoy in a historical setting, as an admixture of a great artist and a genius "who has not only drawn incomparable pictures of Russian life but

has made first-class contributions to world literature," and "a landlord obsessed with Christ". When I had read this article, I entertained a doubt as a young man as to why Indian Marxists did fail to make such a critical analysis of Gandhi and his ideas, instead of hurling abuse and ridicule at him. After all, the canvas of Gandhi and his actions were larger in scope, and he was instrumental in pitting himself in a gigantic task of anti-colonial struggle, though with all infirmities and idiosyncrasies, a mass leader par excellence and a longtime source of guidance for a political outfit consisting of all shades of thinking from extreme left to extreme right.

My search for a different analysis of Mahatma Gandhi, from Marx point of view, almost ended with my finding of "Revolutionary Gandhi", by Pannalal Dasgupta, a revolutionary Marxist of yesteryears, leader of the Revolutionary Communist Party, translated into English by K.V. Subrahmonyan in 1990s. Though the English translation was complete by 1999, it could see the light of the day when it was published by Earth Care Books, Kolkata only in 2011.

Two major objectives of the book are indicated at the end, in "Epilogue": "My purpose has been to show Gandhi in a new

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\* Advocate, Hyderabad

light to the Indian leftists and to present the historical Gandhi to the so-called diehard Gandhians". "I look upon Gandhi, Marx, Lenin and other men of the age as forming a powerful giant telescope and introscope, if I may use that word to mean an instrument which shows what goes on within my mind."

For a person to evolve into a revolutionary, he needs to be, first and foremost, a social scientist. Scientific thinking is the basic claim of Marxism. Can Gandhi be described as a scientist or a social scientist? Yes, says Pannalal. For a person to be considered as a scientist, he has to be truthful to the inquiry and shall discard anything which proves the hypothesis false. While returning from England, at the conclusion of the discussions for the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, Gandhiji, talking to some well-known French journalists, made some remarks of profound significance. He said that he had at one time thought God was Truth, but had to change his mind, for he knew now, that Truth was God. "Truth has to be inquired into again and again constantly, for no truth wears the same face at all times". "Seldom do we come across an individual with such passion for inquiry". "Gandhiji would rather be happy to be a beggar holding on to an atom of truth than a king with a mountain of falsehood". Pannalal Babu bases his whole work on the premise that Gandhiji was a foremost scientist, dispelling the common notion he was only a mystic, and a person relying on intuition rather than reason.

How does a Marxist understand a spiritual Gandhi? In search of an answer to this most complex question, while assessing Gandhiji as a sufficiently tempered scientist, the author examines the very nature of religion. Gandhiji called the Gita the non-violent yoga of action and adopted it as his path towards the realization of God....." Gandhiji had drawn much inspiration from the concept of *Sthitaprajna* or "abidance in the self", which can be considered as a more secular religious understanding. The author contends that the ideas of Gandhi on religion are truly secular, and contrary to the many popular views on religion, and offer new insights into it.

On non-violence Gandhiji said that he had an "innate and natural attraction for truth from his early years, Ahimsa or non-violence was not an innate trait for him". Gandhiji's non-violence is not just absence of killing. Gandhi recognized that in the progress of nations, both evolution and revolution have their own role. He said: "Nations have progressed both by evolution and revolution. The one is as necessary as the other." His revolutionary fervor was not a bit less intense than that of the votaries of armed revolution, though their paths and means were different. Gandhi wrote in Young India of 15<sup>th</sup> Oct, 1925 "It is better to be violent, if there is violence in our breasts, than to put on the cloak of non-violence to cover impotence. There is hope for violent man to become non-violent; there is no such hope for the impotent".

While evaluating the concept of satyagraha and its execution in practical field, the author declares his objective of explaining Gandhi: "Anybody who wants to understand Gandhiji will have to reckon with two facts. First, Gandhiji's historical role, and second his personal and independent ideology. Gandhiji was not merely the embodiment of non-violence; he also symbolized the national struggle against imperialism. He was the representative of India in a special era, and he also had a special responsibility with regard to non-violence. In his historical role he provided leadership to the nation and his endeavor was to guide history along a certain direction...". Nirmal Bose wrote: "It is just here that the method of satyagraha steps in as a possible and effective substitute for war. It does not propose to do away with conflicts; but it raises the quality of those very conflicts by brining into operation a spirit of love and a sense of human brotherhood. *Satyagraha* is not a substitute for war, it is war itself, without of course many of its ugly features and guided by a purpose nobler than we associate with destruction. It is an intensely heroic and chivalrous form of war" (emphasis supplied).

One of the major considerations of the author has been that Gandhiji attempted to reconcile economics and ethics. One of the main charges leveled by economists at Gandhiji is that he did not accept the independence of economic laws and created confusion by bringing ethics into

economics. Gandhi believed in the importance of objective and scientific forces but even greater for him were also the ideas of wisdom and dharma. In his view, morality and religion were integral parts of everyday life. In a lecture before Muir Central College of Economic Society of Allahabad, he said: "I venture to think that the scriptures of the world are far safer and sounder treatises on the laws of economics than many of the modern text books".

Another important topic of serious concern for Gandhi has always been "Hindu-Muslim Unity". In fact Gandhi's concepts of religion and inter-religious faith have been highly advanced by his time and age; and even today we may need to appreciate this area with fresh evidence of increasing religious conflicts. By providing leadership to the Khilafat Movement, the Indian firmament had been filled with the cry of *Hindu-Muslim bhai bhai*. India, oppressed and torn into pieces on religious lines for long, at last found in Gandhiji, a new method of uniting society. In concluding the debate over Hindu-Muslim Unity, and Gandhiji's contribution to it, the author says that although there was a conservative element in Gandhiji, yet we have seen that he could move with the times and that, in many cases, he proved himself to be more radical than the revolutionaries and that he had the capacity to assess the historical value of every action and accordingly to adopt or reject it.



*Nai Talim* (new education) of Gandhian pedagogy, much neglected by many Gandhian Scholars, has occupied a significant stage in the discussion of Pannalal Babu. The first and the foremost observation of the author has been that Gandhiji liberated manual labour from its dismal associations; more specifically in his scheme of proper education. "Trace the source of every coin that finds its way into your pocket, and you will realize the truth of what I write," Gandhi said. Gandhiji named his new method of education through manual labour *Nai Talim*. Gandhiji said: "Our education has got to be revolutionized. The brain must be educated through the hand.....". (Harijan 18th Feb, 1939). While quoting extensively from Marx, Engels, Sydney and Beatrice Webb, Emerson, etc., the author contends that: We can find in human history fragments and hints which bear out the truth of this kind of thinking. It was Gandhiji, however, who gave in concrete shape, experimented with it in his life and endeavored to introduce it into the whole country.

There are several controversies and contradictions on the issue of Gandhiji's role in respect of the upliftment of dalits, adivasis and workers. But one thing needs to be said that Gandhiji at one point declared that he would not step into Hindu temples so long as they denied entry to the Harijans (the description Gandhi invoked for Dalits during his struggle) and other suppressed classes. He kept this vow till his last day, although he remained a devout

Hindu throughout his life and acknowledged the need for temples. The Muslim League and the Ambedkarites carried on the propaganda that Gandhi's Harijan movement was but a clever political ploy aimed at winning wider support. Even the leftists were, according to Pannalal, openly critical of the Harijan movement. The Left parties believed that the Hindu-Muslim divide as well as the Harijan problem would disappear if there were no religions at all. To them, the movements for securing entry for Harijans into temples or for bringing about Hindu-Muslim unity, will only help perpetuate man's bondage to religion and were thus reactionary.

How did Gandhi understand the role of women in the society? Indian women liberation activists never considered Gandhi's ideas in this regard as progressive or useful, though in his life time, he could bring in most women into the freedom struggle, probably more intensely than any other political leader in the world politics and women could work along with him more comfortably. His two-fold view of women in the traditional way and as a companion in struggles or in modern society offers most controversial reading at the outset. Commenting on the position of women in society Gandhi said: "A society cannot rise above the level of its womenfolk." "... Many of our movements stop halfway because of the conditions of our women....." However, he differs with the western liberal ideas on

this subject. "He believed that men and women played complementary roles. His views regarding the man-woman quotient were very similar to Tolstoy's. Professor Nirmal Bose has given many insights into this aspect of Gandhi's personality in his book "Last Days with Gandhi". He says that in some ways Gandhi's personality was exactly like that of women and that he acquired this trait through conscious experiment and effort. Manubehn Gandhi, Gandhiji's grand-niece, even chose for her book on Gandhiji the title *Bapu - My Mother*.

The concluding chapter of the book "Gandhism" considers Gandhi as a votary of both God and Truth - concepts which the modern intellectual would often regard as offending and mutually contradictory. "Gandhiji tried to equate science and philosophy by defining Truth as God." Pannalal writes that Gandhi was a many faceted personality-an experimenter of truth, a great pilgrim and a supreme leader. If Marxism has made a great contribution towards laying the foundation of that (socialist) culture from the point of view of economics and state craft, Gandhi's contribution in the domains of morality and public life will make their foundation considerably more natural and elegant. In Gandhi, we find a leader and a prophet rolled into one. "Men like Gandhiji do not appear often on the earth. No single individual or group can fill his place. It is only mankind in its entirety, which is

capable of being a true successor to a person like Gandhiji. "Deluded as we leftists were," he says, "we shut our eyes to our own history and tradition. Consequently we lost focus on our goal, became self-complacent and engaged ourselves in imitating others".

Pannalal Dasgupta's *Revolutionary Gandhi* is a rare piece of writing in the Marxist-Leninist tradition, which has appreciated Gandhi as a part of the dialectical movement of current history. It attempts to clear the Indian Marxist air filled with nothing but ridicule and abuse on Gandhi, and also endeavors at placing Gandhi in a historical setting of anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggles of many Asia-African countries of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Pannalal dispels myriad of Marxist's doubts on Gandhi's Non-violence, Satyagraha and Constructive Programs. As an eternal truth seeker, and a person who was always ready to discard any of his opinions or ideas, even those held by him quite preciously, at the instance of impeccable proof or convincing argument, Mahatma Gandhi is the first and foremost social scientist, contends Pannalal. Even on the most problematic issues such as God, religion, ethics and morals etc., Pannalal, though a believer in Marxist-Leninist path, considers Gandhi on par with or as above many so called secularists, and presents Gandhi's ideas in a fresh and modern milieu.

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## MILTON'S SATAN: HERO OR FOOL

Dr. A Venugopal Reddy\*

The belief that Satan is the hero of Milton's *Paradise Lost* owes its origin and popularity to the romantic poets and critics, who, fired with the ideals of the French revolution, were prone to exalt a champion of liberty over a symbol of autocracy and dictatorship, human or divine. Blake set the ball rolling by declaring Milton to be of the Devil's party without knowing it and clearly indicating a conflict between his conscious aim and unconscious impulse. The meaning is that Milton himself was a great champion of freedom like Satan and like him he was also plunged into darkness of defeat and discomfiture, without, of course, the least inclination to submit or yield. So Blake's conclusion was that when Milton wrote about God and angels he was, as it were, fettered, but when he referred to the Satan and his followers, the defeated champions of liberty, his manner became free, natural and spontaneous.

This is the sum of the romantic argument for exalting Satan over his omnipotent victor to the status of the hero of an epic which Milton wrote 'to justify the ways of God to man,' after years of study and preparation for the production of a work "which the world would not willingly

let die,' and which will, incidentally, prove that the poet has made the best use of that one (God-given) talent which is death to hide." An unbiased survey of the poem and of the progress of Satan in the epic, however, will convince us that Milton was true to his intention which the romantic critics have misestimated, and that taken, all in all, Satan is not a hero but a fool of his egoistical pride.

In order to prove the validity of this anti-romantic and anti-popular conception of Satan we have to undertake a closer analysis of the poem. The opening lines state the theme of the epic, which is man's first disobedience which brought about his expulsion from his blissful seat in Eden and doomed him and his descendants to the curse of mortality and all the woes incidental to it. The protagonist of the poem, therefore, is Adam, who was created by God in His own image, and became eventually the centre of Satan's concerted effort to defeat the design of God through his own corruption and alienation. Adam may himself be inactive, but he sets all activities of Satan in motion. That God allowed the first man to be perverted by the archfiend may be construed as a serious mistake or negligence on the part of the Creator, so Milton proposes to justify the ways of God in this affair.

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The poem opens in Hell and we are introduced to Satan, a tall and mighty figure, dazed but firm in his moment of crushing defeat and fall and ready to build a new kingdom in Hell and infuse his fallen and abject followers with courage, hope and enthusiasm for waging an unending war with Heaven for regaining their lost seat, or, failing this, to defeat His design of peopling Eden with a new generation to fill the vacuum in Heaven created by the banishment of the host of rebel angels. It is this picture which has captured the imagination of the romantic critics and the popular readers of the poem. The simple explanation of this exaltation of the Enemy of God is not the poet's unconscious sympathy for and unconscious identification with him, but the fact that the antagonist of God must be worthy of His power and majesty-Ravana must be a foe worthy of Rama's unerring arrows. But this exaltation of the fallen Angel was also necessary to ensure the right estimate of the nature and extent or depth of his subsequent fall.

