

ISSN 0041-3135

RNI No. 25269/57

TRIVENI

(Estd : 1927)

INDIA'S LITERARY AND CULTURAL QUARTERLY

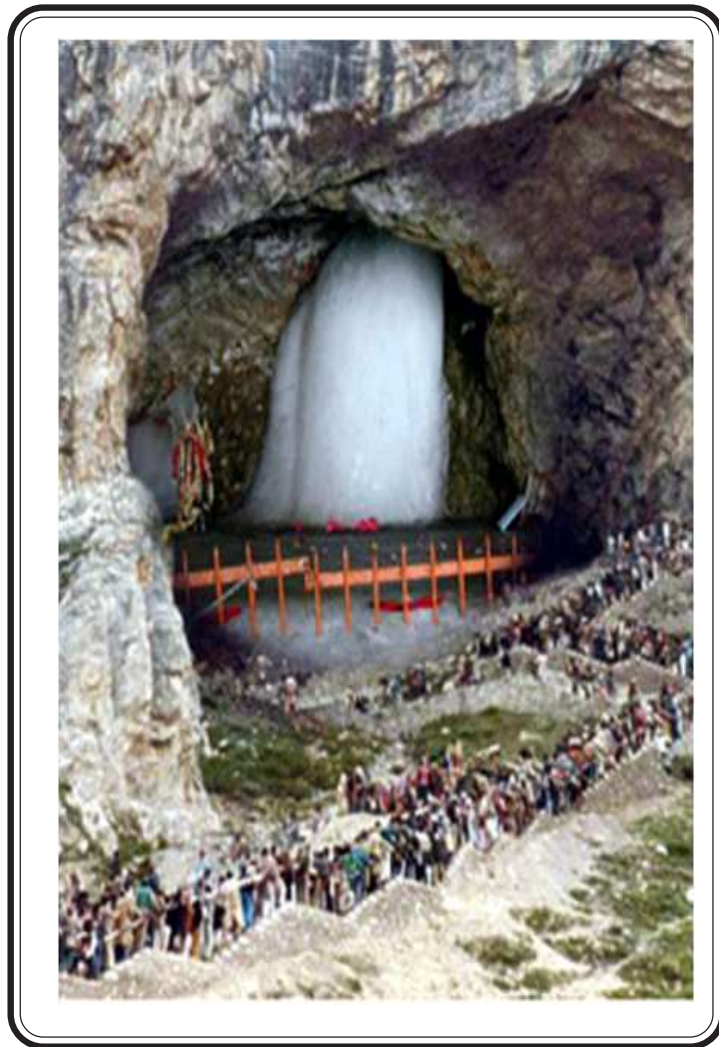


Vol: 88

APR.-JUN. 2019

No. 2

Rs. 20/-



Self-formed ice Shiva Linga in the Amarnath Cave

Source: Internet

TRIVENI

INDIA'S LITERARY & CULTURAL QUARTERLY

VOLUME: 88

APR.-JUN. 2019

NUMBER: 2

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Printer:

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Publishers:

The Triveni Foundation (Regd.)

12-13-157, Street No. 2,

Tarnaka,

Hyderabad - 500 017.

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Inside Full page	Rs. 5,000	Rs.15,000

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TRIPLE STREAM

RANDOM REFLECTIONS

D. Ranga Rao*

Now and then I receive letters addressed with the prefix 'Dr.' or 'Prof.' before my name or with a Ph.D attached to my name at the end. This mode of address amuses me because I am neither a 'doctor' nor a 'professor' and I do not possess the Ph.D degree too. This manner of address makes me go personal and reflect briefly on doctoral degrees and their efficacy in the teaching profession with offence to none.

In the early decades of the twentieth century the B.A. degree was considered a high qualification and the person who possessed it walked with his head held high. He was looked upon with reverential awe. Science graduates also were awarded the B.A. degree in those days. In course of time the M.A. degree and later the Ph.D usurped the place of B.A. An additional research degree M.Phil got squeezed between M.A. and Ph.D as the educational authorities thought that an intermediate and introductory research degree would help candidates to perform better in attaining the highest research degree as also perhaps boost their performance in the classroom.

The Ph.D degree when expanded reads 'doctor of philosophy'. I sometimes

wonder, with due respect to old traditions, why a person who does research on a topic in his chosen subject should be called a doctor of philosophy as the nomenclature and the theme of the topic have nothing to do with medicine or with the tribe of thinkers. Generally speaking this highest university degree does not make the candidate a better classroom teacher at any level of teaching.

Once there were very few Ph.D holders in the universities. Most of the teachers in the Andhra University where I studied in the early fifties had only M.A./M.Sc. degrees including some Professors who were heads of departments. The professor who had a Ph.D or a D.Litt. was a veritable Bruhaspathi. In the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL), now EFLU, where I was a participant for two years in the early eighties, many professors and teachers were only M.As. These 'masters' were as good as the 'doctors' in delivering the goods and everything went well. I may recall that Abdul Kalam, the missile man of India who blazed forth brilliantly in the skies of missile technology had no Ph.D.

With the idea of joining the band of Ph.Ds following the trend in the seventies I decided to take up research on the plays of the Irish dramatist Sean O`Casey and made all preparations to get registered under the guidance of Dr. M.K. Nayak in the Dharwad University, Karnataka. Just at this time the Department of Higher Education, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh transferred me from a degree college to the Collegiate Cell, State Council of Educational Research and Training, (SCERT), Hyderabad. The lecturers of this cell were to organize in-service training programmes for college teachers in all subjects including English. During the five years I worked in this institution, I came into close contact with the teachers of the CIEFL who were the resource persons at our programmes. I gave a number of demonstration lessons to the trainees under the guidance of the CIEFL teachers in Teaching English as a second language.

After five years in the Collegiate Cell of SCERT I was deputed by the government to the CIEFL for the Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching English. This deputation put a stop to my attempts to do research for my Ph.D as the tide changed its course suddenly.

After the P.G. Diploma I continued my stay in the CIEFL to do M.Litt. by research in English Language Teaching (ELT). Had I not been deputed to the CIEFL I would have gone back to my research project for Ph.D and would have got it and would have been a doctor of philosophy!

The CIEFL exposure and experience gained in the teaching-learning process through evaluation of scripts helped me in giving demonstration lessons to junior and degree college and university teachers as an external faculty member of the Distance Education dept. of the CIEFL for many years at the contact programmes. At this time I prepared and recorded syllabus oriented audio lessons for +2 students of colleges situated in remote and backward areas of the State for the Board of Intermediate Education, Govt. of A.P. Later as Principal of a P.G. Government College affiliated to the Osmania University. I taught my M.A. students literature Papers as well as the ELT Paper which gave me job satisfaction. I treat my ELT experience being of greater value than a Ph.D in literature.

No doubt research for the doctoral degree widens the researcher's mind and broadens his outlook of life and makes him aware of life and its meaning in a larger context. This research may add new knowledge in his area of work. At the same time the degree also boosts one's image and provides a status symbol, places the person on a higher pedestal socially also and pats him with a heavier pay packet too.

Times and things changed over the years and the universities realised the need and importance of basic communication skills to be mastered along with the study of the content by the learners. What with the advent of the computer and other allied

gadgets the scene now presents a different picture, a change for the better as far as language learning is concerned though much has yet to be done.

Coming back to my starting point,

I conclude that I am happy, contented and satisfied with the simple looking and sonorous sounding Indian prefix 'Sri' before my name. Incidentally, dear reader, the prefix has a greater import and sanctity as it connotes divinity!

LONELY HEART

Dr J. Bhagyalakshmi*

I have a family,
I have a house full of people
Comings and goings I see
A lot of talk, chatter, laughter and shrieks
Reach my ears
Cell phones ring with different ring tones
People relax stretching themselves
Holding mobiles in their hands
Clicking away at random
Yes, I have a family
Sons and daughters, nephews and nieces
Friends, pals, chums and buddies
They assemble, disperse and reassemble
Not all at once.

They talk in pairs or in groups
Give long side glances
If they sight me with a book
Their eyes follow my movement
Yes, I have a family, ever busy family
Where my needs are met, I have comfort
Nothing is awry, everything is smooth
Only that I sit in the garden all alone
Watching trees, swinging branches,
Blooming flowers and chirping birds
Sometimes indeed blue and charming
I also see floating clouds and distant hills
Breeze is soothing, silence is overwhelming
By the way, what syndrome do you call this
To feel all alone despite a family?

* Writer and Poet, Madanapally

ACTION AND DESTINY

T.N. Dhar 'Kundan'*

Over many centuries this debate has been going on whether our lives are shaped by our destinies or by our actions. There are fatalists who believe that everything in our lives is pre-determined and nothing can be changed. We often see astrologers perusing our horoscopes and then predicting what is going to happen and when. The human mentality is such that if the prediction is favourable we do not at once believe it. Our attitude is to wait and see when that favourable occurrence takes place. If, however, something unfavourable is predicted, we immediately believe it and start looking for some remedies to ward off the evil. These astrologers have various prescriptions to avoid the unfavourable events or at least to minimise their impact. They prescribe some specific ritual, some sort of a fast or chanting of some mantras to avoid the destined misfortune. There are action-oriented people also, though lesser in number, who give importance to actions. They have an aim. They chalk out a plan of action to achieve that aim and are focussed in undertaking the required action. They do not believe in destiny nor in any pre-determined fate. Most of them are branded as materialists. There is yet another group

of people who advocate that we must act and leave the result in the hands of the Divine. These varying schools of thought are so confusing and baffling that it is very difficult for us to figure out which one of them is right and which is wrong. Even so, we do adopt a particular path of belief and tread on that, sometimes consciously and often un-consciously.

Recently I came across a small book written by a Chinese author and interestingly the first chapter of that book dealt with this topic only. He had reproduced the story of his father as narrated by him. It seems that in early days of his life he had certain ambitions as we all have. He desired to pass certain examinations, qualify in certain subjects and then aspired to get a certain prestigious position in the administrative set up of his native place. In the meantime, he came across a holy person who had the spiritual powers to read the destiny of a person. That person predicted for him, what examination he would pass, what he would not be able to pass and what rank he would get in these examinations. He also told him what position he would be able to secure for himself and what he would never achieve. It so happened that over the next few years every single prediction of his came true. He failed where

* Writer, Bengaluru

he was told that he would fail. He passed where he was told that he would qualify and even got the rank that was foreseen by that holy man. The result was that he developed a firm belief in destiny. He came to believe that the stars and planets have taken a position in his life that will result in success or failure as ordained by them and as predicted by the holy man. He gave up the hope to achieve those positions and get those posts, which he desired but was told that he would never get.

This state of affairs continued for quite sometime and the person concerned accepted what came through from time to time, both success and failure. Interestingly it tallied hundred per cent with what he had been told years earlier in advance. As the providence would have it, one day he came across another holy man, a Zen Master. During his conversation with him, he was asked why he was not going to take a particular examination that would improve his prospects for promotion to a higher post. He told him that it has been predicted that he will never cross that hurdle. He was asked why. His reply was destiny and then he revealed to him all that the previous holy person had predicted which had so far proved to be factually correct. The holy man made a profound statement. He said, 'Yes destiny exists, but it is changeable. Destiny is not set but is created and determined by ourselves'.

The Zen Master explained to him the statement he had made in detail. He said

that destiny is there for all of us, but the God has given us strength to change it for good or bad. If we endeavour honestly and firmly we can change our destiny to our advantage. Everything unfavourable can be converted into favourable. If we are docile and lethargic and do not act in the right direction even the good in our destiny will not materialise for us. This advice was so effective for that gentleman that thereafter he toiled and laboured with renewed zeal and vigour. The result was that he passed the examinations that he had earlier thought he would never qualify. Eventually he got the coveted prestigious post that he had desired in his younger days but was told that he would never get, as it was not assigned in his destiny. So, in practical life he experienced that the holy man he met later in his life was right. He then passed on this advice to his son. Incidentally, he was earlier told that he would never have a son. That is why he was narrating all these experiences of his to his son, who was born after he met the second holy man. He even revealed to him the fact that as a result of this experience he had changed his name from Xuehai, meaning 'broad learning' to Liaofan, which means 'transcending the ordinary'.

After reading this chapter it was now my turn to ponder over this subject. We have inherited what is known as *Karma* theory. According to this theory our actions design and formulate our destiny. The stock pile of these actions is carried forward by us from one birth to another. This is called

Sanchit Karma or the actions in our account, the result of which we have not yet borne and, therefore, those actions are as credit or debit in our account. A portion of this accumulated stock that has already fructified in the form of our present birth, body, environment etc. is called *Prarabdha karma*. Then we have the actions that we perform during this birth. These are called *Aagami Karma*. These actions can alter and change, for good or bad, the effect of our previous actions carried over from the past birth. An analogy of a hunter is often given to explain these three sets of actions. A hunter has shot an arrow, which is his *Prarabdha karma*. He is carrying a bundle of arrows at his back, which is his *Sanchit karma* and he is about to shoot an arrow, which forms his *Aagami karma*. How the present actions can change the destiny is illustrated by citing the example of two persons born in two different families, one rich and one poor. Due to the *Prarabdha Karma* one was born in a rich family and the other in a poor one. The rich one squandered all his wealth in wining, dining and betting and became a pauper. He first mortgaged his bungalow, in which he was born and eventually that too was confiscated by his creditors. He came on the road due to his bad deeds. The poor one worked hard and toiled to gain knowledge, engaged in constructive chores, earned money and became affluent. He constructed a mansion in the place of a modest cottage in which he was born. In this manner he was able to change his destiny with the help of his good deeds.

This confirms the statement of the Zen Master that destiny exists but is changeable. It is because of this eternal truth that Shri Krishna has said in Bhagavad Gita, *Karmanya-evaadhikaraste maaphaleshu kadachana* - Your authority is restricted to performing your actions only; you have no authority on the fruit of action'. So, we have to concentrate on doing our job and doing it well, so that the destiny changes in our favour. This philosophy is not new for us. Our scriptures go a few steps further and tell us that our actions of this birth can be classified into three groups, *Karma*, *kartavya* and *karya*. *Karma* is that set of actions which we have to perform voluntarily or involuntarily and without performing which we cannot exist. *Kartavya* constitutes those actions which we have adopted as our duties. These actions have to be performed diligently and sincerely, with a sense of commitment. *Karya* involves those actions which are desirable to be performed and include *Yajna*, *Tapa*, *Daana* or sacrificial ritual, penance and charity. These actions when performed in a detached manner and without an eye on their fruit raise us to the level of divinity and our liberation is assured. In other words, we make our destiny ourselves. So the saying in Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, *Aatmaiva aatmana bandhuha atmaivaripura atmanah*- 'we are ourselves our friends and ourselves our foes' stands established beyond any doubt, That is what the Zen master has stated in the story narrated above.

AUM (OM) - PRANAVA

T.S.S. Anjaneyulu*

A mantra is the dynamic aspect of thought. Speech is the minor component, the outer expression and the vehicle (movement) of the thought. The Hindu - Logo (*Sphota*)- the material of all worlds is OM. The only possible symbol OM is *Pranava*. It is the boat (*Nava*) that carries man to the other shore. It is everything in the universe - *Sabda Brahman*. Mere repetition of OM a few times removes the tossing of the mind (*Vikshepa*). It is the mother of Vedas and the *Akshara Brahman*. Mandukya Upanishad says that OM is the light of the Supreme. All the world is OM where its vibrations penetrate. It is the past, present and future. It is also the one which transcends all the divisions of time. The universe begins with the vibrations of the primal sound energy OM. As sound and object are inseparable OM is the universe, visible and invisible, audible and inaudible. It is the objective form emanating from the transcendent godhead.

Atman is the original of four feet altogether ultimate in resolve into one whole only a fourth of which is objective, heard outside in AUM (OM). A is *Vaisvanara*, objective, awake state. U is *Taijasa* (subtle mental dream state), M is *Pragnya*, the deep sleep cognitional state of bliss and *Turiya*

is the state beyond the above three. It is a non-dual transcendent state. They refer to body (*Virat*), mind (*Hiranyagarbha*), intellect (*Ishwara*) and bliss (*Brahman*). Philosophy has been reviewing life the objective - awake state and not of the totality of experience. Mandukya Upanishad, which occupies a very high place in Vedantic literature, elaborates these aspects. It contains one of the four great utterances - *Mahavakyas*, *Ayam Atma Brahma* meaning this atman is Brahman. Gita (9,16) elaborates that the letters of OM cover the three states of time and consciousness, the three qualities, the three states of subtlety and pervasion and the three places of meditation. It implies self (OM Tat Sat) the three fires - *Agni*, *Vayu* and *Aditya*.

Mandukya Upanishad (II,2,4) says OM is the bow, intellect is arrow and target is *Brahman*. It needs polarisation of mind through focus (*Avarana*) and deep penetration into the mind removing the veiling from its *Vrittis* (*Vikshepa*) developing greater awareness and expansion of consciousness.

Chandogyopanishad says - as all leaves of a tree are held by the stem, all the words are held together by the primordial sound OM. It is the vibration of cosmic

* Writer, Hyderabad

creative intelligence - the *Sabda Brahman*. OM is the entire existence. It is the overflow of the bliss of *Brahman*. The vibration engulfs the whole universe with infinite number of frequencies and is audible eternally. It needs one to be able to listen. It becomes a reality only when it is listened to through proper tuning. We live, move, rest and find our quest in OM. It is fulfillment. All the universal frequencies are available in our cerebral-spinal cord system - from coccyx to pineal the inner universe in man. Each psychic centre has its own frequency affecting the cells corresponding to the centers.

Om is *Aksharam* - imperishable. It is sacred. OM means a solemn affirmation an ascent -like say "Let there be" in Christian theology.

Om is verily the *Brahman* the pure consciousness. Kathopanishad (VI, 4-11) says "beyond the senses is the mind, beyond the mind is pure intellect, beyond the intellect is the great *Atman*. Beyond the *Atman* is the unmanifest" (*Brahman*). It is beyond all plurality to unity in *Brahman*. Everything in nature is fragmented into diversity. *Om* is the unfragmented whole. It is everything - totality of man universe and reality. It is everything, creator and creation, a sum total of all matter all-pervading - the totality of all mortal and immortal. The sacred syllable is *Pranava*, the primordial sound. It is formed by three letters - A, U, and M, which merges with O and prolongs to M through nasal resonance.

Om is the imperishable ontic reality. The symbol is observed in all Vedic works in Krishna (black) Yajurveda.

Taithiraeya Samhita and most of the Upanishads describe OM in several ways. It is a primordial sound, a three-lettered symbol (AUM). Constant recitation or chanting of OM takes it to the place from which it emerged and helps reintegration of man. *Om* represents *Brahman* (*Omitye Kasharam Brahma*). It is *Nada* (*Na-da*). *Na* is *Prana* and *Da* is *Agni* (fire). It is verily the fire of *prana* from which comes the universal mother nature in name and form of colors, letters and sounds. OM provides Peace (*Shanti*) and rest (*Vishranti*) from the worldliness. Of AUM, A represents fire, sun - fire (*Vaiswanara*) - *Jyoti Hiranmanyam*, *Tejovai Hiranmanyam*. U represents air, *Taijasa - Hiranya Garbha Samvartatre* and M represents sun - *Havyavahana Adi Deva Adirya*.

The hollow canal *Sushumna* lies through the left interior or upper palate and growth that hangs down between the arteries and passes out to an opening in the center in the skull where the hair is parted. There is a great subtle and bright space in the heart (*Hridayakasha*). Meditation is suggested on the heart.

Any exercise involves expenditure of energy. But meditation replenishes energy. OM is neither psychological (subtle) nor eschatological (gross). It is

anthropo-cosmic. It is the man-God link. It is divine and yet human. To reach the target of *Brahman*, OM is the bow to be used with the arrow of individual spirit-*Atman*. The wisdom of the Vedas shows how through simple ethical living with fearlessness, strength of faith in THAT, one can live.

OM is *Sabda Brahman*, *Nada Brahman*, a word-sound coordination. It is the sound-word that emerged from silence. It is the very beginning - it is the sound behind and silence follows its utterance. It is the first sound of the whole universe. It is an integration of matter and spirit, form and formless, sound and soundless silence. It is all-pervading vibration, the basis of all sounds and the entire range of all frequencies. OM combines the three aspects of the universe-creation (*Brahma*) - maintenance (Vishnu) and dissolution (Shiva). (*Shruti-Stiti* and *Laya*)- they are the universal cyclic aspects of the trinity. In his 'The Fabric of Cosmos: Space, Time and Texture of Reality', Prof of physics Brian Green says, Just as a violin string can vibrate in different patterns each particle produces a different musical note, filaments of superstring theory vibrate in different patterns. At the ultra microcosmic level, the universe is akin to a string a symphony of vibratory matter in existence. K C Cole writing on 'Mind, Matter-Conversation With Cosmos', reports in 2004 that a team of astronomers led by Andrew Lange of California Institute of Technology published the most detailed

analysis of the cosmos's primordial sound, a hum deep in the throat preceded by the atoms and the stars. It is a simple sound, like the mantra OM, but hidden within it are the harmonics on the details of shape, composition and birth. It is reported that the harmonics rang out like a bell in the first fractions of a second after the big bang. Cosmologists believe that these minute ripples of sound become the seeds of matter which eventually lead to the formation of the stars, galaxies and planets such as earth. Cole reports that in the primordial period 'nothing existed but pure light, sprinkled in smattering sub-atomic particles. Nothing happened except that this light and the matter fluid spreading it out to others. Like banging on the head of a drum, the comprehension of the liquid light as it fell into gravity wells set up the sound waves that cosmologist Charles Line Weaver calls 'the oldest music in the universe'. As the universe aged, these sound waves developed on ever-large scales, filling the heavens with a deepening roar. Long after the bang, the universe cooled down where electrons and protons condensed into atoms of hydrogen and separated from the vibrating light (photons). The photons went through separate ways and the universe abruptly went in silent evolution (Bohr calls the matter as frozen light). The next is history of the universe. The particles joined each other to form other atoms, stars and everything else, including people.

Mandukyopanishad (1,4,1-3), and Chandyogyopanishad (VIII, 6) say that one

should meditate on the symbol OM - in Udhgati chant. It is the essence of all beings - the elements - earth, water, plants, human speech and Vedas. Sama Veda is its musical chant (Udgati chant) and Rig Veda is its speech.

Taitheeya Upanishad (1,8) says OM is Brahman - Om is whole - it is the response of the universe, the echo of Brahman and the soul of all souls. OM is variously described and elaborated in Chandagyopanishad, Kathopanishad, Taitreeyopanishad. Mahanarayan upanishad, Prasnopanishad, Mandukyopanishad, Maitriyupanishad and also in Bhagavad Gita.

Om is one of the twelve aspects of the power of the sun's rays (*Saura Sakti*) - *Adityas*, *Rishis*, *Yakshas*, *Apsaras*, *Rakshasas*, *Sarpas* (serpent), *Gandharvas* and so on associated with the seven horses (*Aswas*) of the sun. Gayatri symbolism of luminous sacred OM is the *Nada-Sabda-Brahman*.

Om contains the seven musical notes (*Sapta Swaras-sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, da, ni* of Indian music). Inward - directed contemplation of supreme (non- material and non-dual) is deflected to outside objects - (matter) by mind and ego until they are absorbed in the self Yoga is oneness of breath, mind, senses and intellect, the recreation of all existence to react. What is, what was, and what will be, the time integrated - THAT timeless and eternal with

nothing beyond is OM. Om provides and establishes a state of balance in mind-body. It provides food, health, increased inner energy levels, increased memory power, control of stress and anxiety. It provides energy and clear thinking for good leadership and management. Today, even the materialist world - scientists, medical men, neurologists and psychopathologists - is understanding and appreciating the wondrous aspect of OM chanting and meditation. Even corporates are allowing some time for it. Some schools have done it.

All creation is *Gayatri* says Chandagyopanishad. When vibrations of the mantra generate spiritual energy, it is gradually merged into the movement of Prana as one ascends to spiritual form. The mantra can be applied to generate energy to stop the vrittis of the mind. The mantra directed internally and externally on the object to transcend till it is unified with the deity. With increasing degree of consciousness, when light is observed, it inundates the mind and *Prana*. The mantra is one with God and expansion involves spiritual transcendence. The glow of the spirit reduces the form of the objects seen. Eyes become divine eyes.

Gayatri mantra says, 'May we meditate on the effulgence and glory of HIM who has created the universe, who is fit to be worshipped, who is the embodiment of knowledge and light, who is the redresser of all sins and ignorance, may he light our intellect'. OM is imperishable, says

Mandukyopanishad. OM covers *Bhoo Loka* (terrestrial), *Bhvar* (*Antariksha*-the astral), *Svar* (matter) *Loka*. The meditation on OM bestows health, beauty, strength, vigour, vitality and destroys sin. *Om* is *Gayatri*. It is the *Sakti*. It is the power of the universe. The *Gayatri Mantra* stands unparalleled in the Vedas and is regarded as the seed word with the syllables, *Vyahritis* - *Bhoo*, *Bhuvr*, and *Svar*. It is supposed to be the "open sesame" of the universal manifestation at the commencement of time.

The *Gayatri mantra* consists of 24 syllables. Man's gross body has 24 elements, 20 external and four internal, five sense organs (knowledge), five motor organs (action), five *Pranas* and five subtle elements (*Tanmatras*), four internal organs - mind (*Manas*), intellect (*Buddhi*), *Chitta* (mind stuff, memory and feeling) and ego (*Ahamkara*).