The first two books of the poem present a clear picture, not only of Satan's stature and salient traits, but also of the quality of his ideal of liberty. When the romantics described him as a champion of liberty they stated only a half-truth, because they did not analyze the nature of that liberty which Satan was supposed to champion. In the first address to Hell, his new abode, the newly risen Archangel (Satan) lets the cat out of the bag in the remark, "It is better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven." It

means that his rebellion against God was not prompted by the sense of democratic liberty; he simply wanted to overthrow the autocracy of God to set up his own rule. It would have been simply the change of one ruler by another. This is borne out by the descriptions which follow in book 11. Satan is introduced as an oriental monarch, seated on his dazzling throne, raised by pride to that bad eminence. He is imitating the majesty of God and his new kingdom is so planned as to be an exact replica of heaven. Then comes his address to his peers where his whole drift is simply a subtle effort to convince his followers that he was in no way to blame for the defeat which has overwhelmed them. The council breaks up with Satan's proposal to explore the new domain created by God for His new creature, as a vantage-point for opening a battle-front against Heaven. He quickly offers his own services for that hazardous undertaking and then rises to depart lest, encouraged by his own offer, someone of his peers should volunteer himself to be his companion in the voyage. Two points are underlined by the poet in the description in this crucial first council. In the first place, we are clearly given to understand that Satan was more feared than loved by his followers and he was not even a benign dictator. Secondly, his arduous undertaking was simply a way of gratifying his personal pride and envy, which was given the colouring of the public cause. He could not, therefore, brook a rival in this matter to share the glory with him.

The poet, thus, leaves us in no doubt about the fact that Satan's master passion was pride and the rebellion in Heaven was inspired by his rivalry with God and his personal envy against His supremacy. Defeat in war has simply exacerbated the sense of personal antagonism, which he resolves to gratify by adopting a principle diametrically opposed to that which is the essence of God's glory. If God is the symbol of the good and its prime source and fountain-head, Satan proclaims, 'Evil be thou my good.' With it he also proclaims, as it were, the fact that he was of inordinate pride. Pride and envy, indeed, did blind him so completely that he could not foresee the degrading effect of such a principle of life. Yet, with his total commitment to evil the inevitable change comes over his character and he declines progressively in physical as well as moral stature. As soon as he gains the wall which separates Chaos from Heaven his adventure takes a crooked and insidious form. Like a skulking spy he starts prying into the secrets of the human couple,

sighs at their happy union and chaste love and fixes upon the strategy effective under the circumstances. He resolves to attack the weaker partner and taking the form of a snake, a reptile that crawls basely on its belly, he whispers his flatteries and temptations into the ears of gullible Eve.

His victory, however, cost him heavily in as much as the fall from the lofty, erect, heroic position to the crawling abjectness of a reptile is a real degradation, worse even than that of Marlowe's Dr. Faustus, who also foolishly resolved to attain to a superhuman height by renouncing God and selling away his soul to the Devil. Satan adopts the same method to tempt the Second Adam, Christ, the Saviour, but he meets with the same miserable result, namely, transformation into a hissing snake. Thus, Milton intended to present the Enemy of God as a fool of his own pride and envy and he succeeded remarkably well in the execution of his design. Milton was of God's party.

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No institution can possibly survive if it needs geniuses or supermen to manage it. It must be organized in such a way as to be able to get along under a leadership composed of average human beings.

Peter Drucker

## **PROFESSOR K.S. MURTY AND *AANVIKSHIKI* (PHILOSOPHY) Its Relevance To Contemporary Indian Society**

**Prof. K. Venkateswarlu\***

I take this opportunity to pay homage to my mentor and guide in my research studies, Prof. K S Murty. I had the pleasure and benefit of an intimate, long (fifty years) and stimulating fellowship with Prof. K S Murty.

In my humble understanding, Prof. K S Murty is a great and an original thinker. He endeavoured hard and burnt mid-night oil throughout his life to build a system of ideas and thought to explain and understand the meaning and destiny of human life. What follows is an attempt to identify the central or key concepts which will enable us to interpret and construct a coherent system of his ideas and thought. I feel this is a desideratum to appreciate and appraise the works, contributions and legacy of Prof. K. S. Murty.

He was born on the 25<sup>th</sup> September, 1924, in a well-to-do agricultural family at Sangam Jagarlamudi (Village), Tenali (Revenue Division), Guntur (District), Andhra Pradesh (then Madras Presidency). His family enjoyed high customary status and respect in the village and known for probity of conduct and good reputation. His father was deeply interested in religious studies and had a good collection of books in Telugu language.

He was the only surviving child of the family. His parents reared him with unique attention and care. As a young child and boy, he did not have the pleasure of the company of siblings, or even the company of the children of the neighbourhood families. In effect, he was brought up as a lonely child. He had no taste or time for games, swimming, music or other childish pleasures of fun and frolic. This personality trait was a lasting feature in his life. He did not join any club and had no interest in sports and games and music.

His father put high premium on his education and studies, and instilled in him love for knowledge and habits of virtuous conduct. He was trained in Sanskrit education and learning in the traditional

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\* Professor, Visakhapanam  
K. Satchidananda Murty Endowment Lecture, delivered at the INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL CONGRESS, 90<sup>th</sup> Session, Magadh University, Bodh-Gaya, Bihar, February 1-4, 2016.

Prof. K Satchindananda Murthy was Prof. of Philosophy, Andhra University, Vice-Chancellor, S V University and Vice Chairman, University Grants Commission.

mould under the tutorship of Sri Gadiyaram Sivayya Sastri, and Sri Palle Purnaprajnacharya. Both the tutors were celebrated scholars, and his grounding in Sanskrit studies and learning was very strong and dyed with rational and critical spirit. Often he used to recall that Sanskrit learning shaped his outlook in a substantial measure. Later in the School, College and University, he mastered western knowledge and pedagogy with an equal measure of passion and devotion.

The formative period of his youthful mind was deeply influenced by the ideas and ideals of the critical phase of Swaraj Movement. Tenali Town and its neighbourhood region was a centre of cultural renaissance of modern Andhra. It was a centre for the whole range of mass movements and ideas - Gandhian movement and its programmes of social reform and national re-construction, Rationalist movement, Communist movement, Radical humanism and other protest movements. The ideals which were up-held and advocated by these movements left an indelible impression on his mind. This is another source to follow up and understand his ideas and mode of thinking.

Thus both the mental and material base for the formulation and growth of his ideas and thought processes lay in the environ of early life and studentship.

Philosophy or philosophical outlook is the first field of study and

reflective life and work of the mind of Prof. K.S. Murty. Philosophy was an integral part or essence of his being.

Philosophy is said to be love of wisdom of life and things in a two -fold sense. First, it is the intrinsic or given attribute of human mind to enquire about thinking, its nature and its ultimate reference or source. The problem of philosophical wisdom deals with the nature of ultimate reality or sat (actuality or reality). Therefore, metaphysics, epistemology, ontology, theology, ethics, logic (tarka), spiritual experience, revelation and speculative modes of thought constitute the stuff of philosophy as love of wisdom. Secondly, philosophy is love of knowledge. It comprises of general principles and laws generated (also observed) through the application of rational procedures in respect of the vast body of factual world. It seeks to understand and explain the patterns of relations among the various parts and divisions of the factual world. Its aim is to make the world and human life and work intelligible and intelligent and coherent entity and process.

The two-fold manifestation and development is the true spirit and character and the main body of Indian Philosophical tradition. The corpus of Prof. Murty's works document with minutiae information and the most open-minded approach the true spirit and body of Indian Philosophical tradition. The problem or problems of Indian

Philosophy arise out of the inability to correctly understand the two-track course of Indian Philosophy. Indian and Western scholars misread and misunderstood the Indian Philosophical heritage. They gave either undue and exaggerated importance or under-emphasized the role and validity of the stream of philosophical love of wisdom or the branch of philosophical knowledge of the material world. The need of the hour is to cultivate an objective, authentic (based on original sources), and critical approach in order to appraise the merit and weakness of the Indian Philosophical tradition. In fact, both the streams of Indian Philosophical tradition have developed simultaneously and have been mutually dependent on each other. Each stream has its own realm of ideas, theories and applicability, and rules and procedures to investigate and find solutions pertaining to its problems. Simply, both the streams of philosophical consciousness represent the philosophy of different things - of the human soul and unknown or unknowable other world, and of the human body and knowable material world. In one sense, they are separate entities and their beliefs and doctrines neither contradict nor invalidate each other. Both the streams of Philosophical tradition complement each other in striving to promote human happiness, progress, prosperity and liberation from the condition of bondage and suffering. According to Prof. Murty this is the pith and substance of the real nature and content, role and legacy of Indian Philosophical tradition.

Prof. Murty had a full-blooded vision of the nature, and function of Philosophy, as envisaged and advocated by Kautilya's *Arthasastra* - a classical text of Indian Civilisation and Tradition. He deliberately employed the technical term *Aanvikshiki* to designate the discipline of Philosophy. He also cited and used other technical terms: *Aatmavidya*, *Brahmavidya* or *Paravidya*, *Darsana*, *Drishti* to refer to Philosophical wisdom and knowledge and activity in Indian tradition. Of all these terms, *Aanvikshiki* captures and conveys the universal character and attributes and function of philosophical discipline. The uniqueness of Philosophy lies in its methodology of rational examination and critical appraisal of ideas, ideologies, historical environment of the society, and the programme of action relating to various spheres of social life. Philosophy is rational examination and evaluation of the foundations of customs, traditions, beliefs and faith. The ultimate aim of Kautilya's *Arthasastra* and its governing idea-magisterial *Aanvikshiki* is the security, prosperity and happiness, and *Indriya Jayah* (mastery of senses and mind) of the king (ruler) and of the people. The universal aim of Philosophy is the promotion of human welfare and well-being in this world as well as the other world.

Prof. Murty fully endorsed and adapted Kautilya's *Aanvikshiki* as the arch-stone of his system of ideas and thought. Simple doubt, why did he accept Kautilya's *Aanvikshiki* as the frame of reference to his



thought, given the background of his profound and critical scholarship of the Western (specially Greek and Christian), Islamic, Chinese, Japanese, Indian (including the Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Lokayata, Sikh, and Christian and legacy of Bhakti movements and the tradition of spiritual experience in the Hindu and Islamic cultures) Philosophical systems?. The question begs an answer as a prefatory note to our topic. I propose a provisional answer to the question. First, he concluded that the true spirit of Philosophical discipline is critical and rational examination of things to enquire about the nature of ultimate reality. *Aanvikshiki* foots the bill eminently. For example, it approves rational examination of the good and not so desirable teachings of Vedic discourse and practices regarding spiritual knowledge and experience. This is acme of rational and critical spirit. In this connection, note the critique of Buddhism, Jainology, Lokayata and Theosophy with regard to vedic heritage. Secondly, his Sanskrit education and learning was the source, which enabled him to understand and realize the true character of classical Indian Civilisation and culture. The splendid achievements and the lasting legacy of classical India in all fields of thought and activity is the product of spirit of rational examination and critical appraisal of things. Nor is this all. The gradual extinction of critical spirit and the rise and hold of dogmatic beliefs and sectarian outlook on the Indian mind is the cause for stagnation and decline of Indian Civilisation. Thirdly,

he was deeply influenced by the ideals of Swaraj Movement. After careful observation of the problems and progress of independent India, he felt and thought that the cultivation of the spirit of *Aanvikshiki* is sine qua non for the fulfillment of the ideals of Swaraj Movement, particularly its twin programme of Social Reform and National Re-construction. It is the duty of intellectuals to suggest ways and means for the promotion of an objective understanding and interpretation of Indian Tradition and its meaning to the contemporary Indian Society. He thought rational examination and- critical appraisal of the problems faced by the Indian Society and alternative choices to solve the problems is our task. For these reasons, he approved and accepted Kautilya's *Aanvikshiki* as the foundation for his ideas and thought. In the following section, I will attempt to present an account of his ideas and thought.

Prof. Murty's account of Indian Philosophy - its character and spirit, and function - has solid foundation in linguistic proficiency of Sanskrit, Telugu, Hindi and English languages. It is based on authentic and original sources - both textual and commentaries-and is informed by versatile scholarship of the Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Lokayata, Islamic, Sikh and Christian philosophic legacy. His approach in studies is objective and open-ended, singularly free from parochial prejudices, and above all is stamped by rational and critical spirit. It is supported by exceptional love for learning and knowledge, which had been

pursued with rare capacity for laborious, disciplined and devoted study. Furthermore, he cultivated abiding love for India and its heritage, partly inspired by Sanskrit learning. He deeply yearned for the progress and prosperity of the Indian society, influenced by the ideals of Swaraj Movement. He felt and thought that intellectuals owe a primary duty to the society in helping the resolution of its basic social, economic, cultural and political problems through the application of their knowledge, and thus foster the progress of the society. This is the ideological and historical context for his firm conviction that philosophy (*Aanvikshiki*) should function as a catalyst agent to support and strengthen the endeavour of Indian society for the fulfillment of the tasks of nation-building and development. Incidentally, such a constructive and useful role of philosophy in national life will contribute for the enhancement of its professional status and value.

Prof. Murty had a fond hope and deep conviction that Indian Philosophy is bound to play a critical role in shaping the process of thought transformation and cultural change in modern India. It is a two-pronged process. First, the whole baggage of mis-understanding and mis-interpretation of Indian Philosophy - the alleged dominant religious orientation, other worldly attitude to life, and sectarian spirit and outlook and the hold of dogmatic beliefs and rituals - will not stand the test of rational examination and critical

appraisal. Consequently, the support base for prevalence of social inequality and inertia, economic backwardness, and conservative foundations of cultural life and practices will be gradually eroded. Issues and questions like religion vs. science, revelation vs. reason, tradition vs. empirical knowledge, *Nivritti* vs. *Pravritti*, *Jnani* vs. *Grihastha* etc, will lose their relevance, or could be resolved in accordance with the triple criterion (noted earlier) to reconcile the contradiction between spiritual experience and empirical knowledge. This is the first part of the role of Indian Philosophy in clearing the intellectual landscape for fostering social and cultural change in Indian society.