Says Paramahansa Yogananda, 'the physical beauty of a form or of nature is fleeting'. Its perception depends upon the power of physical eyes. The beauty of cosmic energy is ever-lasting and can be seen with or without the physical eyes. God makes a grand display of cosmic energy in the astral realm of vibratory light', in the psychic centers, the space on the forehead between the eyes (*Bhrukuti*) is the corneal center (*Ajna Chakra* (medullar)). *Ajna* means to obey. It is the centre of willing. The center corresponds to pituitary gland - as two-petalled lotus of grey color. During meditation, it is possible to open up the

spiritual eye, the third eye, where Paramahansa Yogananda experienced a ring of golden light with a violet blue field within. Jesus Christ says, (Luke 11:34-35) in Bible, "the light of the body is the eye, therefore, when thine is single, thy whole body is also full of light, but with thine eye is evil, the body is also full of darkness".

Vital breath (*Prana*) enters the body at medulla oblongata, stored in the *Sahasrara* continues in the head and is distributed through the boundary according to the jurisdiction of five *Pranas* and the substances for their activity. It is possible to transform ego consciousness by concentration between the eyes along with or without *Pranayama* and meditation.

AUM in reality represents a combination of five aspects - AUM, *Bindu* and *Nada*. It represents the supreme, the formulation of *Linga* of SIVA with five faces - *Sadyojato* (modern evolution) - *Vamadeva* (handsome), *Aghora* (fearless), *Tatpurusha* (that one beyond mind and language) and *Eesana* (the creator) with five directions - four horizontal and one upward with five colors - *Mukta* (reddish-white), *Vidruma* (red), *Hema* (yellow), *Neela* (blue), *Dhavalā* (white) - representing *Gunas* - white (*Satva*), red (*Rajas*), blue (*Tamas*), a combination of white, red and blue (*Saumya*) - and greater than all the three colors - (*Turiya*) longing for the universal aspect of evolution.

Man progresses from gazing at a symbol to the mental act by linking the form

but not the symbol and then to *Dhyana* giving up name and form but concentrating on a particular sound (*Dhvani*) on a particular hymn (*mantra*) and the sound caught up in the mind. *Gayatri* is one such *mantra* (*Om* *kara*). Patanjali says the word AUM is God.

Rig Veda says, "In the beginning was *Brahman* with whom was the word and the word was supreme *Brahman*." Bible says (John1:1), "in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God". AUM is like "AMEN" of the church, AMIN of Muslims. St Francis of Assisi described it as music, so sweet, so beautiful that had it lasted a moment longer, we would have lost in it completely".

In *Prasnopanishad*, Pippalada answers Saryakama on being questioned "what happens to a person who meditates on AUM till death". If he meditates on one syllable, he comes back to the world after death being enlightened by that. If anyone meditates on two syllables, one is united to the word. After death, he goes to the world of moon and having enjoyed returns back. He who meditates on all three syllables, he is freed from all the sins as if a snake is freed from its slough.

The three letters of AUM represent the three states of our experience awake, dream and deep sleep respectively. The world is there as long as the mind is there. The mind is there as long as all the states are there. Noble Laureate physicist James Clacks Maxwell, who gave his four

beautiful equations of electromagnetism, says, "the only laws of matter are which our minds must fabricate and only laws of mind are fabricated for it by matter". So to go beyond the world, we have to go beyond the mind (the cosmic center of the world). To go beyond the mind, one has to go beyond the three states (awake, dream and deep sleep) beyond space-time causality. AUM represents the basic principle, pure consciousness the atman upon which the states come upon and go as waves do on the surface of the ocean. The ocean is not affected by the presence or absence of the waves. It remains the same even in balance in its deep quiet - but waves cannot exist without ocean.

AUM originates in the throat, middle of the mouth and in the lips. A is for larynx, the root sound, the key pronounced without lowering tongue or palate. D, the entire complex from the very root rolls to the end of sounding board of the mouth, and M is produced by the closing lips. If you utter them in combination, you have to feel the three states of consciousness all merging into pure consciousness like waves merging into ocean. This idea of actualization of merger becomes Vedantic contemplation. Many particulars that go through the idea sink in the mind and dissolve there. *Sravana*, *Manana* and *Nidhinyasana* are the three steps to knowledge.

Om is the seed mantra of all mantras of the three worlds. *Atman* and *Brahman*

have four parts of which three parts are the spheres of activity -awake (*Vaiswanara*), dream (*Tejasa*) and deep sleep (*Pragna*). The fourth is intangible - beyond the rest. It is all bliss - *Turiya*. AUM is considered one with *Brahman* as the word OM. Vedanta upholds the doctrine of *Sphota*, the essence of all name and form. Order is the essence of inner.

When one meditates deeply on *pranava* in which all the worlds are held together, not merely as a reduction of bountiful reality, but as a whole universe itself recognizing it as OM is everything (*Om karam Idam Sarvam*). AUM represents body, state of consciousness, universe and the different worlds. When you utter the letter A, you open the mouth representing creation and when you utter M you close the mouth in stop (*Bindu*, the dissolution) and U, the link representing universe. Body observes, mind desires as also contemplates centering physical and mental (outer and inner).

Many thoughts (*Vrittis*) come and go during the chanting of OM. As they come and go, they come up on the innate "I" (ego). If I is expanded, it becomes the universe. It is like expanding the dimensionless point (*bindu*) into concentric spheres engulfing the boundless infinite. Universe, the other way is to reduce the entire infinite spherical existence to a point (*Bindu*). One may think of expansion to infinite - convergence to reality - crossing the layers to non-matter reality or linking the cool *Sahasrara*

(pineal) with warm coccyx through the awakening *Kundalini*. They can also be visualized as linking *Prana* and *Apana*. It also means merging of CNS into ANS through subduing the mind.

Only in the deep sleep "I" remains dormant. In awake stage, "I" enters the external world. In the dream stage, what is visualized is the creation of the mind - the projection of "I" and it comes upon the conscious as ripples on the ocean and they can veil the substance of the ocean itself. In the practice (*Sadhana*), the origin of ego "I" is to be traced out. In deep sleep, the ego remains dormant as there is no sense experience.

The tools for locating the atman are subtle internal organs mind (*Manas*), intellect (*Buddhi*), *Chitta* (feeling mind stuff) and *Ahamkara* (ego) through appropriate reception, classification, evaluation and rejection of thoughts. Through contemplation in *chitta*, one can get into perfection in contemplation to remember the existence (*Sakti*) or universal consciousness with the "I" (*Soham*). By discovering the *Sakshi* (witness), one should learn to differentiate between *Sakshi* and *Soham* to consciousness.

The power of mother nature (*Sakti*) combines in herself and manifests through sun with aspect of *Mitra* - (*Sanno Mitrasya Varunah*). *Gayatri* has four qualities - beautiful (*Soundarya*), pure (*Swacha*), acceptable (*Sumukha*) and easy (*Sulabha*).

The power of *Gayatri* is centered in man at heart (dorsal) in the form of 12-petalled lotus. Human body comes and is sustained by the power of the sun. He belongs to all the three worlds. Sun is a healer (colore-therapy), Sun is related to circulation of blood (*Marthanda*). It has also a psychological nature. The power of Rudra manifests through sun as *Rudra Sakti*. It pervades through the whole body organism through the vibrations of 24 letters of *Gayatri* covering the 24 elements of the body. It covers dawn, mid-day, dusk -the *Sandhya* periods representing the three aspects of fire (*Agni*) - *Garhparya Agni*, *Dakshina Agni* and *Avaviha Agni*. The process of conversion of subtle elements to gross form (evolution) and the reverse of gross elements to subtle form

(involution) are aspects of matter - consciousness transformation.

The primordial sound OM covers all range of vibrations in the universe. Vibrations are generated in the world in various ways through mantra, word and sound, through *Nama* (name), *Rupa* (form), through *Prana* (*Swara*), through gestures (*Mudras*) of dance, through concentration (observation or movement), control of *Prana* - inhalation and exhalation through gestures, through prayers and various acts in which 10 are of fire, 12 of sun, 16 of moon.

God is in man - unrealised. All aspects of the universe and reality are ingrained in him, in each of his cells. Only he has to realize his divinity.

LOSING GOD

Dr. Basudhara Roy*

Under the glazing, resplendent
surface of your bronze,
I sight flashes of human flesh,
vulnerable, bleeding, torn.

The initiation leaves a wound
yawning for ever,
for in losing a god
much more than faith is lost.

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Walled around the heart,
the infinity of the universe shrinks;
shrivels up like a walnut, silently
rotting from without to within.

TOWARDS A SPIRITUAL SADHANA: SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

Prof. M. Rajagopalachary*

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are the two great spiritual masters of the world in the twentieth century who practiced what they preached besides Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Ramana Maharshi and Jiddu Krishnamoorthy, to name a few. While Sri Aurobindo had Vasudeva Sakshatkara in the Alipore jail, the Mother had several mystical experiences including the vision of divine descent. Their spiritual collaboration was a sort of confluence of the best in the east and the west. It appears both of them were predestined for a noble purpose of spiritual rejuvenation of the humanity. Their remarks about each other reveal their indispensability in this mission- Sri Aurobindo: "The Mother's consciousness and mine are the same, the one Divine Consciousness in two, because that is necessary for the play. Nothing can be done without her knowledge and force, without her consciousness-if anybody really feels her consciousness, he should know that I am there behind it and if he feels me it is the same with hers" (Sri Aurobindo on the Mother); the Mother: "Without him, I exist not; without me, he is unmanifest" (A Chronology of The Mother's Life). Their

writings have been so prolific that it is humanly impossible to assess their contribution to the spiritual elevation of mankind within any intellectual framework. The present study is, however, a modest attempt to understand the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother with focus on the significant role of the latter through a quick review of landmark events in her life.

II

The teaching of Sri Aurobindo stems from that of the ancient sages of India that there is an eternal Self behind the appearances of the universe. The entire creation is united with this One Self, but avidya or ignorance keeps one under the illusion that it is separate. Through yoga one can dispel this illusion and become aware of the true Self, the immanent Divinity. There is an evolutionary process by which the consciousness liberates itself from matter. Self-impelled it evolves as life in the first step, then as mind, and as a spiritual and supramental consciousness, and then towards Supermind and Spirit as the dominant power in the conscious being. At this stage alone there is the possibility of the divine descent. ("Sri Aurobindo's Teaching and Method of *Sadhana*" 95-97). The process is long and arduous. In this

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discipline, the Master who has risen to a higher consciousness and being can be of great help not only by his teaching but also by his power to communicate his own experience to others ("Sri Aurobindo's Teaching and Method of *Sadhana*" 95-97). Sri Aurobindo calls his yoga the integral yoga. It does not require like the older paths to leave the earth to find the Truth or to seek spirituality in all parts of life. The central purpose of the integral *yoga* according to Sri Aurobindo is to transform our ordinary human living into the life divine. The object of the Integral Yoga is "to enter into and be possessed by the Divine Presence and Consciousness, to love the Divine for the Divine's sake alone, to be tuned in our nature into the nature of the Divine, and in our will and works and life to be the instrument of the Divine" (Pandit). There is no set mental teaching or prescribed forms of meditation, mantras or others to practice this yoga. One needs to open up voluntarily to the Divine Power above us and its workings and its presence in the heart "by faith, aspiration and surrender" and rejection of all that is away from it.

The key-methods of the *sadhana* are-(i) the way to devotion and surrender without any ego, (ii) the way to knowledge-"meditation in the head" to receive the descent of peace of the higher consciousness till it envelops the whole being (iii) *yoga* by works-separating the *Purusha* from the *Prakriti*, the inner silent being from the outer active one, so that one behind

watches and observes and finally controls and changes the other. The other way is to do everything for the Divine and for the Mother as if the Divine Force is doing them (Pandit).

Aurobindo describes the *sapta chatushtaya*, "seven quadrates as the stages of development in integral yoga. (Wikipedia on Integral Yoga). They are--

- *Shanti* (peace, calm), which consists of *samatha* (calming of the mind), *shanti* (peace), *sukha* (happiness), and *hasya* (*Atmaprasada*, contentment of the *Atman*);
- *Shakti* (power), which consists of *shakti* (the power of the primordial energy), *virya* (energy, effort), *daivi prakriti* (Divine Nature, primal force), and *sraddha* (faith);
- *Vijnana* (knowledge), which consists of *jnanam* (knowledge), *trikaladrsti* (knowledge of past, present and future), *ashtasiddhi* (eight powers), and *samadhi* (absorption);
- *Sharira* (body), which consists of *arogyam* (health), *utthapana* (levitation, being free from gravity and physical powers), *saundaryam* (beauty), *vividhananda* (bliss);
- *Karma* (divine work), which consists of Krishna (avatar of Vishnu), Kali (the Goddess), *kama* (divine delight), and *Karma* (divine action);
- *Brahma*, the realization of *Brahman*;
- *Siddhi* (realization), which consists of *shuddhi* (purification), *mukti* (liberation), *bhukti* (enjoyment), and *siddhi* (realisation of yogic powers).