Secondly, philosophy is a vital ideological force in helping the process of national development and nation - building. This is a fundamental conviction with Prof. Murty. Through its unique method of rational and critical examination of affairs and issues, philosophy promotes rational culture in the society. It questions the utility and validity of the age-old customs, beliefs and social practices of inequality and exclusion and discrimination. It generates and builds-up correct knowledge and right behaviour and disciplined and responsible conduct. Such a ground-breaking change in the outlook and attitudes of people and society is the foundation for development. It is a pre-condition for the successful implementation of the programmes with regard to national development. Furthermore, Indian philosophical tradition adds



an ethical dimension to the concept of development. In addition to economic prosperity and welfare, individuals should cultivate habits and manners of virtuous conduct and honest behaviour, and a sense of concern for the well-being of other persons. The ethical base of development will promote harmony and happiness in the society and helps to reduce conflict and violence in the society.

Nation-building process in India is a formidable task, given the multi-religious and ethnic stocks of people, cultural and linguistic traditions, and the hoary past of its history and civilization. The hold of sectarian, exclusive and orthodox outlook, and the belief that India is a blessed land is very strong on the Indian mind. Philosophy examines the basis and truth content of the popular beliefs and myths. For example, India is neither a blessed nor cursed land. Its culture is materialistic and religious oriented just as the cultures of other countries. It is a part of universal history of humankind. It has unique features in

some fields of thought and activity. Indian philosophical heritage is a body of schools, doctrines and knowledge comprising of the Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Lokayata, Islamic, Sikh, Christian traditions and the rich philosophical and theological literature in the regional vernacular languages, which flourished in the vast space and historical time of Indian Civilization. Like-wise, Indian history is a history of various territorial units and people of different ethnic stocks, who have been inhabitants of it. Indian Civilization and culture is a product of cross-fertilization and mutual impact of different cultural traditions of different religions and people. In the long span of historical time and vast space of India, composite culture and plural society had evolved and flourished in our country. Such a conception of glorious and shared history, culture and religious doctrines and beliefs (constructed by philosophy) will facilitate the process of nation-building in India. This is the functional role and relevance of philosophy in contemporary Indian society.

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Anybody can become angry - that is easy, but to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose, and in the right way - that is not within everybody's power and is not easy.

Aristotle

## LITERATURE AND LIFE

**Dr. Bavanasi Deepa\***

The relation between literature and life says, G.K.Chesterton, in one of his brilliant essays, is like that between a tree and the soil out of which it grows. Its roots lie deep in the soil, get nourishment out of it and the length of its life generally depends on the depth to which its roots are able to penetrate below the surface. Arnold, the great poet-critic of the Victorian England, has rightly observed that the production of great poetry requires the conjunction of a gifted mind with great moment, a society rich in thoughts and ideas which are easily available to the artist. In his essay, 'Of Studies' Bacon has reminded us that, studies give directions too wide and vague unless they are corrected and rectified by the experience of life and Hazlitt has supported Bacon with his cogent remark that books are good in themselves but they are mighty bloodless substitutes for life, and its greatness, in the final analysis, is measured in terms of the quantity and variety of life's experience it is able to absorb and preserve. A literary work which is merely artistic but has no root in real life is like a beautiful flower, artificially produced and kept up in the glass case for show, like a piece of decorative furniture.

Some people are fond of repeating the well known dictum that literature is a mirror of life. Now, the mirror-image has been used by Plato, later by Shakespeare, to denote the relationship between literature and life. Plato however uses the image in a pejorative sense to condemn art and poetry. The artist holds a mirror before life to capture the surface reflections of things. He simply creates an illusion of life which, however, can delight or terrify only children like colorful pictures in books, but they are not to be taken seriously by men of sense and judgement. He therefore, concludes that art deals in shadows and illusions rather than in the truth and reality of life.

Plato's criticism of art was a great challenge to the critics and lovers of literature and it was effectively faced and answered by one of his own gifted disciples who was none other than the great thinker and scholar Aristotle, the celebrated author of *Poetics*. Aristotle described art as an imitation of life imitation being process of making, of reducing the bristling discords and chaos of life to logic, order and discipline, thereby rendering the meaning and mystery of life at once intelligible and delightful to the readers. The mind of the writer is not a passive and faithful reflector of external reality but a plastic agent

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capable of representing or distorting or idealizing the actions and characters of real life. Literature presents not only things as they are or were, but also things as they are said or thought to be, like stories and myths about gods and the actions of super natural creatures and finally, as the things ought to be, that is, the ideals and dreams which life fails to satisfy. Commenting on this point Sir Philip Sidney has observed that lifted by his own invention the poet becomes a second nature and either produces things more beautiful than those extant in life or creates creatures which never existed in the actual world, the 'airy nothings' like fairies, demi-gods and monsters etc. The nature's world, he concludes, is brazen, but the poet alone delivers the golden. The golden world or imagination, super natural or utopian, derives its validity from the writer's knowledge of life and of human nature. Commenting on the handling of the supernatural agencies, which was his portion in the famous partnership with Wordsworth, Coleridge has observed that these airy creatures were to be given a semblance of truth and humanity in order to induce that 'suspension of disbelief' concerning them 'which constitutes the poetic faith'.

After determining the close, vital and creative connection between literature and life in general, it is necessary now to probe with greater minuteness into the nature of the artist's relation to the life around him in a particular milieu and point of time. There are several alternatives open

to him, of which he may choose in accordance with his natural proclivity or under the exigencies and pressure of circumstances. He may choose to be a representative of the age like Pope and Tennyson by incorporating into his works the main tendencies and burning problems of the day and voicing the feelings, dreams and aspirations which are felt by most of his countrymen. He may win instantaneous popularity and easy fortune but his fame rests on a flimsy foundation because the surface of society is constantly changing and the conventions of one age become the relics of hated superstition in another and in this revolution of mind and taste the popular writer is the first casualty. The reactions against Pope in the nineteenth century and against Tennyson in the twentieth are only the typical cases in point which have their counterparts in all the countries.

Aristotle has rightly observed that history is concerned with the particulars while, poetry with the universal aspects of human nature and the real problems which a literary artist has to face is the difficult task of combining the temporal and the timeless, the accidental and the permanent interests of life. Great artists like Homer, Virgil, Dante, Chaucer and Shakespeare or Kalidas are at once the chroniclers of their particular ages and the historiographers royal of humanity in ages yet unborn, whose works have new meaning for new age. Sometimes there is a clash between the literary artist and the society at large and

the literature produced by him may be a criticism of contemporary society, where the values of life have gone down, institutions have deteriorated and corruption and injustice, like insidious cancer, eating into the vitals of its heart. Comedy or satire is the peculiar weapon of this literature but it is on the side of life, desiring to destroy the evils and abuses in order simply that society may function properly, with its health and mental balance quite intact. But he may be a more vigorous and radical critic of society, unsatisfied with mere purgation or purification of its system and earnestly at work to bring about a complete transformation of society and the outlook of the people. In England the typical cases are those of G.B. Shaw and P.B. Shelley and the extreme of this view point is represented by the Marxist critics and authors who have exhorted the writers and artists to act as the active spearheads of the political movement against the old, decadent capitalist system which must be replaced by a classless society.

The artistic interpretation of life, therefore, is wide, complex and many-sided and the ultimate and perhaps the noblest aim or function of literature is the restoration of values to life or, in the words of Mathew Arnold, the grand application of ideas to life, to the problem of how to live. This Victorian critic was writing in a period when the old values were vanishing under the impact of science and new values had not yet been created, a wanderer between two worlds, one dead and the other yet

powerless to be born. He, therefore, asserted that as the old religion had decayed and fossilized society in future would come to depend more and more on poetry to console or sustain or elevate its spirit.

The idea of Arnold has not found favor with the critics and artists of the present age, dominated, as they are, by the terror of the atom bomb, where cultural life has been reduced to a heap of broken images and society to a wilderness of chaos and anarchy; where literary artists are either immersed in the destructive elements or they are busy in search for new value or the restoration of the old ones connected with orthodox religions and philosophies. Marx and Freud are our substitute gods, with their different emphasis on social and individual diseases. For Marx the evils of society are due mainly to the selfishness of the capitalist, where for Freud the mainspring of the internal ailment is attributed to the conflict between the natural appetites of the individual and the moral code of society which is opposed to the free expression and full satisfaction. The result is repression complexes and neurosis. Freudian literature is mostly concerned with sexual perversion and abnormality and it has laid bare the inherent animality of man, casting to the four winds all the sense of decorum and decency and all canons of conventional morality. Sexual literature and the literature of crime, violence and sensational adventures supply now the staple fare for the solace and recreation of

the mass of dehumanized workers as well as for the idle rich bored to death by the inanity of life and desperately in need of strong stimulants to galvanize their jaded hearts and minds. It is argued that this literature has a cathartic value because it provides safe avenues for the free play of those impulses of the heart which do not find gratification in actual life. The argument unconvincing in as much as it is not supported by actual experience. Literature

of this type is in the nature of an intoxicant which serves to increase the craving by satisfying it momentarily. Literature was created to make life beautiful and endurable or at least for providing healthy and vital recreation: not to make a parade of the animality of man or of the sexual mud, conscious, subconscious or unconscious. But it is quite true: every society gets the literature it deserves: decadent life has its counterpart in decadent literature.

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### NERIUM OLEANDER (*Billaganneru*)

Telugu: Thummuri Rammohan Rao

Translation: **Thummuri Sharath Babu\***

I know I'm a flower sans fragrance  
A bit attractive though to look at  
There's no scene of sowing in a pot  
I grow every here and there hence this disregard  
My life is like a thirst-enduring camel in a desert  
There's none to quench my thirst  
Doctors must know if I'm of any medical significance  
I am plucked for *puja* when no other flowers around  
I wonder if the fan is designed after me

A five-petal flower sure I am like  
*Panchakshari*  
Yet the *panchamasthanam* (last/fifth place)  
Let me ask plainly  
Am I to blame for not bearing fragrance  
Like a plump little boy  
Clinging to the waist of a beggar-mom who weaves mats  
However sweet I might be, will you take me onto your bosom  
Is it me alone, how many flowers of my sort aren't dishonored?  
Well, it's alright  
Over some pauper's yard, in bundles I bloom  
And turn his yard a garden  
And as a light in his eyes I glow.

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## A VILLAGE GODDESS FESTIVAL

Dr. Dornal Sudharshan\*

A village goddess festival is a cultural manifestation of collective experience and reflects shared meanings, shared ethos and shared beliefs which contribute to meaningful social existence. Its cultural significance is immense in that it is part of the shared experience of joy, dedication, loyalty, prayer and supplication. There are aspects of myth, legend, history and a way of social living. The ethos, or the spirit of culture, and the myths of the culture shape each other by endless cross-currents. The conception of a protecting deity, usually in the shape of a folk goddess, (perhaps a relic of the matriarchal domination at the anthropological root of Indian Culture), in every village (the geographical unit in India which has been primarily an agricultural nation) is age-old. Each village or cluster of them has a common and yet unique way of expressing its shared existence in a vast culture. The stupendous participation of people in these cultural festivities brings them into the ken of popular culture studies.

*Jatara* is a popular religio-social festival with elements of a carnival and spectacular celebration. The *Jatara* of Paidimamba, the Village Goddess of

Vizianagaram, is an age old celebration which has its origin around 1757. The name Paidimamba connotes the mother of gold, the goddess of riches. She is considered to be the protecting deity of the area by popular belief.

The Paidimamba festival is the popular variation of the canonical religion. This observance is a popular and collective expression of what was once an exemplification of canonical observance. If the conception of the deity as a goddess speaks of the anthropological base of matriarchal tradition, there is enough sentiment attached to the distinctive and affectionate treatment offered to the daughter of the house. Hindu culture, canonical and popular, accepts guarantees and retains a distinctive place to the daughter in that a worshipful, holy kind of treatment is believed to be of salutary and beneficent effect on the well-being of the parent's house. This is unique to Indian culture for in the western countries the singular and distinctive treatment to the daughter of the house after she leaves for her husband's abode is not held to be as necessary, salutary or beneficent as it is in India.

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A study of the festival of Paidimamba affords us a key to the

understanding of the multitudinous facets of the sub regional manifestations of Indian popular culture. Different motifs may be isolated in the festivity:

- an outlook of loyalty to the leader/benefactor/ruler of a pre-eminently feudal origin.
- a social festivity which has at its centre, a religious observance.
- an attempt at the realization of the ultimate reality with feet firmly planted in the here and now.

The uniqueness of the festival lies in that it embraces both the elite and the different kinds of minorities. From the lowest in this social scale right upto the top (in this case, the Rajah, the feudal Lord of Yore) participate in the festivities. There are rituals, religious observances, carnivals, and fairs - - all an expression of popular enthusiasm.

### **History, Legend and Myth:**

The identity of the goddess is shrouded in an aura of mystery. Some assert that Paidimamba is the sister of a king, the victor in the Bobbili-Vizianagaram fray of the mid-eighteenth century. Some hold that she is the household goddess of the Royal family. It is popularly believed that there is a close affinity between the 'Shakti' (guardian angel) of the fort and this deity. The fort itself was constructed in 1713 by

the feudal lord who patronized a hundred and one temples in the surrounding two hundred miles. The fort has historical connections with the Nizam of Hyderabad and later the French adventurers. These shaped a distinct local culture which is singularly different from the South Indian Culture at large. Legend has it that the Manne Suhan of Vizianagaram, Vijayamma Gajapati's sister, Pydimamba, was a devotee of *Shakti*. Her devotion kept her aloof from political intrigues. In a divine trance she saw the intrigue of the French General Bussy and forewarned her brother who assured her and left for the battle field. A short while later she succumbed to small-pox, in those days attributed to the fury of Shakti, the goddess. It was believed that the deceased Pydimamba once again warned her brother in his dream of the French and asked him to install an icon which she said would be found in a tank and to offer it worship.

Lord Carmichael compiled the history of Visakhapatnam District in 1886 and some of these legends were mentioned by him. The town Vizianagaram which has come to be a district head quarters in 1979 has several goddesses worshipped in the surrounding villages like Nookalamma, Yellamma, Nalla Maremma, Mutyalamma and Kali. The idol of Pydimamba has close resemblance to that of Goddess Kali. In her left hand are a sword and a trident, in the right Shiva's little drum and an ornamental urn, a receptacle of red turmeric powder, to indicate purity and



auspiciousness. She might be a variation of Manikyeswari sharing the origin with Kanaka Durga of Bezwada.

Though the exact origin of Pydimamba and her affinity to Kali cannot be established in the face of conflicting pieces of evidence, disparate trends in popular belief and the multiplicity of legends and myths woven around the celebration reveal a shared cultural experience.

### **The Festival:**

There is a fair, a carnival, a feast and plethora of frenzied kind of worship. Nearly 0.2 million people offer their worship to the goddess and partake of the festivities. On the day of the main festival there is a spectacular gathering of nearly a hundred thousand people in the huge open space before the historical fort. There is a procession taken back and forth from the temple to the fort. A fasting man, perched at the top of a thirty feet tall hewn tree trunk hauled on a cart by men, bows thrice before the fort. It is a symbolic pledge of loyalty to the Shakti of the Fort as well as to the Lords of the Royal House seated on the battlements. Even today members of the Royal House sit on the battlements to witness the festival. The tree is chosen by the chief priest of the temple on specific instructions delivered to him in a dream. The trunk is called popularly *Sirimanu* - the auspicious trunk.

The *Sirimanu* is led by a cart signifying an elephant and another with a huge fisherman's net. It is a festival of the working classes, men who work on land and those who fish at sea. Vizianagaram is in North coastal Andhra. The *Sirimanu* was once a *Sirimanu*, a tree trunk with a steel hook. At the top was a man suspended from a tree hook thrust into his back. After human sacrifice was abolished both by law and social practice the man sits on a chair like structure at the top and it came to be called *Sirimanu*, a trunk which brings prosperity and therefore auspicious. Thurston in his "Castes and Tribes of South India" recorded the practices of the people in the distant past.

The sight of the *Sirimanu* is spectacular. People invite their relatives from surrounding villages within a radius of two hundred miles. Popular belief has it that one should not absent one's self from the festival if one happens to hear its announcement made nearly a month earlier. The goddess is brought from her in-laws' abode with pomp and is retained for worship here for as many as eight to ten weeks. The day before the auspicious-trunk festival, there is a preliminary festival, *tolllellu*, when agriculturists receive grain to be mixed with seed. It is a fertility rite. On harvest land owners give quantities of grain to the temple and after a formal offering to the deity, the grain is distributed to the tillers. The day following the main festival there is sumptuous feasting on non-vegetarian dishes. Two days of abstinence



from meat and then this 'festival of meat dishes'.

The social festivities are a charming sight. Young and old, men and women throng to the temple and after getting a glimpse of the deity assemble in the open yard before the fort to witness the auspicious trunk which is heralded by the fabulous fisherman's net hauled on a cart. On the cart are four muffled men guarding themselves from the plantains pelted by the crowds. The fasting man perched on the top of trunk guards himself with a fan. This pelting of plantains is a relic of the ancient custom in which the man is speared from below till he is mortally wounded. It started with a human sacrifice to propitiate the deity who protected people from epidemics.

Weeks before the festival, people vow to the goddess to participate in masques as actors in costume. The most popular of these are tiger shows. To the rhythmic beating of drums, men painted and dressed to suggest that they are tigers, dance and sway and jump. The tiger show is an artifact which has no equal to it in the entire country. The swaying and the movements are taught by aged experts. The frenzied beating of drums rising to a crescendo and falling to a slow rhythmic beat, the graceful, enthusiastic swaying of energetic limbs and the movements of the neck muscles bring

to mind the most graceful moments in Indian dance. Some men and women go into a frenzy of excitement and are supposed to be under the spell of the deity. Camphor and incense are lit before the frenzied worshipper to pacify and appease the goddess. Pots filled with holy water are taken in a procession of men and women, their path lit by the old fashioned oil wicks. The main auspicious Trunk Festival is flanked by the preliminary Festival *tollellu* and the Feasting festival, the Festival of Meat dishes.

While the main festival takes place on a Tuesday after the National Festival of Durga *Pooja* before the full moon day, the celebration of the farewell festival *anupu* is prefaced with a cradle-festival on a Tuesday before the New Moon day. The goddess is taken back to her residence at her in-law's, four kilometers away to be invited again the following year in Vaisakh, May.

This is a folk festival with huge crowds participating in a colorful and boisterous fashion. It is the focal point of popular culture, the shared beliefs, and sentiments of the men of the soil pledging their loyalty to their ruler and devotion to the goddess who is believed to protect people from epidemics. The enthusiasm of the people is electrifying.

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## BESSIE HEAD, THE SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH WOMAN NOVELIST

Dr. P. Satyanarayana\*

Bessie Head, the South African-born novelist and short story writer, is one of the best-known women writers to emerge from Africa in recent times. She has made an extraordinary contribution to the literature of her country in a relatively short span of her literary career. When she died in 1986 at the age of forty-nine, she left behind a legacy of diverse writings. Her oeuvre comprises three novels, two collections of short stories, an oral history, a historical narrative and collection of articles on her life and writings.

Head's life and works portray the tragic conditions of South African life. Her initial works show the influence of her own experiences in South Africa, focusing on the themes of racism and refugeeism. Despite the parallels between her personal life and her story lines, she successfully transcended the parochial boundaries to reveal the pattern of discrimination on the basis of colour, class and gender. In her later works, the focus shifts from individuals to community and its significance in preserving the local ethos and culture. Although southern Africa and Botswana in particular serve as settings for Head's work, she saw herself largely

associated with world literature. She refused to classify her work in terms of nation, race, colour or class as she had a desire to be accepted globally. Her works chiefly address the problems of racial and sexual inequities in Africa, emphasizing the correlation between the resultant prejudices. She treats this theme with a rare sensitivity. Most of her work features marginalization on the basis of class, colour and gender. Even though Head resisted being labeled as a feminist writer, a large portion of her work significantly deals with the travails of women in patriarchal societies, their position, experiences and evolution as individuals in their own right. Head's three major novels are *When Rain Clouds Gather* (1969), *Maru* (1971) and *A Question of Power* (1974). *When Rain Clouds Gather* was written after she first arrived in Botswana in 1964. Head became aware of the two burning issues in Botswana- the-drought in which 300,000 cattle died and the first general election for independence. The idea that appealed to her was the zeal among blacks to form cooperatives in order to deal with natural calamity. *When Rain Clouds Gather* deals primarily with Head's portrayal of an agricultural community of Botswana, it initiates some of the major concerns of Head's fictional texts, chiefly class, racial and gender prejudices in the African

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society. Here prejudices, racism, corrupt tribal practices, witchcraft are all shown as weapons used to terrorize common people. This novel is the story of Makhaya, a political refugee from South Africa, who escapes to Botswana after serving a term in prison. He moves to a rural town named Golema Mimidi and finds it inhabited by people who like him are seeking a better life. He attempts to become a part of the community that is struggling in the face of a severe drought. The village community has set up an agricultural project and a cattle cooperative, both of which do not find favour with the village chiefs. Thus it is a struggle against ignorance, prejudice and traditions which prevent the community from benefiting from modern farming techniques. The novel not only deals with the exploitation of blacks by whites but also by their own black chiefs.

Head's second novel *Maru* (1971) was greeted with great enthusiasm. It is the story of a young Masarwa, Margaret Cadmore. In Head's words, this is a novel on "the hideousness of racial prejudice." She further comments, "I also wanted the novel to be so beautiful and so magical that I, as the writer, would long to read and re-read it". The novel deals with racial and sexual prejudices prevalent in the African society. It shows blacks of Serowe to be as racist towards the Masarwas as whites are towards blacks. It presents a Bushwoman, Margaret Cadmore, suffering tribal prejudices. Even as a young girl, she is made conscious of the fact that she is "mixed

breed, half breed, low breed or bastard." The novel brings out the conflict between two men Maru and Moleka who fall in love with the same woman, Margaret. The relationship between Maru and Margaret is not really conventional in the sense that it is not surrounded by all the romantic hues associated with love. In fact, both of them hardly meet after their first brief encounter and yet Maru is convinced in his mind that Margaret is the girl he wants. The plot of the novel involves love, betrayal, freedom and marriage. *Maru* is Head's attempt to universalize racial hatred, pointing out that victims often seek other victims lower in status and power than themselves.

*A Question of Power* is Head's most powerful novel. It describes the events in the life of the main protagonist, Elizabeth, in South Africa. Just like Head's previous two novels, it sets out to explore the interplay of gender, race and class in Botswana culture and their impact on an individual who joins the community as an outsider. Elizabeth lives in cooperative community with her son but her peaceful life is soon threatened by a nervous breakdown. This novel is autobiographical, yet Head has successfully imparted to it a universal appeal and made it every man's story, "for people in the course of their lives go through a similar period of stress." The first part of the novel portrays Elizabeth's relationship with Sello and is filled with imaginary exchanges involving Elizabeth, Sello and a series of incarnations. In Sello

we have a highly spiritual being while Dan, the second male figure in the novel, is sexually aggressive and dominating. In the second part, Elizabeth enters into a destructive relationship with Dan but this becomes Elizabeth's ticket to freedom as she is finally ready to establish a meaningful relationship with Sello. He begins to understand and value the true meaning of love where "love is two people mutually feeding each other, not one living on the soul of the other like a ghoul."

The novel can be discussed at two levels. At one level, the narrative is a back-breaking struggle of the protagonist who is stateless and alienated and is desperate for an identity. In order to save herself from further humiliation and racial bitterness, she leaves South Africa on an exit permit to live in Botswana. Her mental instability and disturbance mirrors the social malice of apartheid ridden South Africa. Elizabeth was baffled by her life in South Africa which was like living with permanent nervous tension. The second interpretation of the novel centers around the need to confront male power as it is intrinsic to the woman's social role and her personal

identity. Woman not only has to confront masculine aggression as a symbol of oppression but has also to fight her obsession to this power in her own psyche. *A Question of Power* is about love, creativity, power of good and evil, degradation, alienation and struggle of an individual to survive even in adverse circumstances. The novel marks the end of Head's first phase of literary career. Lionel Abraham has aptly called this novel a "small mine of insight into religion, sex, sociology, psychology and morality from which patient and receptive readers will be retrieving treasures of new understanding for decades to come." It shows Elizabeth moving from her state of alienation and silence to a world of community and expression. Her odyssey comprises various images, which are signs of a society sustaining itself on the system of power play in every sphere of life. Her pain and insanity are products of her failure to conform to accepted social patterns in what is still a conservative man's world. This shows Head's knowledge of and concern with, the plight of black women in an oppressive society.

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Hell is empty and all the devils are here.  
Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none.  
All that glitters is not gold

- Shakespeare

## THOUGHTS IN A GARDEN

M.G. Narasimha Murthy\*

Crimson glow of the rising sun  
 Along the rosy horizon  
 Set ablaze the floating clouds  
 With edges embroidered in flaming gold  
 And ushered in a brilliant dawn.  
 Sunbeams on the mountain slopes  
 Uncovered valleys and gurgling streams,  
 Darting rays through gnarled trees  
 Adorned with foliage of emerald green  
 Illumined the serene garden scene.  
 Genial warmth of the morning sun  
 Opened rows and rows of white jasmine  
 And filled the air with fragrance sweet  
 While mother nature sprinkled smiles  
 In a shower of roses of delicate hues.  
 Hummingbirds and honey-bees  
 Hovered over colourful blossoms,  
 big and small.

Shy flowers, like blushing maids,  
 Allured passersby to pause a while  
 And admire their beautiful,  
 bewitching smile.  
 Basking in sunshine  
 under the bright blue sky  
 Or stretching on grass in chequered shades,  
 My questioning mind probed in vain  
 The enigma of nature's creations ,  
 It's amazing harmony and violent ire  
 And the aim of evolving human life.  
 Eager to grasp what the future holds,  
 Indulged in reveries undisturbed,  
 Oblivious of fortune's ebb and tide  
 And ceaseless struggle for survival,  
 Until twilight showed the early stars  
 And gliding clouds veiled the azure sky.  
 In darkness dissolved the lovely scene!  
 Soon, the vision of rapture was a  
 vanishing dream,  
 A foretaste of life merging  
 with the cosmic stream!

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\* Principal (Retd.) Hyderabad.

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You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backward. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something--your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life.

- Steve Jobs

## **JIDDU KRISHNAMURTHI -PHILOSOPHER, PSYCHOLOGIST AND WORLD TEACHER**

**V. Muralidhar\***

Jiddu Krishna Murthi says, "A radical transformation in society is our problem and this transformation or revolution in society must begin with inner psychological transformation of the individual."