Sri Aurobindo calls his *yoga* an integral *yoga* because it is different from the traditional forms of *yoga*. The reasons are many. Firstly, it is different from the traditional methods of *yoga* which seek the brahmananda as an experience beyond this world and thus remain partial and incomplete. Secondly, it aims at achieving perfection not only in the consciousness but also in the Nature to become the Divine Nature. Thirdly, all the powers of man-body, soul, mind, will and heart, become at once means to reach divinity. Fourthly, it is not confined to realizing the complete divinity alone but also to bring down this divine power into our whole being to transform our inner consciousness. Fifthly, it combines all the three paths of *yoga-karma*, *jnana* and *bhakti* instead of choosing one or the other (Purnachandra Rao).

III

Both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother worked all their lives for the manifestation of a mode of consciousness beyond mind, which Sri Aurobindo named "Supermind" or "The Supramental". It is supposed that it would result not only in a new species beyond Man, but also in a modification of the whole terrestrial creation. The transitional beings in the transitional phases in between would be endowed with the higher consciousness and prepare the way for the advent of the Supramental race. Sri Aurobindo speaks in eloquent terms about the Mother's role in this divine task:

There is no difference between the Mother's path and mine; we have and have always had the same path, the path that leads to the supramental change and the divine realisation; not only at the end, but from the beginning they have been the same.... There is one divine Force which acts in the universe and in the individual and is also beyond the individual and the universe. The Mother stands for all these, but she is working here in the body to bring down something not yet expressed in this material world so as to transform life here -- it is so that you should regard her as the Divine *Shakti* working here for that purpose. She is that in the body, but in her whole consciousness she is also identified with all the other aspects of the Divine.

The Mother had an immense faith in the divine task of Sri Aurobindo: "What Sri Aurobindo represents in the world's history is not a teaching, not even a revelation; it is a decisive action direct from the Supreme." (Words of the Mother 4). She finds in Sri Aurobindo a life-time effort "to establish in himself this consciousness he called supramental, and to help those gathered around him to realise it" with an "assurance of a divine future" (On Education 116). This can be ascribed to the Mother as well.

IV

The Mother was born as Blanche Rachel Mirra Alfassa in Paris on 21 February 1878 as the second child of an Egyptian mother and a Turkish father. She

was called the Mother by Sri Aurobindo who considered her an incarnation of the Mother Divine. A precocious child she had many occult, inner experiences from early childhood on without knowing anything about the subject. Sri Aurobindo affirms: "The Mother had been spiritually conscious from her youth, even from her childhood upward and she had done *Sadhana* and had developed this knowledge very long before she came to India" (Sri Aurobindo on the Mother 384). Right from the age of three she was "conscious" of "a Light and Force" from above penetrating her brain, and sometimes she was able to "wield that force to correct an injustice" (A Chronology). She used to feel "a series of psychic and spiritual experiences" which revealed to her "not only the existence of God but man's possibility of uniting with Him..." (A Chronology). At the age thirteen or fourteen, she recalls, she dreamt of a dark figure whom she had never seen before in real life. This she used to call Krishna (Vrekhem 14). She used to dream that she went out of her body clad in golden robes and saw the distressed getting relief at the touch of her robes while an old man, silent and still, was found dissolving into the Divine after giving her all his knowledge. She recognizes him later as none but Sri Aurobindo himself. Though she turned an atheist for some time, she attains "a conscious and constant union with the divine Presence...all alone." At this stage she finds Raja Yoga by Swami Vivekananda and a translation of Bhagavad Gita in French helpful in explaining about her

experiences to some extent (Vrekhem 29). The period of 1896-1907 was a period of cultivation of the vital being and aesthetic consciousness. Her acquaintance with Louis Thémanlys, the head of the Cosmic Movement, a group started by Max Théon at this stage, proves a turning point in her life. She attends his speeches and becomes active in the group. Interested in spiritual development, she travels alone to Algerian city of Tlemcen to meet Max Théon and his wife Alma Théon twice in 1906 and 1907 to practice and experiment in their house on their teachings (Vrekhem 37-67). After her divorce with her first husband Henri with whom she had a child, she participates in discussions with Budhists and other cosmic movement circles in Paris. The period 1908-1914 remains one of "intensive mental development" for her leading to the realization of something luminous and true beyond the synthesis of all mental knowledge (A Chronology). It is a matter of coincidence that the year 1908 turns out to be a period of realization for Sri Aurobindo on which his *yoga* and his spiritual philosophy are founded.

In 1910 Sri Aurobindo arrives in Pondicherry, his "cave of *Tapasya*" and begins his intense sadhana with Sri Krishna as his Master of Yoga. The same year the Mother could see the Buddha in a bluish light standing beside Alexandra when he was giving a talk on Budhism. Between 1911 and 1914 she meets Abdul Baha, son and successor of Baha Ullah, the founder of the Bahai religion, "who by his presence

alone transmits spirituality," but she could not accept the beliefs of his sect. In 1911 she marries Paul Richard who was also interested in philosophy and theology. It was from him that she first hears of Sri Aurobindo. On May 7, 1912 she decides to realize the higher planes of consciousness and unite with the Divine presence and "put the earth in connection with one or more of the fountains of universal force that are still sealed to it" and to establish an ideal society (A Chronology). On August 15, 1912 Sri Aurobindo experiences "a prolonged realization and dwelling in *Parabrahma* for many hours". Later the same year he proclaims his mission: "To re-explain the *Sanatana Dharma*...from a new standpoint" that Sri Krishna has shown him; "to establish yogic *sadhana* which will not only liberate the soul, but prepare a perfect humanity" with a view to restoring India to her "proper place in the world" by "means of Yoga"; to remodel society-to make it "fit to contain" a perfect humanity. On November 7 1912 the Mother meets the Sufi mystic and musician Hazrat Inayat Khan who tells her that for the sufis there is "a state higher than that of adoration and surrender to Divine", when the distinction between the Divine and oneself is obliterated. On Dec 27 the same year she hears for the first time OM chanted and sees everything suddenly filled with "a golden vibrating light" that sets her body vibrating "in an extraordinary way." Later she says: "That sound contains the vibrations of thousands and thousands of years of spiritual aspiration...And the power is

automatically there" (A Chronology).

The Mother's meeting with Sri Aurobindo on 29th March 1914 in Pondicherry is a significant landmark in the spiritual history of India. In the very first meeting, Mirra at once recognizes Sri Aurobindo as the mentor whom she used to see in her earlier dreams and visions: "As soon as I saw Sri Aurobindo, I recognized in him the well-known being whom I used to call Krishna" (A Chronology). She feels a sudden silence and blankness in presence of Sri Aurobindo (Vrekhem 140-155). Sri Aurobindo is touched by her sense of self-surrender: "I have never seen anywhere a self-surrender so absolute and unreserved" (A Chronology). On July 21, 1914 the Mother gets *Kundalini* experience, a column of light rising from the base of the body to the head and from there to the universe above. In October she uses her occult force to subdue the savage Kali gloating over the impending destruction of Paris by the advancing German armies in the First World War. Sri Aurobindo recognises in her an embodiment of the dynamic expressive aspect of evolutionary, creative Force, known in India as the 'Supreme Mother' (The Mother: A Brief Sketch). After staying with Sri Aurobindo for about eleven months, she had to leave India after the outbreak of the First World War. In November 1915 she experiences complete identification of her physical consciousness with the Divine. In response to her letter describing her experience, Sri Aurobindo interprets it as the union of the

Earth of the *Veda* and *Purana* with the Divine Principle. She meditates with Dr Okhawa Shumei, a Zen practitioner in Japan in 1916. In December 2016 she sees and hears the Buddha telling her that there is in her heart a diamond surrounded by golden light which carries a message for the distressed. During Jan-Feb 1919 she uses her occult power to destroy the Asuric being behind the countless deaths in Tokyo due to Influenza epidemic. On April 24, 1920 she arrives once again in Pondicherry. She experiences Sri Aurobindo's aura while her ship was several nautical miles away (Questions and Answers 223). Sri Aurobindo feels as if the *sadhana* and the work were waiting for the Mother's coming (A Chronology). Sri Aurobindo treats her of equal stature with him.

November 24, 1926 was declared as *Siddhi* day (victory day) as the Mother and Sri Aurobindo claimed that Overmind Consciousness had manifested directly on earth allowing the possibility for Human consciousness to be directly aware and be in it. The same day when Sri Aurobindo retired into seclusion, the Mother starts Sri Aurobindo Ashram with a few disciples as a centre of spiritual *sadhana*. Under her spiritual guidance the sadhaks had to render selfless service taking up any of the activities of the Ashram they like. During 1926-27 the Mother works out "a very brilliant creation...in extraordinary detail, with marvellous experiences, contacts with divine beings and all kinds of manifestations which are considered

miraculous." At Sri Aurobindo's bidding she dissolves it, for it was an Overmind creation, not the supramental. In August 1928 the Mother meets and meditates with Sri Ramana Maharshi's disciple Vasistha Ganapati Muni who recognises in her an exalted manifestation of the Supreme *Shakti* and composes Sanskrit verses on her. Sri Aurobindo too says that the Mother has four dimensions of personality endowed with divine knowledge, divine force, divine harmony and divine perfection which we call Maheswari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswathi. In 1946 she feels the descent of the Divine Mother's Personality of *Ananda*, indispensable for the transformation of the body. But it could not act due to lack of the minimum requisite receptivity in the vital and the physical.

Under the Mother's tutelage for nearly fifty years, the Ashram grows into a huge, multi-faceted spiritual community. Her writings, conversations, speeches, prayers, meditations and all her other activities turn it into a centre of a spiritual pilgrimage. When Sri Aurobindo passed away in 1950, she feels that the supramental force accumulated by Sri Aurobindo "passed from his body into mine. And I felt the friction of the passage. It was extraordinary -- extraordinary." (Notes on the Way 328). She continued to feel his presence by her day and night. She reveals to the Ashramites that Sri Aurobindo had left her the task of realizing the descent of divinity upon the earth and its consequent transformation.

The Mother establishes Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education in 1952 to fulfil his mission to provide a new kind of education for Indian youth. The Mother believes "Humanity is not the last rung of the terrestrial creation. Evolution continues and man will be surpassed. It is for each individual to know whether he wants to participate in the advent of this new species" (The Mother: A Brief Sketch).

February 29, 1956 was an important landmark in the history of the Ashram. That evening during the collective meditation the Mother declares the descent of supramental consciousness. She reveals she saw a live vast golden form obstructed by a huge, heavy golden door and that she shattered it into pieces with a golden hammer witnessing an incessant flooding of supramental light, consciousness and power down to the earth (Venkateswara Rao 77-78). In her messages dated March 29 and April 24 of 1956, she confirms fulfillment of her promise. Her *yoga* of physical transformation starts in 1958 which continued for the next fifteen years with intense practical religious experiences. Auroville, an international township was built in 1968 as a yet wider field for practical attempts to implement Sri Aurobindo's vision of new forms of individual and collective life, preparing the way towards a brighter future for the whole earth (wikipedia on Mirra Alfassa). The Mother leaves her body on 17th November 1973. The experiences of the last thirty years of the Mother's life were recorded in

the 13-volume work *The Agenda*. Today, Auroville is managed by a foundation set up by the Indian government.

The obvious purpose of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother was to sow the seeds of a new way of life founded on a higher consciousness and to embody and manifest upon earth this Divine Consciousness, with the Ashram as the starting point. "It was her drive, her force, her guidance that made things happen. From the smallest insignificant detail to the overseeing of every aspect of maintaining the Ashram, from interacting with the children of the Centre of Education to the supervising of the athletic competitions in the sports ground-she was there, fully present, to see that everything is raised to its utmost perfection" (The Mother: An Introduction).

The Mother reveals all encompassing humanism in her declaration that "I belong to no nation, no civilization, no society, no race, but to the Divine. I obey no master, no ruler, no law, no social convention, but the Divine. To Him I have surrendered all, will, life and self; for Him I am ready to give all my blood, drop by drop, if such is His will, with complete joy; and nothing in His service can be sacrifice, for all is perfect delight" (The Mother: An Introduction). It can be concluded that the Mother remains a spiritual force to reckon with all through her life with her experiments with the integral yoga and its execution for the divine descent.