The internationally reputed celebrity J.K was born at Madanapalle, Chittoor Dist. A.P. As he was an adopted son of Dr. Annie Besant, she took him away to England, where this unique personality came into contact with eminent scholars of his time and rose to the pinnacle of fame.

Undoubtedly, he is a philosopher cum psychologist par excellence, whose diagnostic insight into human psychology has made us awestruck for his marvelous observation of human nature and his inspiration to all humans to study to open their mind's eye to the book called "The Book of Life", which allows us to draw profusely and abundantly the profundity and variety of ideas and thoughts to be helpful and useful in our life.

It gives us an impetus to study human behavior under different concomitants of life situations, events, incidents and

circumstances of which we wish to probe our search into the root cause of all so as to enable us to get some solution and thereby learn many a lesson for our self-development.

He deals with various aspects with regard to human miseries, sorrows, fear, beauty, the concept of God, violence, education, mind, meditation, religion, emotions, frailties, love, compassion, envy, aspirations, interests, ego, prejudices, intolerance and idiosyncrasies.

Be it understood that they are all the products of the human mind, and in as much as they will be the dying embers of the mind of which our mind is completely responsible for all our actions and deeds. This outstanding personality has stated in his vignettes of philosophy that the so called society has been doing great harm in every respect creating fear complex in the minds of its members and also sowing the seeds of immoral and demoralizing sermons and lessons to spoil and destroy the atmosphere of the society.

Society is doing everything to inculcate fear by laying down standards, religious ideals, class distinctions, ideas of success, the sense of inferior and

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\* Writer, Madanapalle.

superior, the rich and the poor. Society is doing everything possible to breed distorted values, says J.K.

We are, in fact, caught in the web of fear, whose forms are many namely, fear of death, fear of public criticism, fear of old age, fear of losing - self-confidence, fear of losing job, fear of disappointments, fear of natural calamities, fear of diseases and illness, and fear of going against traditions and conventions. There is every possibility of being ex-communicated by the society, if we don't follow and encourage rituals, poojas, idol worship and other activities prescribed by the society, as we are all revolving in the orbit of fear like a satellite since time immemorial.

Further he says that fear has been obstructing and arresting the growth of the mind in goodness, which is really a genuine reason in all its true sense. A twinge of conscience, fear, guilt, regret, and remorse maybe providing an opportunity to cogitate up on to develop self-confidence, self-introspection, and circumspection in order to bring about the psychological transformation not to harm with all our evil and perfidious designs. It is true that we are all educated, intelligent, cultured, good mannered, cunning and we are violent internally.

We plunge into fear out of violence, anger, frustration, disappointment, and discomfiture taking into consideration the situation, and eventually we resort to

meditation hoping to get an iota of calmness, serenity and inner peace. In a thoughtful moment, we wish to reflect-up on the relation to meditation, whose forms are different namely discovery, self-recollected awareness, cutting loose from tradition, ideas, conclusions, and sense of loneliness and finally death.

J.K says, meditation is not a withdrawal from life. Meditation is the process of understanding one self. And one begins to understand one- self all the hidden parts of one-self as well.

The summum bonum of life is to comprehend that culture is the sum total of our valuation of our emotional response, for it is the shape of our character of the mind. It is always to be understood that each thought is an internal dialogue and also an introspective monologue, as all our thoughts will explore into a kaleidoscopic spectrum. Thoughts will spring in our mind and, therefore, we express in conformity with the situation and need and necessity, as our mind is nothing but an unceasing flow of thoughts, whereas psychologists are of the opinion that mind is temperament and hence thought is the response of the memory.

The human mind has the capacity to preserve every event, incident, failures, success, eulogies, hatred, crucifixion of feelings.

J.K observes thus: Education means bringing about changes in the mind, not in



others, but in one self. Why bother about changing others; change your-self. We want to change everybody except our-selves. If you change your-self, life will be more meaningful not only to you but also to others. As a philosopher and psychologist, he used to meet innumerable people all over the globe with a view to listening to their soul stirring affliction, apprehensions, pent up emotional feelings, frustration, agitation in their minds, and, consequently they used to know that he had been loving them, understanding them thoroughly well, and also consoling them for their miseries. Finally he said that man himself was his own saviour and nobody else, as redemption or help might not come from outside.

He had immense belief in understanding humanity, and used to draw from nature in order to have free mind to pass on to the humanity at large with an intention to spread and share infinite love and affection and at the same instant he had also been allowing and helping them to have an analytical examination and dissection in order to know the root cause of their problems.

J.K asserts thus: "The feeling of care is the beginning of affection. And so to have affection right through life is one of

the most difficult things and without it life becomes very empty. You may have children; you may have a nice house, a car and all the rest of it, but without love and affection, life is like a flower that has no scent".

J.K was a great reformer, humanist, keen observer and an ardent admirer of nature, like Keats, Wordsworth and Kalidasa. He had great fascination to the beauties of nature - the green fields, the meadows, the gurgling noise of the rivulets, the purling of the brooklets, the pure air of the country side, the music of the insect life, the rippling streams in their pearly path, the azure loveliness of the sky, the glittering stars in the firmament - all these naturally would be feasting to the eyes and thereby paving the way for our keen observation to learn from nature's bounty what we call 'education' and, at length, pearls of wisdom of truth.

The philosopher and psychologist is of the opinion that it is for the humans to investigate or enquire into human problems themselves by following psychological surgery in order to get free from the sufferings and sorrows.

Happiness can be experienced ineffably.

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## ANNAMACHARYA SANKEERTANAS

Translated by  
**Prof. M. Rajagopalachary\***

Annamacharya (1408-1523) is a pioneering *sankeertanacharya* in Telugu literature with 32,000 sankeertanas to his credit out of which only 12,000 are available now. Steeped in *nishkama bhakti*, these *sankeertanas* are called mantras or sacred hymns. Annamacharya is also known as the father of *Pada* tradition of poetry (Padakavita Pitamaha). He led the carnatic music tradition followed by other composers like Purandaradas, Tyagaraja and Ramadasu. He is also considered father of bhajan style of singing for his influence on common men with a folk touch. It is believed that he is the incarnation of Nandaka, the sword of Vishnu. Annamacharya *keertanas* have *pallavi*, *anupallavi* (optional) and preferably three *charanams*. Some of his *padams* have, however, as many as 25 *charanams*. He made the *pallavi* an integral part of the *padam* by investing it with significant idea which is expanded in the subsequent *charanams*. Every *padam* of Annamacharya has a *mudra* of his own indicating the name of Lord Venkateshwara rather than his own. Besides the *sankeertanas*, Annamacharya composed twelve *Satakas*, *Sringara Manjari* in

*Dwipada*, *Venkateswara Mahatyam*, *Dwipada Ramayana*, *Sankeertana Lakshanamu*, etc. Some of them were written in Sanskrit. Annamacharya's *sankeertanas* exhibit rare social consciousness opposing the practice of untouchability and preaching egalitarianism. Many of his sankeertanas with their moral import can be regarded as lessons in personality development for the modern generation.

Annamayya remained unknown for nearly five hundred years. It was only in 1922 that the copper plates of his sankeertanas were discovered by Veturi Prabhakara Sastry in the *sankeertana bhandagara* of Tirumala temple in a miraculous way. Thanks to the efforts of scholars like Veturi Prabhakara Sastry, Rallapalli Ananta Krishna Sharma, Vijaya Raghavachary and Gauripedda Ramasubba Sharma under the auspices of TTD, the sankeertanas were deciphered with great effort. In 1998 the TTD released 29 volumes in Telugu of *Tallapaka Pada Sahityam*. Annamacharya had a lion's share of about 12, 000 in the total 14000 *sankeertanas* published. As the *raga prastaara* was not indicated by Annamacharya on these copper plates, several modern musicologists like Dr

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Magalampalli Balamurali Krishna, Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma, Sandhyavandanam Srinivasa Rao, Kadainallor Venkataraman, Sripada Pinakapani, Nedunuri Krishnamurthy, Garimella Balakrishna Prasad, Shobha Raju and others tried to compose music to several *sankeertanas*.

Annamacharya's compositions are classified basically into *Sringara* (erotic) and *Adhyatmika* or Devotional songs. Many of the *sankeertanas* are loaded with the wisdom of Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, Bhagavad Gita, the Mahabharata, Puranas and other scriptures. We also find in them *madhura bhakti*, *prapatti*, *vairagya* (detachment), metaphysical quest, *visistaadvaita*, personality development, and varied other themes. The following are a few *sankeertanaas* of Annamacharya translated by me from Telugu into English.

1. *Chooda jooda manikyalu chukkala valenunnavi.....*

Gaze upon the rubies of the Lord  
They look like stars!  
The incomparable eyes of the Lord  
Are the Sun and the Moon!!  
I have seen those necklaces and pendants  
Strewn with precious pearls,  
The majestic crown sky-high  
And the dazzling pair of the conch and the discus!!

Bow to Him; He is right before you!

Look at the cheerful cheeks and the brilliant face

And all the worlds enveloped in his mouth,  
The ornaments of the shoulders

And His beautiful beloved Alamelu!!

Those bracelets and the long sword tied to the waist

And the yellow silk robes shining like gold  
Discovering your disposition from the countenance

Here descends Lord Venkateshwara, the origin of all souls,

As a treasure at your doorstep right before your eyes!

2. *Govinda govinda yani kohuvare...*

Why don't you adore Him chanting the name of Govinda time and again?

Why don't you dance saying Hari and Achyuta

And praise Him as Purushothama?

Why don't you address Him as the Supreme Soul?

Why don't you, O men, rejoice calling Him the consort of Lakshmi?

Why don't you sing His glory as the saviour of the Pandavas

And praise Him as the God who made Garuda His carriage?

Why don't you pledge Your vows to the Lord of the Holy Lake, O men?

Why don't you meditate upon Madhava constantly!!

Why don't you know Him as the Lord of Lakshmi

And behold Ananta, the Infinite, of great splendour?  
 Why don't you reach the Lord of Venkatadri, O men?  
 Why don't you sanctify your lives, thus, always?

### 3. *Annitikinidi paramoushadhamu...*

This is the ultimate panacea for all  
 The name of Vishnu alone is the pure medicine!!

The name of Sripathi itself  
 Is the actual divine therapy for peace of mind  
 Vishnu, father of Manmatha,  
 Is the ready remedy for redemption from all bonds!!

The holy water of Hari's feet itself  
 Is the cure for all kinds of earthly diseases  
 Worship of Lord Krishna who killed the demon Mura  
 Is the principal medication to put an end to the sinful deeds!!

Chanting happily the name of the Lord of Indira itself  
 Is the tonic both in this world and the other  
 Seeking refuge with the Lord of Venkatadri  
 Is the only eternal medicine that is left for us.

### 4. *Bhaavamulonaa bahyamunandunu ...*

Chant the name of Govinda repeatedly,  
 And worship Him both within and without,

O Heart!

All the angels are Hari's incarnations  
 All the creations of Brahma are within Him  
 All the sacred hymns are His holy names  
 Chant the name of Hari repeatedly, O Heart!

All prescribed deeds are the miracles of Vishnu

All the Vedas are praises showered on Him  
 Vishnu alone is at the centre of the entire universe

Go in search of Vishnu repeatedly, O Heart!!

Immortal Achyuta is the origin and the end  
 He alone is the killer of demons  
 He is here on the Venkatadri  
 Seek Achyuta's refuge chanting His name, O Heart!!!

### 5. *Paapinaina naapaala galigi tova...*

A sinner as I am  
 None comes to my rescue and shows me the way out!

I am tired of roaming about the world unsteadily

I am tired of approaching others

I am tired of helpless anger against others

I am tired of mindless act of abandoning my family profession

I am tired of giving up my code of conduct out of disgust

I am tired of vain flattery

I am tired of greed for wealth

I am tired of pining within like a mere child

I am tired of serving so-called scholars

I am tired of seeking out all other gods  
 Refraining from the service of Lord  
 Venkatesha

I am tired of serving others in vain.

6. *Bramha Kadigina Paadamu ...*

This is the holy foot cleansed by Brahma,  
 the Creator

This in itself is the Almighty!

This is the holy foot that broke forth to  
 measure the entire earth

This is the holy foot that pressed Emperor  
 Bali to the Underworld

This is the holy foot that kicked the sky  
 without any hesitation

This is the holy foot that saved the mighty  
 Indra

This is the holy foot that absolved the lustful  
 Ahalya of her sin

This is the holy foot that danced on the  
 hoods of Serpent Kaleeya

This is the holy foot pressed by endearing  
 Lakshmi

This is the holy foot of Kalki that rode the  
 irresistible galloping horse

This holy foot of Yours grants the great sages  
 Heaven by different means

This holy foot of Yours points to Tirumala  
 Hill as eternal.

And remains the highest heaven.

7. *Heenaadhikamu linka neda nunnavo  
 kaani...*

Between God and His servants  
 The relationship remains the same for all

Where is the scope for discrimination of  
 high and low here?

There is only one *mantra* of His name to  
 chant

For people of all classes and castes.

Of whatever caste they may be on this earth  
 The redemption they attain through the vow  
 of silence is the same.

Devotion to be sought invariably is the same  
 For all servants of Vishnu both in the past  
 and the future.

All Vaishnavites who believe in the God  
 As the indweller of all beings belong to  
 the same religion.

There are neither differences nor any  
 secrets among them.

The liberated souls are all alike

Either before or after their existence in the  
 world.

Self-surrender is the only means to reach  
 Lord Venkateshwara, the Consort of Laxmi  
 with love.

8. *Enta chadivina emivinina tana ...*

Whatever be your learning or listening,  
 How do you get rid of your grief and get  
 enriched?

Unless you abstain from calumny  
 Unless you are free from cupidity  
 Unless you control your fickle-mindedness  
 How can you avoid misfortune and attain  
 good fortune?

Unless you are free from greed  
 Unless you are unblemished  
 Unless you are free from ill-will  
 How can you overcome adversities and  
 attain the other world?

Unless you seek Lord Venkatesha in your  
 soul  
 Unless you are free from anger  
 Unless you abstain from telling lies  
 How can you overcome your uncertainty  
 and attain success?

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## BE A WOMAN

Supratik Sen\*

When I said that  
 my friends laughed  
 some of them, women

be a man  
 my ears were trained thus  
 what does it mean  
 I asked myself

strength, power, confidence  
 with which  
 you protect or kill women  
 you marry or molest women  
 you work and relegate women  
 in broad daylight

in my friend's family  
 a zamindar  
 it was being man  
 to throw a course which  
 his spouse cooked for him  
 in front of everyone  
 and accept the one his mother

brought  
 mother was endlessly happy  
 so was this machine, everyone

what you should do  
 how you should be  
 where you should go  
 when you should come

Wait... now I understand  
 what is to be a man  
 a matter of pride  
 nothing to hide  
 free from shame  
 untouched, free from blame  
 Be a man? Then?

When I said that  
 my friends laughed  
 some of them, women

my inner voice screeched  
 unheard, unjudged  
 unsung  
 be a woman

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\* Poet, Editor of Your Space, Kolkata

## EDUCATION OF MAN AND HIS CONSCIOUSNESS

**Prof. Tuttagunta Visweswara Rao\***

The earth, man and the sky are related. Detection of this relation along with its portrayal is done through acute exposition by scrutiny of the function of man, who is the bridge between the earth and the sky. Man--nature interface is dwelt upon at length only to underline the invincibility of human will. And the triumphant hero who prevails over time and space in the process is man. Man is as close to the Supreme One as That wishes to be accessible to him.

Making the world his stage and the sky his crown and by seeing his reflection in all, (sharply accelerated) or revved into eternal consciousness through his well turned ambitions of all, man can get proximate to That in the direction. Man is a character that does not live but being unrepressed and clearly marking out pace of progress in this infinite universe.

Yogic method of Eswara along with its subsequent versions and methods with diverse steps aims at correlating man's mind and body, and affecting their unison in tune with soul and the Supreme Power of all universes.

The objective of man is attaining liberation without re-birth being one with the Supreme Power in the state of *Tureeya* (state of *Dhyaana* - meditation) without reverting to and being devoid of the earlier stages or states of *Jaagrata* (person's state of being physically fully awakened), *Svapna* (person's state of being in dreams with feelings of activities working while he is with complete disconnection with one's gross body) and *Sushupti* (person's state of being in full unconsciousness or slumber with complete disconnection or dissociation with his subtle body also of five sensory organs, five organs of action, five types of air within or *Praanas* and four types of mental characteristics (*chatushta-Antahkaranas*))

Great personalities such as Asoka, Buddha, Socrates, Gandhi and others are examples that give description of different states of man's knowledge, skill or cleverness, capability and mental greatness or maturity and steadfastness with righteousness. The mind plays a pre-eminent role in the many moulds, taken upon himself by man. Man's travel is depicted as three-fold; cultural, scientific and Godly or spiritual- that are imbued with impediments that only make his mental resolve further to move forward. In the

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\* Prof. (Retd.) Rajahmundry

cosmic-stage play of life man steps forward without bending, but remaining unhindered and blighted.

It is necessary to bring out in bold relief the undying faith in the destiny of man and his ultimate triumph or signal success. The fundamental problems such as free will, evil and atonement are to be addressed in the process.

The extensive character of man is both insightful and amazing. Man's mind acts as the original element of all emotions. Degeneration, anger, animal instincts, diminution, culture, compassion, saintliness and purity, all originate from it. Mind is the pertaining to source; it is equilibrium; and it is the sheath or fitting cover that wraps up things for him.

It is his consciousness, that is, cluster of thoughts and feelings that pervades the Infinite Universe and it is rife in all illumining and lasting Truth. It steadfastly sets up the pre-eminence of man and his function in the Cosmos. It outlines or draws the endless travel of man from the day of his creation or birth in the world till its close.

It is to be learnt to be remembered that of the root elements of earth(*Pruthvi*), water(*Aapas*), lighting fire(*Tejo*), air(*Vaayu*), lightening sky(*Aakaasa*), perennial time(*Maha Kaala*) and That, Supreme Power - dotted super light (*Paraasakti Tejo Kaanti Punja*) every succeeding one is subtler and more pervasive than the immediately preceding or earlier one of those of the Supreme Power, setting aside visibility.

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## THRESHOLD

Dr J.Bhagyalakshmi\*

Within this threshold  
One sees  
Struggles and strifes,  
Ambitions and aspirations,  
Coups and conspiracies  
One-upmanships and cut throat competitions  
You may do whatever  
There is much more to be done  
You may get whatever

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There is much more to be got  
In this unending labyrinth  
You chase happiness,  
Indeed a black cat in a dark alley  
All in vain but you never give up  
Yesterday, today, tomorrow  
Yes, the cycle goes on  
Once you cross the threshold  
What is there for you,  
An abyss or eternal bliss?  
Or ex nihilo nihil fit,  
Just nothing out of nothing!

\* Poet, New Delhi



## INDIAN PRESIDENTS AND THE AMBIENT ABUNDANCE OF LIFE

**Dr. T. Radhakrishna Murty\***

The lure and the powers of prose are exquisite and intense as it can be evident from the perusal of pre Independence Indian prose writing which served its discursive and instructive function faithfully. English language was used by writers to carry their message to the educated class and intelligentsia. In the whirlwind and glamour of fiction and drama, it seems, prose may have lost its appeal. The volume of assessment, analysis and critical acclaim showered on the prose texts has somehow been fashioned by the personality and popularity of the person in his field. This might be the reason for a great deal of interest and criticism of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Their works are studied deeply and their contribution to the world of ideas and values of the society has been assessed and gleaned. Their thought and word have been canonized. But the same kind of study or attention is not devoted to the works of others. In this context the writings of the men in high office, the Presidents of India, are worthy of critical attention. Sadly, except for Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and Dr. V.V. Giri, there is

no mention of the works of other Indian Presidents in the huge volumes of critical surveys of the Indian English Literature.

The Constitution envisaged a good constitutional government and instituted an office to preserve, protect and defend it. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution, makes the following observation: "The President occupies the same position as the King under the British Constitution. He is the symbol of the nation. His place in the administration is that of a ceremonial device or a seal by which the nation's decisions are made known." Jawaharlal Nehru explains: "We did not want to make the President just a mere figurehead...we did not give him the real power but we have made his position one of great authority and dignity." In the era of coalition governments and the consequent constitutional crises, emergencies and exigencies, the role of the President becomes pivotal like an 'emergency lamp' as one of the Presidents, R. Venkataraman observed. There are instances in the history of free India, when the President had been called upon to exercise his official authority, constitutional wisdom and discriminating experience.

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The President of India must always be a man or woman of integrity possessing vital common sense and vast sagacity to offer advice; the wisdom to rise above the narrow lines of party politics to present a vision; and the perceptive ability to take path-breaking decisions placing the national interest above all. The custom shaped the President of India into a visionary, a pathfinder and as the conscience keeper of the nation. Though the President is elected by an electoral college through a contest, the tradition has been formed in such a way that he has to be a widely acceptable person to the nation. The fourteen Presidents so far who have occupied the Rashtrapati Bhavan at the Raisina Hill of New Delhi have been outstanding individuals who have come from different backgrounds. During their tenure, they have tried to shape the mind of the nation and in turn mould its destiny. Their direct and indirect participation in freedom struggle of India, the education and the upbringing and the lessons and the experiences, their struggles and sincere rise and invaluable contributions in and to their chosen fields, their words and actions and the books they have written are all inspirational and epoch making. The course of the nation's progress, its problems, its successes and its achieved aspirations appear to entwine with the life and work of each President.

The President as an author heralds new perspectives for the nation and the government to follow or implement. The

Presidential thought, reflections and musings in the form of memoirs, autobiographies, discourses, essays, and special lectures require a keen look in view of the fact that neither the position nor the individuals are ordinary. The hand of god or electoral dynamics of the times, of course, play a role in the choice of certain individuals as Presidents of India. The writings of these personalities who sat in the office can be a source of intellectual direction to the nation. The prose writings of Indian Presidents are vast, varied and profound. These writings consist of partial and full life autobiographies, memoirs, general works, specialized works and texts of the addresses given on special occasions. These can be broadly divided into two major categories - the writings before their occupying the presidential position and after their retirement. These works, which are written before they assumed the highest office, are diverse and deal with both specific disciplines and general fields. Some of the works written after completion of tenure in office and are reminiscent of those years. Some Presidents wrote autobiographies much before they became inhabitants of the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

### **Dr. Rajendra Prasad - The Patriot**

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was a true Gandhian and patriot. He was the first President of India from 13.5.1952 to 13.5.1962. Gentle behavior and integrity were hallmarks of his personality. He was the embodiment of the Hindu principle,

'simple living and high thinking' and he was the fountainhead of true patriotism. He was a son of the soil who worked hard for the implementation of the programmes and policies like cooperative farming, redistribution of agricultural holdings, tribal welfare, and popularization of cottage industries, basic system of education, state trading in food supplies, subsidized supply of seeds, fertilizers and implements in the formative years of the nation. He was largely instrumental for the food security measures implemented by the interim government. In one of his letters to the then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, he suggested the appointment of a high-powered tribunal to enquire into charges of corruption against ministers and others in high position which is the demand in the recent movement of Anna Hazare for the institution of Lok Pal to look into the aspects of corruption in high offices.

### **Dr. S. Radhakrishnan- The Philosopher**

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan was a great teacher and world-renowned philosopher. He was the second President of India from 13.5.1962 to 13.5.1967. Though he did not participate in the freedom struggle, his intellectual support had always been with Gandhi and Nehru. He saw Gandhiji's civil disobedience movement not as a physical fight but as a spiritual force. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's remarkable achievement lies in his application of obscure thoughts of philosophy to the everyday routine of life to provide spiritual succor to both eastern

and western people. He highlighted the underlying similarity and unity among the philosophies of the world in exquisite English. His contribution to the field of higher education as the Chairman of Universities Education Commission is outstanding. As President, he gave to the people a vision of humanity - free of poverty and filled with spiritual and material prosperity. His largely philosophical bearing carried him effortlessly across the diverse sections of the society and administration - national and international.

### **Dr. Zakir Husain - The Educationist**

Dr. Zakir Husain was a teacher par excellence and a great educationist. He served the country as its third President from 13.5.1967 to 3.5.1969. He played a key role in the preparation of syllabus for Gandhiji's scheme of Basic Education and made the National Educational Conference (Wardha in 1937) a success. As Vice Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim Universities his contribution to the field of education is epoch-making. Religious in outlook, erudite in mental makeup and secular to the core, Dr. Zakir Husain as President endeared himself to all with his kindly disposition.

### **V.V. Giri - The Labour Leader**

V.V.Giri was the first prominent labour leader who brought respectability to trade unions and gave priority to labour welfare. He was the fourth President of

India from 24.8.1969 to 24.8.1974. He was a great lawyer and socialist who actively participated in the nationalist movement and was the acknowledged authority on labour affairs to Gandhiji and others. He represented Indian labour at the Round Table conference along with Gandhiji and at the International Labour Organization. The spirit of sacrifice and service and unflinching support to the cause of industrial labour mark his life. As President, he advocated planned development of resources and egalitarian system of income distribution.

### **Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed - The Freedom Fighter**

Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed was a staunch nationalist and senior advocate in Assam High Court and Supreme Court of India. He was the fifth President of India from 24.8.1974 to 11.2.1977. He was a deep lover of Urdu language and advocated its use as a national language instead of confining it to Muslims only. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed's presidency is marked by his signing of Indira Gandhi government's proclamation of emergency.

### **N. Sanjiva Reddy - The Leader**

N. Sanjiva Reddy was a leader at the grass roots level and an able administrator. He served the country as its sixth President from 25.7.1977 to 25.7.1982. He was a follower of Gandhiji and actively participated in the civil

disobedience movement of Gandhiji. Known for his administrative acumen and knowledge in legislative affairs he was deeply committed to the development of agriculture and industry for the progress of the nation. As President his decisions in the constitutional crisis of Janata government of 1979 enhanced the prestige of the high office.

### **Giani Zail Singh - Man of the Masses**

Giani Zail Singh was truly a mighty man of the masses and he rose from humble origins to adorn the office of the President of India. He served as the seventh President of India from 25.7.1982 to 25.7.1987. He was the architect of modern Punjab and deeply committed to the development of the state and the nation. The strong shades of patriotic fervor, religious bent of mind and rebellious attitude towards injustice define his life. His presidential tenure was shaded by some unsavory incidents like Operation Blue Star to weed out Sikh terrorists from the Golden Temple Complex, the mass killing of Sikhs in the wake of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's assassination and the tiff with the then Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

### **R. Venkataraman - The Versatile Statesman**

R. Venkataraman was an internationally acclaimed constitutional lawyer and a specialist in industrial law and man of abiding human values. He was the eighth President of India from 25.7.1987

to 25.7.1992. A man of deep erudition and ever a stickler for propriety and integrity, his conduct as President of India set a precedent to the succeeding Presidents. His trend setting decisions in the appointment of three Prime Ministers and his concern in saving the country from edges of constitutional crisis won laurels from constitutional experts as well as the common man.