ENGLISH AND MOTHER TONGUE

Dr. Chaganti Nagaraja Rao*

In a recent meet graced by some highly qualified men, certain speakers expressed their anguish and agony that we are doing away with higher human and ethical values in our mad pursuit of learning of English language, and in our fascination for English language we have become uncertain of our values, our goals and our purposes. They even attributed all the evils prevailing in our society to our imitation of western culture. One speaker even expressed his anguish that if the trend continues like this we will forget our mother tongue. The author is rather unable to appreciate as to how learning a foreign language or literature amounts to neglect of one's mother tongue or despising one's native literature and how it results in erosion of ethical and human values. Learning a foreign language only adds to one's store of knowledge but does not suppress one's zeal and enthusiasm to learn one's mother tongue or native literature. At the same time neglect of English does not amount to respect for one's native tongue or literature. When England was at war with Germany there was a move to stop teaching German in England. But the King didn't approve it since England was at war with

Germany but not German language and hence continued its teaching. Likewise, love for English and mastering English language and literature cannot be a mistake or despicable act. Indians launched a struggle against British rule for two centuries but not against English language or literature. Even eminent Indians openly admitted the greatness of English education. Could India have produced a globally reputed philosopher like Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, an eminent Hindu religious thinker like Swami Vivekananda, a great leader-cum-scholar and writer like Jawaharlal Nehru or many other stalwarts of India without English education? English literature forms one of the master pieces of world literature. It is in this vein that Surendranadh Banerjee admits in unequivocal terms that "English education has produced a splendid galaxy of distinguished men who have done incalculable service to morals and manners, who have ennobled the literature of their country and made it a rich vehicle for the expression of the noblest sentiments, of the most abstruse reasonings in philosophy and science and of the varied and complicated requirements of modern life." As such he suggests that "nothing should be done to check the spread of that system of education which has produced splendid results in the

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past and is fraught with infinite possibilities of progress for future generations."

India has no doubt a vast knowledge and has a lot to give to the world. But even this knowledge can spread to the world only through English. That is why C.Rajagopalachari rightly questions, "Can anyone deny that English is the window of modern knowledge as far as India is concerned? We must keep it open, fully open, if we desire to maintain and improve our position in the world. The place of English must continue to be what it has been these 200 years in schools, colleges and offices. English is Goddess Sarasvati's gift to us." In the same vein A. Lakshmana Swamy Mudaliar rightly puts it that "English today is the language that makes it possible for Indians generally to obtain a wealth of information and to make their own contributions known to the world,"

There is no denying the fact that English has been the eyes and ears of the world for centuries. That is why Isaac Mathai rightly says: "If Sanskrit had a glorious past, English had an equally glorious past, a more glorious present, and still a more glorious future as the world language."

Let's not, in the name of foolish language fanaticism, deny to ourselves the invaluable wealth of information in the works of world famous authors like William Shakespeare, Bertrand Russell,

Will Durant, C.E.M. Joad, Bernard Shaw and a splendid galaxy of men of letters. Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa admonishes saying that "We will be doing them (our children) a great disservice and generally a great harm to our country in the future, if we do not teach them this language from the early school days." Mahatma Gandhi dreamed of creating one world government where all countries live happily with no foreign domination. Will it be possible to achieve it without a common language? Can there be such a language other than the globally spoken English? That is why Cariappa says that "If we neglect the continued study of English we will find it hard to keep up our rightful place in the commercial, intellectual, cultural, international and economic world of today."

Jawaharlal Nehru opines that "English today was the link between the people of India and the rest of the world. To throw away English would be to throw away the vast treasure of knowledge embodied in that language and lose knowledge forever." The wealth of information contained in works like Will Durant's *Story of Civilization* (10 volumes), *Pleasures of Philosophy and Great Men of Literature*, Russell's *New Hopes for a Changing World and Mysticism*, Logic and Other Essays, C.E.M.Joad's *Guide to Modern Thought* etc is certainly not available in books in other languages, which Indians cannot deny to themselves. Besides the above, India has produced an unusually large number of

world famous writers in English. The works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr.S.Radhakrishnan, V.S.Naipaul (British born Indian), Raja Rao, R.K.Narayan, D.F.Karaka, Nayantara Sahgal et al form an integral part of English education all over the country.

As K.M.Munshi rightly puts it, "We should not forget the value of English in the immediate present, nor its importance in shaping our future. English today is a powerful unifying factor in our national life." English is the language of international intercourse. It is impossible for us to maintain the high level of our intellectual and scientific training and achievement without English. C.D.Deshmukh even recommended taking steps to acquire adequate proficiency in English. No eminent educationist of India can deny that English is the main gateway to enlarged learning. That is why B.G.Kher declares that "Elimination of such an International language which had bestowed so much benefit on India and contributed to her progress would be ruinous."

English education gives us an edge in social settings, a fact that none can deny. It is not meant by this that mere ability to speak fluent English with sonorous terminology that is beyond the comprehension of common people will elevate one's status when the speech is devoid of content. Mere display of scholarship never makes one great but certainly knowledge acquired through

English language has its own unique advantages. Besides improving one's knowledge of the world English introduces us to a world of thought and fancy and brings us in touch with master spirits past and present. English education enlarges our mind by helping us keep company with men of high intellectual eminence of the world over. English education certainly widens our horizon and enlightens our spirit. As Surendranadh Banerjee rightly puts it, "English education is a precious boon which has come down to us as a heritage from the past." That is why he stresses that "our most sacred concern to safeguard it against encroachment and limitation, and so transmit it, with its beneficent aura undiminished, to those who, coming after us, will bear our names."

English is undoubtedly the door to the world of success and to achieve success in the world. Acquiring mastery over English would not mean despising or denigrating one's mother tongue, nor does it mean severing one's connection with one's culture, ideological roots and the essence of one's identity. One need not learn English only at the cost of one's local ethos or one's native language and culture.

The spread of English provided thousands of opportunities for unique learning and satisfactory employment. Mastery over English language and its usage will improve the chances for achieving progress in many fields of human endeavour. Globalisation of economy

necessitates the adoption of a common language for exchange of business and conduct of international trade. English has a beauty of its own. It has produced one of the greatest literatures in the world. English is the worldwide medium of communication. Achieving proficiency in English is an investment in knowledge and it is an intellectual capital gain.

English has already emerged as a global language and as such English is as much Indian as it is of England or of America. "Today English is ours; with its aid we can ourselves travel throughout the world. It would, therefore, be criminal to ignore or neglect English in this country." (K.M.Munshi). But the spread of English in all fields of activities in India has not resulted in the disappearance of any one's native languages or cultures. The British ruled India for two centuries and transacted official business only in English and thus English language had become so deep-rooted in the Indian soil that it is not

possible for us to neglect it. But it has not stopped the growth of the native literature of any language. One can play one's role on the stage of the world only through English. English enabled "brain exchange" and sharing of knowledge and experience of countries. Hence "We must adopt English as a lever for our multi-sided national advancement." (Frank Moraes).

The distance between countries is minimised due to large scale migration of people from country to country either for education, business or politics or the like which converted the world into a global village. English has swept the world's social, political, economic, physical and virtual space. "Development of our minds will be impossible without extensive and reinforced resort to one of the most advanced languages of the world, that is, English," as C.D.Deshmukh appropriately puts it. Hence, a common language for the whole human race is required. That is English.

Little do we realise that health is as contagious as disease, virtue is as contagious as vice, and cheerfulness as contagious as moroseness.

- Swamy Vivekananda

"KAVI SAARVA BHOUMA" II : SRIPADA

Prof. Tuttagunta Visweswara Rao*

*Jayanti Tee Sukrutino
Rasa Siddhaah Kaveesvaraah
Naasti Yeshaam Yasah Kaaye
Jaraa - Maranajam Bhayam*

With their bodies of fame being devoid of fear of old age and death, persons with their earlier pious and good deeds; great poets, being spiritually meritorious and adepts of *rasaas*, will remain forever successful and become perpetually living after their demise also.

Poet Laureate Sripada Garudachala Krushna Murthy Sastry of velanaati vaidiki family, the famous traditionalistic Telugu poet, was born on 29-10-1866 in Gummaluru village in Narasapur Taluk, West Godavary District, Andhra Pradesh. His ancestors were '*Sree Vidyopaasaks*' of *Stotreeya* cult, and were famous as counselling ministers. His father, Venkata Somayajulu acted as Dewan of the estate of Kota Rama Bhupathi at Katavaram. He had poetic talents and had knowledge of astrology.

Sastry's father Somayajulu took a second wife after his first wife died

childless. But the couple had no children for a long time. Somayajulu consulted a saint who said that he should worship Naga and Subrahmanya Garuda to beget children and that the name of the deities should form part of the name of his children. The advice was followed and the couple had two sons and two daughters. The first born child was a boy and the parents named the boy Garudachala Krushna Murthy Sastry, our poet in question. When nearly two years old, little Sastry miraculously escaped death from a severe viral fever and lived on to reach the second half of the next century!

The young Sastry learnt Sanskrit and Telugu in his school going age and hated studying English as it was a foreign language though his father wanted him to learn English. After his *Upanayanam* (thread marriage) in his eighth year, Sastry learnt *kavyas*, *dramas*, *alankaras*, *lakshana grandhas* etc. from eminent scholars like Nagalinga Sastry and Subbanna Deekshitulu. The boy mastered astrology, *samudrika sastra* as also *aswa sastra* in which he became an adept. Sastry was also proficient in playing chess.

Sastry started writing poetry when he was only sixteen years old. He was

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influenced by the works of the eminent poet Kavi Sarva Bhouma Srinatha who lived in Rajahmundry for about ten years during Sastry's formative years.

Sastry's first wife whom he married in his eleventh year died childless and Sastry took Venkata Ratnamamba as his second wife and begot two daughters and a son. As his literary pursuits could not support his family, he turned his attention towards doing business and started selling tamarind and tobacco for his livelihood but he faced severe losses. Then he took up the job of a Sanskrit pandit first in Pithapuram school and later shifted to the Municipal High School, Rajahmundry. In 1899 Sastry went to Madras and started a monthly *Kalavathi* and ran it successfully for ten years with grit and dedication. This journal won laurels for its literary and critical essays published by him.

After this journalistic stint in Madras he returned to Rajahmundry and set up a printing press. He published classical works like *Ghatikachala Mahatyam* of Tenali Ramakrishna, *Subhadra Parinayam* and *Kapila Go Samvadam* by Kuchimanchi Jagga kavi, a story of Mahabharata and some philosophical books and works of criticism.

In his autobiography Sastry stated that he had authored 225 works in Telugu of which 42 were poetic works, 19 prose works, 12 dramas, 5 Sanskrit works and about 20 unpublished writings. Three

fourths of his works were poetic and the rest in prose, dramas etc. His *Satyavathi Katha*, *Savitri Charitra* and *Chitra Sataka* were produced by him in his early teens. *Gowthami Mahatyam* and *Kalidasa Charitra* were written by him in his late teens and many more works before he reached his twentieth year. *Sri Venkateswareeyam*, *Veera Rudra Vijayam*, *Pradyumnopakhyanam*, *Vanee Sankaram*, *Kala Bhashini* and other works when he was twenty years old. He wrote in all literary genres, satires, biographies, farces as well as translations.

His renderings of *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavatham* into Telugu verse are great translations of merit and reveal his unique poetical capabilities. Sastry was an adept in writing *seesa* stanzas in Telugu.

He performed *ashtaadhanams* and *satavadhanams* which are intellectual and memory exercises typical to the Telugu language which requires a keen, sharp and an astounding memory on the part of the person who performs the *avadhanam*. Sastry visited many courts of different estates, including a visit to Kasi where he performed an *ashtavadhanam*. He was honoured by the *zamindars* and the rulers of states for his intellectual acumen.

A good turn which he did for himself was his act of producing his works in print. He managed it by dedicating his books to zamindars and land lords and

noted rich persons who helped in publishing them. Some of his works are lost, some others remained incomplete. Some of his books have gone out of print or out of stock and some are not traceable. He faced opposition from critics like Gidugu Rama Murthy Pantulu and others who upheld *Vyavaharika bhasha* to the bookish and conservative literary style in which Sastry wrote. But he remained an 'uncompromising controversialist'. He was himself a lexicographer in Sanskrit and Telugu and defined and upheld his usages saying he belonged to *kousikasagotra*. Though he was a purist, he had a heart of gold and appreciated his staunchest critics. He was a samadarsi who mingled with all ages and groups. His residence was perpetually visited by men of letters to whom he played host within his modest means. He was short tempered too which made Sri Bezawada Gopala Reddy remark that he was Vasishtha when he was seated and Viswamitra when he stood up!

Sastry's literary career spread over eighty years with the blessing of the goddess of learning, Saraswathi. In view of his poetic talents and excellence, the titles of *Andhra Valmiki* and *Andhra Vyasa* were conferred on him by the literary elite. The Andhra University conferred on him 'Kala Prapoorna' (doctorate) in 1937. He was made *maha mahopadhyaya* in 1937 by the Viceroy and Governor General of India. In 1938 the Government of India conferred on him an honourarium of Rs.1500 a year. The Andhra Pradesh Government appointed him

the Poet Laureate of the State. The citizens of Rajahmundry honoured themselves by honouring Sastry with a *gandapenderam*, a gold anklet.

His prodigious literary output, marvelous and astonishing as it is, has unfortunately eluded people's response and only a few interested readers have gone through his works completely. A proper assessment and approach of the huge mass of literature of Sripada has never been attempted and an apathy among the public for his works is observed. There is need to bring all his writings into a website for his works should not be lost to the future generations of Telugu speaking people.

Sastry passed away peacefully on 29th December, 1960 in his 94th year. His birth centenary was celebrated in October, 1965 by a Committee formed for the purpose but the government of the State did not come forward to take part in the celebrations. Sastry had expressed in his will and last testament that all the literary laurels and insignia he had received should be handed over to the Andhra University which was done as per his wish.

In the classical world of Telugu literature the first poet of eminence was Srinatha who was called *Kavi Sarva Bhowma*. In modern times the tall and stately looking poet with traditional classical moorings and equally profound in talent and spirit, Sripada Krushna Murthy Sastry is the second *Kavi Sarva Bhowma* which title he richly deserves.

WATER: THE ELIXIR OF LIFE!

Bhavana S.Chari*

Isn't it true and certain that, going back in history, 'Columbus' discovered "America" during the sea voyages in the ship (vessels) through navigation and came to find that the "world" is after all round. We end our journey from where we begin!

The capitalist countries and colonial nations like Britain, France and Portugal made their way to the less developed nations, like India, many parts of Africa, etc and ruled over them for several years; and made it possible by starting with 'trade' - exclusively, by the navigational route; or, for short, by the water-way! What is it that sustains life in this unique planet called "earth"? The waters, the rivers, the lakes, the oceans, which comprise almost 70% of the earth, the rest, with 30% formed by land, in its various aspects that make the continents, the countries, the islands, etc.

"Water", indeed, a "beauty" in all its manifestations - the waves, the tides, the waterfalls, the oceans, the ripples, the rains, the soft drizzles; the rainbow, with its seven hues; the far-off 'horizon' - where land imaginarily meets the sea! Sometimes, hazardous also - causing hurricanes;

whirlpools; landslides, from mountains, the thunder, the lightning, floods with excess of waters - drowning the populace, along with its property! - A 'calamity', striking loss of life and belongings!

The trenches, the marshes, the marooned islands, the lagoons, the islands, the deltas; the waters that flow through the channels within the city of 'Venice' - which provide the joy of water-riding in the form of "Gondolas"!

The 'marshes', mentioned by Thomas Hardy, the novelist and nature-lover of the sixteenth century - in his novels, based in Essex, Wessex in England county, being a divine, nature - worshipper! With, mostly "water", as the essence in all his descriptions and depictions of country and cottage life!

Life is at its best, when we watch the various enjoyable picturesque scenes, circling around nature. The tranquil 'waters', reflecting the various shades of sunlight falling on them, creating glowing and golden 'lustres', sparkling above, the sea-bed; the pebbles, the small-fry fishes; the shallow bays, beneath the transparent streams; making a picture-perfect scenario! Sometimes, frozen in paintings and

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canvasses, - sketched by popular painters and artistes, in the form of landscapes, an entire living of coconut and palm groves, cornering the back waters - amidst lush, green and grassy pastures, providing blithe surroundings - a 'haven' for folks and a tourist's fascination and paradise!

Farming, agriculture, cultivation, carried on in villages amidst fields, lush-green crops; orchards of mangoes, oranges, grapes, guavas and sugarcane - used by farmers and rural folk for irrigation; all in all, only thrive on water letting water down from pumps, motors, sprinklers, canals, into tilled soil in the fields, which form primarily the granary of the nation, feeding the large urban and rural population!

Among the urban population, the fun and frolic of water-sports, serve as a major source of entertainment and also provide healthy competition among the participants, indulging in them like, canoeing; water-skiing. Boat races in coastal areas. yachting, swimming, diving, fishing - to name a few - and many, and many more!

'Water' is also a compulsory ingredient in all foods, beverages, drinks, fond recipes and stuffs and articles for consumption! The human body consists of 70% of water, without which a person would perish!

Water is also used to dilute liquids in concentrated Saline Stuffs and aerated things! 'Salt', which is the most necessary

material to add spice to food - also comes by evaporation of water from canals, bays and dugout pits, soil in-lays!

The most common phenomenon, which occurs from 'water', is the water-cycle, which keeps the process going and the months and seasons to pass, by the hide and seek of sunlight and darkness! And by the play of light and shadow, alternatively, on the surface of earth, repeatedly from time to time, which induces the 'clock' to tick, throughout the year, without cessation!

Isn't it a basic reality, an infinite truth? - That there is no life without 'WATER'! In fact, the very survival and existence of 'mankind', depends directly and entirely on 'water'; and its sources, in several forms! Life cannot sustain without water!

Just think! "All the world is one family - this dictum, can prove honest, fully because, the whole world, connects with one another, only by water and sailing across, between country to country; nation to nation, continent to continent and so on!

The 'monsoon', the nomenclature for the season of rains - relives fantasy when couples unite and cuddle up among shady bowers; getting wet under the rains - which is indeed a romantic sight to watch!

Even at the pilgrimage centres and cities cropping up in and around rivers and coastal plains, the pilgrims, compulsorily

take a holy dip in the sacred waters to wash off their sins and become twice blessed from having visited these spiritual sites!

"Aqua"! - the magnificent word which, in itself, conjures up images of warm sunshine, causing ripples of reflection on the waves of seas and oceans; the entire marine life - depending and thriving in totality on them, which happens to be a God's miracle!

When reminded about "water", there is one such poem, written by a known author, we can recall - who while talking about the "Brook", needs a mention, which

says - "Men may come! And Men may Go! - but the 'Brook' goes on forever! Which means "Man is mortal! But the waters of the flowing Brook is incessant and perennial.

As the ice-belts in the polar zones are melting due to the phenomenon of "Global-Warming", there is the factor of risk of extinction of the human species as well as the multitudinous plant and animal species all over the world, with their existence in deep peril. Therefore, let us save our planet from such a quagmire and calamity. Save Water! Save Life!

PIANO-WRITING

Supratik Sen*

Two soft roads break by the brook I still know,
As a child I'd wonder as to where they'd go;
Stories of the place, about the lines that went,
I could feel even now, their sound and their scent.

Not a public place but I'd call it tavern,
I could hear it speak to me, although taciturn;

I'd imagine anything, pain was also fun,
Flirt with the moon, gold-dig with the sun.

The twin roads are full of flowers,
With precious jewels, rivulets;
Unheard birds and fruits,
Trees breezing leaves, hanging nests.

Every bit of the joint is vivid and clear,
It's hidden in the map of my mind;
I came running in my form to see it from near,
Outside of me, I could never ever find.

* Multilingual Poet-Writer-Editor, Kolkata

THE POETICS OF STATUES

Dr. A. Raghu Kumar*

Men construct huge structures, make endowments, inscribe their names on monuments, create memorials, demonstrate their authority with seals imprinted with their images, consecrate statues and thereby long for permanence. Such an urge of the erstwhile kings, conquerors, military generals had always been reflected in the statues they themselves got erected or when their disciples had done so to prove their allegiance to the authority. There are statues installed by democratic governments too, to celebrate an occasion or remember a person. The Statue of Liberty standing as guard at the entrance of New York Harbor on Liberty Island is a gift from France to commemorate the 100th year of signing of the Declaration of Independence of USA. A symbol of democracy, it's also a colossal neoclassical structure.

But, this well known statue has an inscription on its citadel, a sonnet written by Emma Lazarus (1849-1887), "The New Colossus". Considered as one of the finest pieces of sonnets in English literature, it compares the Statue of Liberty with the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the seven wonders of the Ancient World. The Colossus of Rhodes no longer exists.

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Constructed to celebrate the Rhode's victory over the Cyprus, it was said to be approximately 70 cubits or 33 meters (108 feet) high, almost the height of the present day Statue of Liberty. Erected by Charles of Lindos in 280 BC, it collapsed during an earth quake of 226 BC. Parts of it are preserved, though never rebuilt; it stands as a big question to the endeavors of men or their ideas of permanency! But my Statue of Liberty, says Lazarus:

"Not like the brazen giant of Greek Fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. ..."

Thus describes Lazarus the Statue of Liberty as the mother of exiles, and as distinguishable from the Colossus of Rhodes. While Colossus of Rhodes stood for ancient Greek and Roman civilizations and for exhibition of power, authority and victory in a war, the Statue of Liberty, says Lazarus, stands for compassion, an inviting Mother of Exiles!

"Keep, ancient lands, your storied
Pomp!" cries she

With silent lips. "Give me your tired,
your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to
breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore
Send these, the homeless,
tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door! "

Yet the question that lingers in the mind of any liberal today is: "Is she now the same Liberty, the personification of liberty as Lazarus so passionately praised? When the inviting golden doors are shut to millions of immigrants and asylum seekers, exiles and destitute in the name of "America first", the first of the first colonizers, and when walls are erected with the neighboring States, is she the same Lady of Liberty who cried "Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!" and invited those tired, poor and huddled masses yearning to breathe free? Time has erased the luster of even the claims of Lazarus! Or as history demonstrated time and again - today's heroes are tomorrow's tyrants.

There are plenty of statues, and they stand higher and higher. The Sphinx and the Great Pyramid stand far taller than the Statue of Liberty. Competitive devotees clamor for taller, stronger, higher idols to consecrate their Gods, Kings and Gurus, owned or appropriated. Now the ancients are also in the race of surpassing all that is tall in the world. Sardar, one of the triumvirate of the freedom struggle with Gandhi and Nehru, stands as the Statue of

Unity, a new colossal image, bigger than his mentor in the very land of the mentor, 182 meters high, on the river island constructed by a Multinational Company. Housing within his steel frame of reinforced concrete and bronze cladding an exhibition, garden and museum, and with all the potential of inviting thousands of tourists, lo! He is our Sardar! Challenging many, including the Spring Temple Buddha and the Father of the Nation, he occupies now more than two hectares of land, which probably he might not have ever ventured to occupy while alive!

There is another statue, which also stood for power and authority, the statue of Egyptian King Ozymandias. The Egyptian King was a villainous pharaoh who enslaved the ancient Hebrews and who Moses led to the Exodus. In the night in which, at midnight, the first born were slain, (Exodus 12.29) Pharaoh urged the departure of the Israelites. God used Moses to save His people from Bondage in Egypt for 400 hundred years. P.B. Shelley (1792-1822), in "Ozymandias" reveals the nature and state of the statue.

"I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of
stone
Stand in the desert ... Near them,
on the stand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies,
whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of
cold command,
...

And on the pedestal these words appear:
 'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
 The lone and level sands stretch far away."

Ozymandias, the ancient Egyptian King, now known as Ramesses II, regarded as the greatest and the most powerful Egyptian pharaoh, now stands as 'two vast and trunkless legs of stone', conveying the ephemeral nature of human pursuits, with the civilizations themselves disappearing into a whisper. P.B. Shelley and John Keats were contemporaries. Here is a response to Shelley from Keats (1795-1821) in *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, describing Time's irrelevance to the physical and material, with a suggestion that it is the art that is an anti-dote to this impermanence. The art on the Grecian Urn, a decorative pot from ancient Greece, survives the test of time. Empires, emperors, civilizations and cultures appear, and again disappear traceless into the history but the piece of art remains.

"Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
 Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,

.....

What men or gods are these?
 What maidens loth?
 What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
 What pipes and timbrels!
 What wild ecstasy?

.....

When old age shall this generation waste,

Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man,
 to whom thou say'st,
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty, - that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

The earth is limited and as well the life. But the beauty of art transcends the time and space constraints. A life gets immortalized by art. In one of the best descriptions of a noble person our ancient sage-poet and grammarian, Bhirtuhari, writes:

*Keyurani na bhushayanti purusham
 hara na chandrojjwalah
 Na snanam na vilepanam na
 Kusuman naalankrta murdhajah
 Vaanyeka samalankorati purusham
 Ya samskrta dharyate
 Ksheeyante Khalu bushanani
 Satatam vagbhusanam bhusanam*

[Anklets, bracelets, necklaces, bath, smearing of sandal or vibhuti, or wearing flowers and garlands, or well dressed hair - do not add to the value of a true man. Only the words uttered, rendered with culture, adds to the beauty of a noble man. All that glittering ornaments vanish, and what remains is the beauty of the words spoken.]

Yet again, Sankara, the Advaitin, says in Bhaja Govindam:

*Maa kuru dhana jana yavvana garvam
 Dahati nimesha kaala sarvam*

We remember Sardar as one of the greatest freedom fighters, as the man with

absolute integrity, honesty and sincerity - of purpose and action, as the greatest adherent to his leader Gandhi, as the comrade-in-arms with Nehru, and many more freedom fighters, as a satyagrahi of highest order, and as the Iron Man with iron grit to unify the nation and as a man with great humility who spoke less, and did more. He is one of the tallest figures of modern Indian history. His greatness is within and

not without. We want to remember Patel as one along with our Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, as one in that triumvirate - Gandhi, Patel and Nehru - who constituted a formidable force in that anti-colonial struggle, the Indian freedom struggle, it probably, is one of the best human struggles for freedom and liberation in the world history!

AZIMUTH

Gopal Lahiri*

The grey sparrows fly straight down the
muddy Bank
Into the water bodies. Carry the burden
The evening sun dipped at its lowest
Azimuth and drift
Over the skyscrapers behind Shivaji Park.

There are times when we listen to
Someone else,
as if the arteries speak gently in whispers
as if they have learned something
from the orange splashed skies.