#### **Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma - The Scholar**

Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma was a distinguished scholar of Sanskrit and a legal luminary of vast experience. He worked as the ninth President of India from 25.7.1992 to 25.7.1997. He was a great educationist who fought for all that was best in the long Indian tradition of culture, civilization and education. His rooting in academics brought charm to the chain of political offices he held.

#### **Dr. K.R. Narayanan - The Diplomat**

Dr. K. R. Narayanan is a true Nehruvian, a distinguished diplomat and reputed scholar of political economy. He was the nation's tenth President of India from 25.7.1997 to 25.7.2002. Ever sensitive to the socio, political and economic theories of Gandhi and Marx, he always felt that unless the aspirations of the downtrodden and oppressed classes are met and fulfilled there could not be any real unity of the nation. His Presidential tenure is marked by his keen sense of constitutional

wisdom and propriety. As a diplomat, he opined that India rightly deserved a seat of eminence in the United Nations Organization.

#### **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam - The Scientist**

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was a scientist who lifted the national self-reliance to a higher level with his rocket and missile projects. He was the eleventh President of India from 25.7.2002 to 25.7.2007. He is a visionary deeply rooted in the spiritual groundswell. He is profoundly interested in the all round development of the nation and fashioned detailed visions and feasible dreams for its prosperity in the new millennium. He advocated the harmonious integration of technology, human resources and spiritual values for the ultimate prosperity of the nation. His motivational speeches and interactions with children during his Presidential tenure went a long way in energizing the children and youth to the cherished goals of the nation. He has been an icon for the young in India.

#### **Pratibha Devisingh Patil - The Political Leader**

Pratibha Devisingh Patil is the first woman to have been elected as the President of India. She was the twelfth President of India. In her long career, she was associated with activities for the upliftment of backward sections, youth and woman empowerment.

**Pranab Mukherjee - The Administrator** Gandhi and Manmohan Singh Cabinets.

Pranab Mukherjee, the thirteenth President of India, is a distinguished Parliamentarian and administrator who served as Union Minister of Foreign, Defense, Commerce and Finance in Indira

**Ram Nath Kovind - The Lawyer**

Ram Nath Kovind, the present President of India, is a lawyer and policy maker.

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## UNREQUITED

**Basudhara Roy\***

The intricate arithmetic of ties  
That bind me to you,  
You will never learn.

Never know my love  
As prayers for the moon,  
As gift of the sun.

Perhaps only as some lack of being,  
Some tribute that I must pay  
In my compulsive need

To outweigh in your affections  
Precarious others.

I keep giving; you royally receive  
Sans payment, sans receipt  
To feed what hungry abyss in you

My love's anxious cuisine?  
God-like, divine,  
You pour love like wine

Fortifying what dwindling self  
With illusions megalomaniacal?  
It's high time I think  
That you stopped playing God.  
Did no one tell you  
That even Gods fall from favour?  
(Though faith, they say, be blind)

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\* Asst. Professor, Dept. of English, Karim City  
College, Jamshedpur, Jharkhand

If proffered gifts too long  
Remain unreturned in kind.

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## HALF A LIFE -A STUDY ON EXISTENTIAL CRISIS

Amala. C\*

V.S. Naipaul was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 2001. He has been an effective narrator and a recorder of history of different nations as an expatriate who had roots disassociated later in India, before going to Trinidad. Naipaul's narratives include the narration of the history of the vanquished. He took a giant stride with 'A House for Mr. Biswas', one of those singular novels that seem to constitute the characters, own complete universes, in this case a miniature India on the periphery in British empire, the scene of his father's circumscribed existence. In allowing peripheral figures their place in the momentousness of great literature, Naipaul reverses normal perspectives and denies readers at the center their protective detachment. This principle was made to serve in a series of novels in which despite the increasingly documentary tone, the characters did not therefore become colorful. Fictional narratives, autobiography and documentaries have merged in Naipaul's writing without always being possible to say which element dominates.

In this background this article attempts to analyze V.S. Naipaul's very

well-known work *Half a Life* published in the year 2001. The novel exemplifies Naipaul's use of memory to create a myth of origin through an Indian Character Willie Somerset Chandran who finds it difficult to bridge the past and the present and creating the situation that elucidated from understanding the meaning of existence in life. *Half a Life* is a story of Willie Chandran who wastes opportunities and does not know what to do with his life. Born of a Hindu Brahmin father and a backward caste mother Willie travels from India to London to become a student and later publishes a book of stories. During his life in London, he marries a woman of mixed ethnicity of Portuguese and African ancestry. He lives with her in her homeland for 18 years and at the verge of the colonies independence he leaves her to join his sister Sarojini in Berlin. The journey of Willie is through many continents and countries India, Africa, Berlin, London. The voyage of mixed life, living half his life in different geo-physical settings helped him unravel his notions related to writing. He finds it difficult to accommodate himself and find a house of his own. *Half a Life* examines the cross cultural relations and their impact on the psyche of the protagonist Willie while the novel also incidentally helps us to peep into the character of other people who Willie meets during his journey and

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stay. Willie makes an understanding of the problems that one will have to conform because of this dislocation from the roots and ending up with the loss of identity that makes one's existence a question.

Willie lives with his father and grandfather among whom there is no communication at all. And in his search for his roots he finds his middle name alien. His existential question unleashes the lot of memories unfolding before him a complicated sense of unhomeliness which relates to his roots. The name Willie Somerset Chandran signifies his mixed ancestry that breeds contempt in the 20 year old son of a half Brahmin father and low caste mother. He feels incomplete and gets into a sense of shame making him to live in a world of falsehood and make-believe identity. Willie born in India attains self-awareness of his past and by drawing from that path he reconstructs a background in which he can set his new life. Going to London, a city of immigrants he finds that he could fictionalize his past and his ancestry. He receives a scholarship in London and in London he searches his memory to verify the information he obtained back home. He reads about the trade unions and tries to find certification for the status of his mother and joins the society in London that includes the Caribbeans, Africans and Asians. This gives him an opportunity to become a writer. He constructs stories and gives them to his friend Roza for valuation, who discards them saying that Willie is trying

to hide something. This makes him unhappy because that is real. His mind travels back to the past oscillating between the past and the present. His relationship with a lady of African origin again makes him travel into the past. This travelling into the past frightens and a sense of shame holds him. The life in London is both an experience and a struggle. The cultural as well as social alienation that Willie undergoes in England and Mozambique takes its roots in cultural alienation. His social cultural disintegration begins in his childhood which is made of falsehood and his whole life is doomed by the scar of his father's misplaced ideal in marrying a low caste woman and initiating the alienation which brings punishment to descending generation. The sexual frustration that he encountered makes him feel is the result of the divided identity that he had brought with him from his father. Till the end he was unable to find himself a complete individual. The past haunts him and present though apparently seems to be justifying him, make Willie get into a world of double exile. He feels marginalized. The novel is a portrayal of dilemma between Willie's attempt to accept the past and make people accept him in the present without any hurt to conscience of the individual. From one environment to another he flies to find himself unacceptable and thus feels alienated.

The cultural diversities that he comes across make his life seek answers for the meaning of life. The characters have no sense of belongingness and they are also

immigrants who belong to nowhere. In their attempt to make life more meaningful they unfortunately find themselves a misfit and fail to accommodate themselves because of cultural diversities, as people in exile.

Naipaul's notion of exile may be an intellectual kind of exile as Bruce King says: ...in the case of V.S. Naipaul there is a triple alienation since the author is dispossessed from several cultures and possible homes. Having rejected his Brahmin past, the small decaying World of Indian Trinidad, the lack of sophistication of Creole Trinidad, the provinciality of the West Indian Middle Classes, Naipaul was unable to find in either England or India the high purposeful culture he desired.

Subsequently he has become the voice of the modern experience and of our time in feeling unattached, un-illusioned, without purpose; an observer of the world follies, especially those problems which have resulted from the end of the Empire and the withdrawal of European rule from the third world. Naipaul's work appeals to those who have felt the effect of rapid secularization, mobility and social change; the resulting world is large, overcrowded and yet an empty space.

Thus the novel represents the anguish of countries and people unable to cope with the novelist's description of the new politics of half made societies that seemed doomed to remain half-made.

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## MEMORY

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

It flashes for no reason at all  
A whiff of a thing forgotten long ago  
From the distant insignificant past

Walk I alone in a fashionable T shirt  
Sporting, stylish, dark glasses.

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\* ELT Professional, NTPC Col. Hotagi Station

'Why those glasses?'  
Asked a man, my dad's old crony.  
'Eyes sore,' I mumbled  
And walked away.

Is it the boy-like pride of bigness?  
An attempt to win recognition of sorts?  
A memory may not have any

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Golden Article reprinted from *Triveni* Vol.1 November 1928

## GLIMPSES OF POST- WAR ENGLISH POETRY

M. V. Ramana Rao, B.A.

In a world enveloped in the mists of materialism, the soul-uplifting melodies of song and poem, the entrancing transport of verse laden with the beauty of form and rhythm, are at a discount. But all the same, the world has not become a dry desert where the verdant growth of poetry is altogether absent. There are poets and those who read them-poets whose souls rise above the noise of mortal earth and sing in accord with the music of the stars. There are yet people that are subject to the transitory fits of poetic susceptibility, entranced with the music of verse, the sublimity of higher thought. There are still other poets, even if they are not flourishing, yet existing and adjusting their inspiration to the environment and dressing their thought to suit the fashion of the day. There have thus arisen two types of poetry-the mystic and the materialistic, or the imaginative and the realistic-the former, entirely transcending the earth and the mustiness that encrusts it and purely of a subjective and spiritual kind, more self-absorbing and less popular, less intelligible to the ordinary man, more concerned with what is invisible, far and unrealisable; the latter, of a kind that touches man at all ends and stills his appetite, pleasant, light, accessible, based on observation set in

poetic atmosphere, appealing to the man in the street, less taxing. The pre-war and the post-war poetry of the British Empire is essentially of this kind.

Helena Colman, the Canadian poet whose *Marching men: war verses* has the measured march of war-roused men is a typical example of a poet whose inspiration was the devastating war and whose verses tossed the feelings of the Canadians in a whirl of patriotism:

The fields are green in Canada  
And bloom is on the bough,  
And orchards by the farm-house  
Are just a glory now;  
The thorn trees by the fences  
The lilacs by the door  
Seem more intent on blooming than  
They ever did before;  
But there are eyes in Canada  
That cannot see for tears,  
And there are hearts in Canada  
Grown weary with their fears;  
The resting birds of Canada  
They pipe to deafened ears.

Here is a whole country depicted with exquisite charm in jeweled phrases - a striking contrast of vernal bloom and

battle-blight. The realism that was so significantly absent in Victorian poetry, obsessed by its Romanticism, is the true characteristic of post-war poetry. It appears in all its stark nakedness, in all its bewitching bluntness and has a charm of its own apart from the mystic etherealisation that has endeared itself to not a few and is fast recruiting strength to itself.

Padriac Colum, the Irish poet and dramatist, in his *Wild Earth* depicts a people and a land that through long ages of foreign domination has preserved unsullied its nationalism with "barbaric" steadfastness:

"Sunset and silence! A man: around him earth savage; earth broken,  
Beside him two horses-, a plough."

A picture more true to life cannot be drawn. We see before us the Irish ploughman with ages of unsophisticated past as his background and ages of unploughed future in the horizon, a type of the farmer that Ireland has bred and will breed.

William Henry Davies, in the words of St. John Adcock, has found in the hardships and careless freedom of his town and country wanderings inspiration for some of the most starkly realistic and exquisite flower-like lyrics and ballads in the language. His songs sing themselves and have the beautiful simplicity of "unpremeditated art." No higher praise can

be given to him. Here is a stanza from his *Kingfisher*:

It was the rainbow gave thee birth  
And left thee all her lovely hues,  
And as her mother's name was tears  
So runs it in thy blood to choose  
For haunts the lovely pools and keep  
In company with trees that weep.

Walter De La Mare is another of the Poets that is always fond, it is said, of moving in a world of real men and women and is not enamored of elves and fairies and angels and ghosts and gnomes. He is sometimes as eerie as Poe and sometimes as quaintly fantastic as Lamb and often blends the qualities of both. Addressing England, the poet sings:

These are the woods where to my soul  
Out of the noontide beam  
Flees for a refuge green and cool  
And tranquil as a dream.  
In "The Sleeper," the beautiful quaintness and pleasant airiness of his verse and thought are visible:  
On Anne; as quiet, quiet still she stood  
Yet slumber lay so deep  
Even her hand upon her lap  
Seemed saturated with sleep;  
And as Anne peeped, a child-like tread  
Stole over her and then  
On stealthy mouse-like feet she trod  
And tip-toed out again.

Mary Gilmore who is Australia's most distinguished woman-poet has, among

others, published *Married and other poems*, *The Passionate Heart*," etc. The one outstanding feature that makes her verse attractive is the essential womanliness of her themes, the bewitching feminineness of her expression and all the grace, the delicacy and ease that go with it:

I sit beside my sewing wheel  
And croon my little song  
Content to bide a wife at home  
The whole day long.

So does she sing in exquisite strains with that throbbing heart of a woman-the symbol of sweet modesty and noble devotion. As she says, "The gilded queen upon her throne, compared with me is poor." Such quaint reproduction of realistic life, such reposeful ease of expression, such direct and simple outflow of the fullness of heart and the affluence of love are all visible in the verse of this present century. It has produced more women poets than before. This is not only true of this department of literature but as well of others, but this is remarkable especially in this sphere. Today, among others we have Lawrence Alma Tadema, Mrs. C. A. Dawson Scott, author of *Idylls of Womanhood*, Hellen Parry Eden, author of *A string of Sapphires*.

Rose Flyman whose charm and humour and fantasy are arresting has an enticing quality in her verse that cannot be said to provoke thought while at the same time it makes the mind reflect:

Blind folk see the fairies  
Oh, better far than we  
Who miss the shining of their wings  
Because our eyes are filled with things  
We do not want to see.

Among others she has written *Fairies and Chimneys*, *The Fairy Queen*, *The Fairy flute*. Sheila Kaye Smith, Rose Macaulay, Sylvia Lynd have each of them contributed to the poetic output of this century and made it with their delicate thought and graceful expression more resplendent, and enriched and beautified the treasury of English verse to an inestimable extent. Sylvia Lynd with her exquisite phrasing, her beautiful thought, her love of humanity and faith in the Divine, sings in soul-stirring verse:

God does not fail in any thing-  
The sunny perfumes of the Spring  
The blue dusks dropping fold on fold.

Other poets there are who need no introduction. They are famous if not by their poetry, by works transcendently beautiful in other spheres. Hillaire Belloc, G. K. Chesterton, John Drinkwater, are luminous in the literary firmament. Kipling, the poet of Imperialism, than whom there is none so truly, typically representative of the age, has disturbed the placid waters of Victorianism and is responsible for the new orientation which the poetry of Keats and Shelley and Byron and Wordsworth has been given.

The poets whose names have been mentioned in this necessarily imperfect

sketch may not have received the deserved meed of attention or admiration, essentially because of the nature of their themes and the peculiar limitations they set on themselves by choosing to be local, not universal. But they in their own way served to leave a fragrance behind, sweet and

lovely. It may be that their permanence is problematical; but that they have been able to diffuse their lively imagination for their own soul's delight and in a manner appeased the hunger of kindred souls that thought but remained dumb in the ineffectual struggle for literary expression, is undeniable.

\*\*\*

### **Era of Big Data, AI, Predictive Analytics, Social Applications, Recommendation Engines, Next Best Action etc., All coming Together...**

Hello! Is this Gordon's Pizza?  
 No sir, it's Google's Pizza.  
 Did I dial the wrong number?  
 No sir, Google bought the pizza store.  
 Oh, alright - then I'd like to place an order please.  
 Okay sir, do you want the usual?  
 The usual? You know what my usual is?  
 According to the caller ID, the last 15 times you've ordered a 12-slice with double-cheese, sausage, and thick crust.  
 Okay - that's what I want this time too.  
 May I suggest that this time you order an 8-slice with ricotta, arugula, and tomato instead?  
 No, I hate vegetables.  
 But your cholesterol is not good.  
 How do you know?  
 Through the subscribers guide. We have the results of your blood tests for the last 7 years.  
 Maybe so, but I don't want the pizza you suggest - I already take medicine for high cholesterol.

But you haven't taken the medicine regularly. 4 months ago you purchased from Drugsale Network a box of only 30 tablets. I bought more from another drugstore.  
 It's not showing on your credit card sir.  
 I paid in cash.  
 But according to your bank statement you did not withdraw that much cash.  
 I have another source of cash.  
 This is not showing on your last tax form, unless you got it from an undeclared income source.  
 To HELL With Ur Pizza..!!  
 ENOUGH!!  
 I'm sick of Google, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. I'm going to an island without internet, where there's no cellphone line, and no one to spy on me ...  
 I understand sir, but you'll need to renew your PASSPORT ... it expired 5 weeks ago.

**Courtesy: Internet**

## BOOK REVIEW

***Sachitra Shri Thyagaraga Keertanamrutam, Sri Yabaluri Raghavaiah Memorial Trust Publications, Hyderabad, Hard Bound, A-4 size Art Paper, Pages 380, Second Edition, Price Rs. 1000/ US \$ 50/-***

Ambrosia from the Divine Saint: This is the work of the commentator translator Kalluri Satya Rama Prasad and the adorable devotional artist Kharidehal Venkata Bhima Rao's drawings. The duo is highly educated and both retired from service; one from Bharat Earth Movers and the second from the Electronics Corporation of India. The book is dedicated to Sadguru Sivananda Murty garu, Pontiff of Shaiva Peetham, Nagole, Hyderabad, with ashram in Bheemunipatnam.

To begin with, distinguished persons, the devout in the highest order, wrote forewords: the esteemed founder of Rushipeetham, Saamavedam Shanmukha Sharma, Swamini Atmalilananda Saraswati of the Centre for Vedanta & Sanskrit, Varanasi, and Poojya Swami Paripoornanda. These are further enriched with the article *Sundara Madhura Bhashyam* by Naadanidhi and Sangeeta Vidyanidhi, Dr. Komanduri Seshadri.

This work has provided the meaning of the *Keertanas* and the

significance of each of those immediately after the text with a picture too of many of keerthanas. Starting with a prayer to the slayer of impediments, Lord Vighneswara also called Vinyaka in Raag Saurashtra in aadi taala, three hundred and eighty texts are covered. For this the second edition the writers wrote a foreword too. They appended a brief division in the way the texts, keeratanas, are arranged. The ten divisions are texts on Vinayaka, episodes relating to Ramayana, the uniqueness of Sri Rama, the grandeur of music, the pain and anguish when the glorious appearance was delayed, the exuberance of joy on His appearance, the teachings, messages and common sayings to people, traditional upasana ways in the prayers to deities and their related texts and in conclusion the most frequently sung Ghana Raaga Pancha Ratna Keertanas.

In all about the ninety captivating color paintings along with the texts make the reader spell bound. Enough guidance is given to the readers along with care. Any review cannot go beyond a space limit. *Madhya Kaal Raga* is called *Ghana*. Laakshnikas said that those kertanas that which elate and inspire are in ten *Raagaas*. The first five *Ghana Raagas* are *Naata, Gaula, Aarabhi, Varaali* and *Sree Ragas*. The second Ghana Raagas are *Kedara, Bhoul, Reeti Gaula, Narayana Gaula* and



### Saaranga Naata.

Shri Thyagaraja Swami chose the five *keertanas* in the bliss of seeing the presence of Sri Rama and *sang keertanas* displaying devotion, grace, elegance and dignity. The first in them was praise, sorrow and grief in the second, linking of frailty and weaknesses in the third and praise of accusation (description of the Lord's leelas and the display of His power), in the fourth the deep joy of feeling and in the fifth the *Madhya Kaala Raaga* the bliss of witnessing the presence of the Supreme Deity, Sri Rama. This has been the order.

It has been coming down the practice of the devout and devotional singing in unison with all traditional accomplishments celebrating *Thyagaraja Aaraadhana* every year on Pushya Bahula Panchami at Tiruvaiyyar. This *aaraadhanotsav* singing would take an hour with hundreds of devotees participating in the festival in remembrance of the Saint, reverentially referred to as Thyaga Brahma. Both All India Radio and Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam would air the program from the beginning to its conclusion.

The extremely melodious and captivating *keertana* among the pancha ratnas, the five diamonds is the one in *Raaga Sree -Adi taala*, beginning with *endarO mahaanu bhavuluu andarikee vandanam* meaning-multitudinous are the sacred minded - salutations to all those.

### Anu Pallavi

The one with the hue of the full moon who worship with the fullness of heart-mind-feeling - *manas* viewing the Supreme Being in the lotus of their heart and experiencing infinite bliss - to all those my salutations.

### Charanas

1. O! The ones who have admiration for *Saama Gaana*, to the one adorably pulchritudinous! For such fortunate ones, I offer my salutations.
2. Controlling monkeylike wavering, wandering mind-heart feeling - *manas* - those who would be able to view the Supreme Being's appearance, I offer my salutations.
3. Every moment for those offering their *manas* to the lotus feet of the Lord, I offer my salutations.
4. To those who worship the one who could make even the sinners god-loving, going along the path of rectitude with their *jnaana* , knowingness, I offer my salutations.
5. Myriads are those who wear the garlands of the diamonds of Hari's great qualities on their neck. Along with feelings of love and friendship, with compassion some would be casting their glances by serving and saving all those around. It is only because of them this world is like this. I offer my salutations to those.
6. There are many famous ones who being able to see the Supreme Being all the

time constantly and thereby get goose bumps, floating in the ocean of great bliss, ananda. I offer my salutations to all such.

7. Extremely pious and totally devoted and devout, sacred seers, the moon, the sun, saints like Sanaka and Sanandana, the gods of the directions eight, celestial beings like Kimpurushas, Prahlada, Narada, Tumbura, the son of the Wind God Anjaneya; Shiva who has the crescent moon on His head, Shuka, Brahma and the best of the Brahmanas; the greatest ones of sanctity, great ones - all these always enjoy the bliss of being. Apart from these there are many, many more. My salutations to all those.
8. Sri Rama! The beauty of Your form, body, appearance; the glory and richness in Your grandeur, Your valor and bravery, Your ever calm demeanor, Your spirit of self-sacrifice, Your love and attachment to truthfulness - all these captivate all. For that reason, all the worthless are considered useless by the devout. Loving, admiring and worshipping You and Your mien, people go on singing Your extremely amiable qualities. Many are such and my salutations to all those blessed ones.

9. All the scriptures, right from Bhagavatham, Ramayanam, Gita and the inner meaning and significance in all sastras and puranas - the six religions approved by the Vedas, aver the truth they all propound the that there is only one Paramatma. Knowing the secrets of the thirty-three crore devi's and devatas, enjoying the bliss of music with the bliss of *bhava*, *raga* and *laya*, becoming ever alive, with *manas* full of bliss many are considered his preceptors by Thyagaraja. I offer my salutations to all those.

### **The concluding Charana:**

Many are those who utter and contemplate on the Supreme Being's name with *bhakti*, *jnaana* and *variagya* plaited as one are worshipped by this loving and devout Thyagaraja. I offer my salutations to all those.

The saintly Thyagaraja displays his highly sublime samskara in this *pancharatna keertana*.

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

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**MOISTURE TRAPPED IN A STONE, An Anthology of Modern Telugu Short Stories Translated from the Telugu by K.K. Rao with a Foreword by Mini Krishnan, NIYOGI BOOKS**

This is a collection of 28 short stories written by well known writers and published in leading Telugu magazines and Sunday newspaper supplements over a few decades. Perhaps K.N.Rao can be called a pioneer in taking the initiative to facilitate wider readership, not particularly confined to those who can speak the language but are not familiar with the Telugu alphabet.

The collection opens with *A Whiff of Fragrance* a short story by Madhurantakam Rajaram, winner of the prestigious *Sahitya Akademi Award* (1993) which describes in great detail a traditional wedding. For instance we find a paragraph which says 'Finally, he was given an oil-bath. The priest, clad in silk, a colourful waistband wrapped around his dhoti, holding it in position, was readying a silver pot filled with water, a de-husked coconut with a tuft covering its mouth, flanked by a circle of mango leaves...' The ending does indeed leave a whiff of fragrance, true to the title.

A second short story by Rajaram (seven short stories of the same author feature in the collection) that appealed to me with its subtle humorous 'Cartoon' which goes to prove sometimes a practical joke results in an unexpected ending.

*A Gift of Gingelly Seeds* by Rentala Nageswara Rao, which won a second prize in the *Ugadi* Short Story Competition conducted by the Andhra Prabha Illustrated Weekly is a touching story of Subrahmanya Sastri, past master of all Vedic knowledge but poor in worldly wisdom which reduces him to penury. This story has a surprise ending which leaves the reader guessing.

*A sojourn* by Jalandhara, a renowned Telugu writer and a columnist in Andhra Bhoomi, is very delicately handled where relationships are brought out in all their subtlety and positivity.

*The Rope that became a Serpent* by Vasundhara, pen name of Dr. Jonnalagadda Raja Gopala Rao, a scientist, talks about how a friendship and relationship between two people could break over 'petty issues'.

*A Matter of Prudence* by Dwivedula Visalakshi and 'Outsourcing' by Jonnalagadda Ramalakshmi stand out for their lucid style and topical relevance to which readers can relate.

Coming to the title of the collection *Moisture Trapped in a Stone*, the female readers could feel proud when they reach the climax of this short story which is the third to feature by Madhurantakam Rajaram.

Prof. K.N. Rao has done a great service in bringing out the richness of Telugu language, literature and ethos of the region and handing it on a platter in a language spoken worldwide.

Wonder why the cover says, Translated from Telugu, an article that could have been done away with notwithstanding its correctness.

**N. Meera Raghavendrarao, Chennai**

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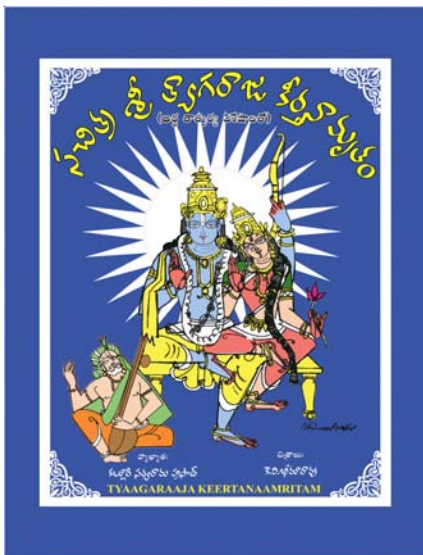
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