When I walk out, the sun slid away
The evening has no depth or height
The blank eyes of the night
surveying the houses and streets
bring only scream and laughter.

* Bilingual poet, writer, editor, critic and translator, Mumbai

WHEN DREAMS TRAVEL

N. Satish Kumar*

The novel *When Dreams Travel* by Githa Hariharan is written in the form of a meta narrative-a narrative about a narrative. Exploring the context and the text of *The Thousand and One Nights*, Hariharan produces a meta text which examines the story of Shahrzad and Shahryar from all aspects- especially the post colonial and feminist. Not only does Hariharan dissect the plot and characters in the old myth, she uses the raw material of the old myth to create a modern-myth deviating boldly from the original misogynist approach of the old text and using it to examine gender vis-à-vis power politics. Hariharan subverts tradition and reinvents incidents and offers alternative women characters to show their inner strength, deviousness and fortitude in a patriarchal world.

From the outset, Hariharan makes it clear that she will take the reader behind the curtain to show them what the original text of *The Thousand and One Nights* misses out or ignores as insignificant. She recreates 'her-stories' of the women who have become pawns or victims at the hands of the oppressive patriarchal system

personified in the character of Shahryar. Hariharan breaks away from the original version of the tales to present Shahrzad not as a trickster hero, but as a victim who devices her own unique way to counter patriarchy. While Shahryar signifies oppressive patriarchy and Shahrzad, the fearless and wily femininity; it is the sketchy Duniyazad whom Hariharan makes the heroine of her subverted version. Hariharan herself reveals that *When Dreams Travel* is the story of Duniyazad-the woman who lies hidden behind the shadow of her illustrious sister Shahrzad:

I think it would be more accurate to say that while Scheherazade is centre stage, as woman or storyteller or saviour, Duniyazad, the silent accomplice, occupies a part of the stage that is almost unlit. It is always this mysterious, unknown corner of a story that sets the writer going. It was Duniyazad's position as the unheard younger sister, the yearning, questioning follower, which allowed me to step into the story as a writer. (The Telegraph)

Joana Filipa da Silva in her doctoral thesis titled *Micro-universes and Situated Critical Theory: Postcolonial and Feminist Dialogues in a Comparative Study of Indo-English and Lusophone Women*

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Writers, points out that Hariharan has attempted to provide alternative ideas and vision for the possibilities of the development of a woman's potential. Da Silva says:

...Feminist writing can be less concerned with identifying the mechanics of local patriarchies than with the search for alternative ideas and projects for women. If, would one wonder from the point of view of sexual difference theories, women had ever been allowed to have their way in terms of power and social reorganization what would they do? Another way to go around the perspectives advocated by sexual difference theories could be phrased as "how will liberated women be?" How can she be different from the domestic version created by patriarchy? I think this set of theoretical questions is relevant to present the last text ... because When Dreams Travel really answered some of these questions in a very creative and intelligent way.

Hariharan's Duniyazad starts from the point of being a character lurking in the background of the tales. Hariharan grafts a new, invented plot taking the old story fast-forwarding fifteen to twenty years after the time the original plot comes to an end. Duniyazad re-enters the deconstructed plot disguised as a man leading her caravan from her home Samarkand to Shahabad, Sultan Shahryar's capital. The metamorphosis of a subdued Duniyazad into a bold and determined middle-aged woman is a

remarkable achievement. It appears that the shifty Duniyazad has finally found her true identity as a fearless woman who knows how to negotiate her terms in a patriarchal world. The journey undertaken by Duniyazad aims at knowing the cause of her sister Shahrzad's sudden demise. Duniyazad is now a widow, since her husband Shahzaman died a mysterious death. Duniyazad's matter-of-factness about her widowhood gives a glimpse into the liberated psyche of a modern woman who doesn't lose her identity after her husband's death, but rather grows out stronger and freer to achieve her personal goals that had been laid aside for the sake of marital duties. The widow Duniyazad is far removed from the stereotyped image of a widow reduced to a shadow of her former self after the death of the husband.

Duniyazad's mission is to know more about her sister's death and avenge her death if need be. She constantly remembers, how, as children, Shahrzad and she played the game called The Martyr's Walk. Living in the shadow of sultan Shahryar's cruel game of marrying a virgin every night and killing her in the morning had made the two sisters conscious of their potential roles in the politics of the city Shahabad. Duniyazad remembers how Shahrzad, even as child, intended to come out of the walk alive. Her desire, almost bordering on greed, was to somehow come out alive. Duniyazad, on the other hand played the regular martyr almost inviting death to embrace her. Duniyazad, who

knows her sister and brother-in-law too well; tied integrally as she was one of the vertices of the much known triangle in the plot of *The Thousand and One Nights*; can make a conjecture that a woman so much in love with life could not have died a sudden quick death. It is this point, she contests with herself while in Shahabad.

Dunyazad plays the role of a female avenger of her sister. By becoming an ally to Shahryar's son Umar, she succeeds in toppling Shahryar and bringing about his imprisonment inside the same monument that Shahryar is building in the memory of his beloved dead wife. It is the slave girl Dilshad who motivates Dunyazad to become an ally to Umar's coup-d'état. Having accomplished her mission, Dunyazad is free to go back to Samarkand or any other place. She has brought the story of *The Thousand and One nights* to its logical conclusion by making sultan Shahryar understand what it is to be confined by walls, what it is to live life under constant fear and what it is to be powerless and upon another's mercy. Breaking the accepted norms of heterosexual relationship, Dunyazad takes the slave girl Dilshad as her lover. She finds herself liberated in the company of another woman instead of searching for a heterosexual option for her bodily loneliness. In rejecting male company, Dunyazad offers an alternative to women who feel stifled and oppressed by the only option of a heterosexual relationship. The solution that Dunyazad offers may not be

palatable to all women, but her attempt almost provides an answer to the queens' languishing in lonely existence even as the kings frolic with other women. The queens indulging in adulterous relationships with their male servants might be carrying the potential situation for the rise of other gruesome and horrific tales like *The Thousand and One Nights*. Dunyazad and Dilshad are two women seared by their experiences of patriarchy which has treated them as pawns in their power-games. They know patriarchy too well to look for a solution within its confined spaces. Hariharan gives them the option of creating a new order of their own-a circle of love where male hegemony, along with its oppression, cannot enter.

Joana Filipa da Silva contrasts the story telling of seven days and nights with that of the story telling of the thousand and one nights and emphasises the subversive element of the former in her words:

In the Arab collection, Scheherazade tells her tales to save her life (and other women's lives) by entertaining her husband, the sultan. In Harihran's version (Part-II) two women, who are lovers, tell each other stories, one tale answers the others', for seven days and seven nights. The victim's position of princess is replaced by companion love in the re-written anthology, for Dilshad and Dunyazad are the active story-tellers in this version.

Dunyazad and Dilshad play their own version of *The Thousand and One Nights*. Not stretching it to the length of three years, they settle for a period of seven days and nights in an interlude of love-making, storytelling and liberating the ghosts of their pasts in an attempt to search for the real Shahrzad. Dunyazad's and Dilshad's stories reveal themselves. Dunyazad's story titled *The Adventures of a Sultan* reveals how Dunyazad was forced to kill her own husband, Shahzaman, for the welfare of the people. The rumour was that the sultan had gone missing, where after Dunyazad puts up her step-son as the minor sultan and rules on his behalf as his regent:

... Dunyazad has acted swiftly, in league; it is said, with a powerful and discontented general in the royal retinue. A boy on the throne, a ruler in the harem, a silent inhibited army; and the city, limping back to life, remains surprisingly calm. Though an occasional whisper links Dunyazad to the Sultan's disappearance, not one voice is raised; nor is there any sign of the agitation that usually accompanies a sudden transfer of power. Though no one says it in so many words, the city seems to have turned, briefly, into the queen's ally. (198,199)

Dunyazad emerges as a powerful matriarch. Her agency can be clearly understood through the above lines. She has, unlike her sister Shahrzad, learned to tackle violence with violence. Dunyazad still wishes that she had killed Shahryar with her dagger the night Umar was born. She

thinks that if she and Shahrzad had done that, they would have been rid of the oppression of the sultan. With her own husband, Dunyazad has dealt swiftly and disposed him off in cold blood. Dunyazad's blunt, though effective, act might not be approved of her father or even by Shahrzad. The image of an aggressive woman in possession of herself and tackling patriarchy with its own instruments is a fresh and welcome change from the powerless dreams of lesser mortals. Not only is Hariharan's Dunyazad a woman of action, she also is a woman of letters. It is she who has written the first version of Shahrzad's thousand and one tales in letters of gold. In her role as Shahrzad's scribe, Dunyazad plays a leading role in preserving the heritage of the story teller Shahrzad.

Dilshad, the slave girl, finds her own true identity in the whirlwind of the coup d'état and her newly attained freedom. Even during the initial stages, Dilshad is no ordinary slave girl. She is intelligent, enterprising and somewhat cynical towards the male rulers. Her presence disturbs yet attracts Dunyazad. Dilshad's boyish features and the grotesque hairy patch on her cheek stirs strange desire in Dunyazad's heart. Dilshad skilfully makes Dunyazad ally with Umar for deposing Shahryar. She informs Umar about the right opportunity of executing his plan when Dunyazad and she are accompanying sultan Shahryar on a visit to the beautiful marble mausoleum. As a reward, Dilshad wants the written version of Shahrzad's tales.

Dilshad represents the oppressed post colonial womanhood bearing the double burden of being the colonized, oppressed by the colonizer as also a woman oppressed by the male-dominated patriarchy. She symbolizes the suffering public of the kingdom forced into laboring for the sultan's fantastic dream of a beautiful white marble mausoleum as a mark of his love for his dead wife. To Shahryar's fanciful question "What colour is a dream?" Dilshad's answer is a cross question-"How much does this dream weigh? Can it break a man's back?" Dilshad initiates Duniyazad into Shahrzad's world as the sultana of the kingdom. Duniyazad finds some consolation from the fact that a young storyteller named Abdullah entertained a lonely Shahrzad. Dilshad had to undergo countless suffering before she could rise to the status of the personal attendant of queen Shahrzad. Having seen her from close quarters, Dilshad adores and idolises Shahrzad. Her personal dream is to write her own version of the tales. Dilshad has a love for learning. She is, in this sense, the true spiritual descendant and successor of Shahrzad. She not only receives the original texts of Shahrzad's tales, but also dares to steal a few more books from the treasury.

Dilshad also stands for an average muslim girl aspiring for knowledge amidst the sea of ignorance. The new sultan Umar is so pleased with Dilshad's services that he could give her anything she wants. That a poor girl like her would choose books over money, property or jewellery is not

too surprising in the postcolonial feminist context where power is preferred to material possessions. It was Shahrzad who taught Dilshad reading and writing. It was the prophetic Satyasama who told her stories. The ability of using language and myth gives a new confidence to Dilshad. She is a free-woman now, free to write 'her-stories'. Dilshad would write about the exploitation of the common people by patriarchy:

Shahrzad, the hero of the original tales, has become a myth and a reference point in Hariharan's *When Dreams Travel*. She is the sultana, "chaste and tender". She has achieved martyrdom without dying. Yet she walks with heavy steps towards her chamber as if her real trial has begun after the end of the nights. The martyr and sultana seems to have lost her calling. In her role as sultana, Shahrzad resembles an intelligent woman caught in an absurd role she cannot play. A glimpse of the witty Shahrzad, however, remains in Duniyazad's memory. Shahrzad, the brilliant strategist and executor can be seen in action in Duniyazad's tale *Rowing a Floating Island*. She emerges as an idealist who would not allow Duniyazad to bring about Shahryar's end through his own weapon-violence. Instead, she uses her wily tongue and imagination to bring about a "peaceful revolution". In the process, she not only saves her own life but also that of the coming generation of women.

She fought for her own head. For it to escape, to be saved. How are these girls

to know? That while she fought furiously, mounted and rode her words with a life-and-death desperation, that she already carried their souls within her, the seeds of her descendents. ... She sees her past, their futures curving one into the other, a circle with no beginning or end. (275,276)

Each-Shahrazad, Dunyazad and Dilshad- ultimately discovers her identity as a free woman who can take her own decisions and will no more be oppressed by the patriarchal hegemony. Shahrazad, a woman of substance, knows from the very beginning that she will have to survive for herself and the coming generations of women. Like a trickster hero, she keeps death at bay and ultimately succeeds in making Shahryar mend his prejudice towards women. She had never been gendered despite her femininity. She is neither sentimental nor sacrificing nor even complaining at her plight. Even when delivering her baby, she puts her own life before that of the child in her womb. When the thousand and one nights are over and she is sent to her queen's chamber, she actively participates in the task of the ruling over the country.

Dunyazad, the silent wispy presence in the original version has been transformed by Hariharan as a powerful woman. Of the three-Shahrazad, Dunyazad and Dilshad-it is Dunyazad whose personality towers above all in Hariharan's *When Dreams Travel*. Her swift action and courage compensate for the doubts that she

faces as she meets the people from her past. Together with Dilshad, she breaks free of her gendered destiny and sets out on a lesbian journey where there is no exploitation but only love and companionship.

Dilshad gets a new identity at the end of the novel when she becomes a free woman. Using her wit, courage, common sense, tact and presence of mind, she is able to subvert the old order and establish the new regime of a thoughtful and frugal Umar. Dilshad represents marginalized femininity taking on the forces of patriarchy. With freedom and knowledge, she attempts to write a new story of a liberated woman.

The three women present the three routes via which modern woman can regain her true identity: by tricking patriarchy a survival tactic; by overcoming patriarchy, through force, as a retaliatory tactic; and by writing 'her-stories' as a subversive tactic, instead of playing a silent role in history. As Joana Filipa da Silva sums up :

Modern myths, like Shahrazad's, are part of popular culture, of our collective cultural heritage, and can work as a powerful mechanism to understand the real or interpret experience. This is not to say that myths are, always, openly pedagogic.

They are complex narratives, ambiguous and multi-layered, allowing diverse interpretations. Still, they transmit an objective model of behaviour and

promote certain values or attitudes. Shahrzad is an example of a positive reformulation of feminine/feminist identities, reversing the traditional victim status of women to a position of empowerment, even in the most adverse circumstances. ... the women characters

created by Hariharan are serious candidates to think new forms of liberated feminist identity, a long patterns of resistance, survival, imaginative choices and solidarity, leading to unexpected life stories.

CLOCK TOWER-VIZIANAGARAM

A. Mahesh Kumar*

Strong standing glory
Here is its short story

Those silent days, Time
Steals people's lifetime
Know not how it moves
and flies
Born the Tower of Time
From the king's sublime

Decorated Life's charm
In its centre as an alarm

Consistence its rule
Shunned Time's misrule
Four sirens a day
Alarms people far away

A proud piece of the town
A symbol of people's crown
Measurable its height
Memorable its sight
Short is its story
Of a Long Culture's Glory

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ANIL K. SHARMA GIVES NEW DIMENSION TO INDIAN ENGLISH POETRY

Dr. J.Bhagyalakshmi*

The Pilgrimage by Anil K.Sharma, editor of "Contemporary Vibes" is not a mere book of poems. It is one of those books to be chewed and digested in the words of Francis Bacon.

Many stalwarts have already read and expressed their valuable opinions and poetic thoughts which are also included in the volume. Yet no thoughts are exhaustive and no opinions are the last words when it comes to appreciation of poetry that wells up from the depths of a poet's heart.

At the outset one cannot help but remember John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Not that there is anything common between these two except a thread of spirituality that manifests in one of the sections of the present volume. John Bunyan's is complete spiritual odyssey. The *Pilgrimage* has much more to offer which touches many aspects of life.

In the Preface itself the poet says that his heart's throbbing with intense feelings resulted in the book. "The present collection of poems has been divided into

two sections. The first comprises the poems of passions and compassion and dispassion. The second has in its ambit, the 'Mindfulness' of the great souls who inspired millions and shall continue to do so in future. I have with all humility attempted to go beneath the great minds that spilled the beans of their thoughts through writings, actions and sacrifices that have remained shrouded in mystery since long" That is that. How else can anyone express their opinion better? Still there is scope. Having written the poet's or writer's role ends. What impact the message has is completely in the domain of the reader. That is why so many reviews, interpretations and revelations take place. Yet we value poet's own expression about his own work. Thus the Section One is "emotive and evocative". The Section Two is "intellectual exercise in poetics of thought".

Be that as it may we readers will venture out on our own pilgrimage. The very first poem, *The Pilgrimage* captures our attention. It defines dualism in a novel way.

Let me not fall prey to the duel of
dualism

* Poet, Writer, Madanapalli

Double talk - double cross - double mind!
 The whole poem is iconoclastic blazing like
 wild fire.
 Whenever my clans took pilgrimage,
 History brought commotions - carnages
 After such a pilgrimage with entourage,
 I throw challenges to my foes across
 oceans,
 Bring revolutions and depositions
 everywhere,
 Put panic - terror, disturbances all around.

Towards the end we feel calm after
 the storm.
 O, Pilgrim,
 Take me not with you,
 Let me remain in my habitat!
 Every habitat be peace!
 Every self be at peace!

Dividing a collection into sections
 is in conformity with classical style. Even
 titles of the poems stand apart. Nothing is
 of dreams or of fantasy. Every title has its
 own weight and gives a lot of scope for
 contemplation. A random selection confirms
 this. Here are a few examples: *The
 Pilgrimage; Gangotri to Gangasagar; The
 Crystallised Tears; The Transparency-Bell;
 Asato Ma Sadgamaya; The Moving Mystic
 Mount; The Mind Game of Mahatma; and
 Rainbow Thoughts of Kalidasa.*

The second section as mentioned
 in the Preface is the mindfulness of the great
 souls. The first poem, "Asato Ma
 Sadgamaya" requesting to be led to right
 path ascertains:

Pragmatic truth lays buried
 Deep in earth,
 To be exhumed by rationality
 Of mindfulness,
 Lightning does the enlightening
 Of human mind

.....
 As portrait of universal truth
 Nailed on the wall is dear to me,
 So I meditate on the holy saying -
 Asato Ma Sadgamaya

As the poet says, everything should
 be washed, cleaned and refreshed.

Let there be stormy wash for the
 Embedded sticky dirty 'ism'
 Let there be command within
 To move from falsity to realism!

In "*Navgrah Chant Within*" we get
 a different perspective. We worship Nav-
 Grah, the major nine planets, believe their
 influence on our lives, try to appease them
 to save ourselves from adverse effects. But
 here in this poem see what the poet unveils.

Almighty has its cosmic scale
 To monitor planetary movements.
 Potential to replicate it in moments,
 Creator has destiny to be its lethal weapon
 To command the creation,
 Pro-creator has the individuality
 To comprehend the
 Fault-lines of its destination!

The poem, *The Mind-Set of Dr
 Hedgewar* is in two parts. It is a rare poem
 and a bold one at that. The concluding part
 captures the essence.

Dr Hedgewar had single panacea for all
 ills of individuality
 Sangham Sharanam Gachchami - Sangham
 Shakti Yuge Yuge' -
 Unity is strength and to be unified visit
 daily outfit's branches
 But mediocrity is not clay to make gods in
 the Sangham furnace.

Vishnu Sharma too did not escape
 the poet's purview. Sounding very poetic
 is *Rainbow thought of Kalidasa*. It is in
 seven parts covering major traits of
 Kalidasa's poetry bringing alive the
 beauties within. Anil Sharma's dexterity
 manifests itself when all the works of
 Kalidasa are beautifully interwoven. For a
 while the poet lends his third eye to us so
 that we could perceive the valuable gems
 within. This long poem concludes vibrantly
 leaving behind an enchanting, romantic and
 dreamy scene .

Nostalgia grows in absence with renewed
 trust and future delight,
 Loved lines flash in sky with light and
 sound a great duo to excite.
 Inseparable cloud and lightning, shower
 dew from the heaven,
 Both clasp in blissful showers tossing in
 the air folded in fond embrace

That is how Yaksha and his beloved
 wife are blessed free from the curse to live
 in ceaseless joy of their everlasting life.

Contemporary topics which are
 hotly debated and discussed too figure in
The Pilgrimage. Perhaps, that is what the
 pilgrimage is about spanning past, present

and future.

An interesting poem that does not
 escape any reader's eye is *The Mind of
 Modi*. Here the poet rhymes his lines,
 carefully selecting his words and crafting
 the poem to its fullness. He begins:

Tempest trumpeting
 To be regent or renunciate,
 The mind of young Modi
 Vacillating ...
 The state of Modi-minding,
 As day-night having dusky meeting,
 As silent forest doing wave-churning,
 As sea-tides doing moon-kissing.

Wow! What other expression would
 come to one's mind to express
 wonderment?

Going through *The Pilgrimage* is
 undoubtedly a rewarding experience.
 Sometimes we feel that the poet is not
 writing for any reader. The whole thought
 process is akin to meditation. He travels to
 inner realms and expressions come to him
 as if in trance. Surely, this book is not for
 bed time reading. You have to sit upright
 and read. In the process you meditate on
 the inner meaning sometimes abstract and
 some other times transcendental.

Anil K. Sharma is a unique poet
 unveiling a new dimension to Indian
 English poetry. For him the poetry is a
 vehicle to convey the greatness of the land,
 people and history of his motherland, India
 that is Bharat.

LESSONS FROM MAHABHARATA

B.N.V. Parthasarathi*

Mahabharata teaches us many lessons in life that are relevant forever. No wonder it is acclaimed as one of the major epics.

1. Though Pandavas were more powerful than Kauravas they had to be in exile for 13 years after losing their kingdom. This indicates whatever your strength, when you are running through a bad period you have to undergo certain amount of suffering in life that is unavoidable.
2. Pandavas, despite being stronger than Kauravas, lost their kingdom because of Yudhishthir's weakness for the game of dice. There is a lesson in this to us that one should be careful and try to avoid or overcome one's weaknesses lest it leads to one's downfall.
3. During the exile Pandavas never lost their confidence and instead persevered to acquire greater powers and strength in order to prepare them to face and win the battle against the Kauravas after their exile period was over. This teaches us an important lesson in life that we need to double the efforts when the chips are down and should never give up in life and succumb to defeat.
4. Duryodhan, despite being rich and having a vast kingdom was consumed by jealousy against Pandavas which eventually led to his downfall and death. This gives a very important message that one should be content with what he has rather than feel jealous about others.
5. Dronacharya was fond of his disciple Arjuna. He taught him all the nuances of archery and was pleased with the dedication of Arjuna. Drona taught him one day how to invoke and revoke one of the most powerful *astras*- *brahma sironama*.' Drona tells Arjuna, "I don't have any desires but I only request you not to fight against me in a war, if such a situation arises" as his *Gurudakshina*! Arjuna agrees but still he had to fight against Drona his master in the deadly Kurukshetra war. The important lesson from this episode in Mahabharat is that one should never part with all the tricks of the trade to his subordinates / peers and should be careful to guard with secrecy few important traits so that he

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will not have threats to his life or profession. This is very essential in a highly competitive environment.

6. A saint by name Bruhadashwa pays a visit to Pandavas while they are in exile and living in forests. Yudishthir laments to Bruhadashwa by saying, " Oh. Saint, we, Pandavas are the most unfortunate and unlucky people on the earth suffering greatest misery." To this the saint responds saying, " Yudishthir it is human nature for anyone to feel that no one else was suffering like what he was suffering. There used to live a king by name Nala who like you lost his kingdom due to his weakness to the game of dice and underwent lot of sufferings. If you compare the miseries he experienced you must say that you are a very lucky person." This episode teaches a very important lesson in life - when in difficulties one should look at others who are experiencing more difficulties and must feel blessed and feel fortunate compared to those people, rather than going into a mode of self pity.
7. Kauravas wanted to flaunt their riches and ridicule Pandavas who are in exile in the forests. When Kauravas visit the forests they happen to fight with a group of Gandharvas near a pond in the forests to show off their supremacy. Provoked by the Kauravas the Gandharvas fight with Kauravs and defeat them. Coming to know that the Kauravs were defeated by the Gandharvas and imprisoned by

them, Pandavas fight with Gandharvas and release the imprisoned Kauravas. This episode tells us two important lessons- (i) One should never try to make fun of others when they are in difficulties. (ii) In times of crisis our family will come to our rescue because blood is thicker than water.

8. Pandavas while in exile in the kingdom of Matsya Desha ruled by King Virat take up different jobs in disguise in the king's court- Yudhisthir as the player of the game of dice, Bhim as a chef, Arjun as dance master, Nakul as horse trainer, Sahadev as cowherd and Draupadi as the hairstylist of the queen. They had developed expertise in these fields in the past and that came to their rescue in their hour of crisis. This tells an important lesson that one should also develop certain hobbies apart from one's core job/ profession. In the hour of crisis those hobbies may prove to be handy in overcoming the hardships in life.
9. Before the commencement of the Kurukshtra war both Duryodhan and Arjun approach Krishna for his help. Krishna says he will not fight in the war but will only be an advisor and then asks Duryodhan and Arjun to chose between himself who will not take part in the war and an army that is equally powerful. While Duryodhan chooses the army Arjun prefers to have Krishna by his side as an advisor. Pandavas win the

Kurukshetra war mainly because of the advice and guidance of Krishna. The lesson one can learn from this episode is that one has to have a good advisor in the crucial situations in life who can bail one out of the problems because in certain circumstances in life power and wealth may not be of much help to us.

10. On the 13th day of the great war of Kurukshetra Dronacharya plans *padma vyuha* to fight against Pandavas. As Arjuna is fighting elsewhere in the battle field at a distant location, Abhimanyu offers to lead the Pandava's army to fight against Kauravas. Abhimanyu, though knows how to enter the *Padmayuvha* he does not know how to exit. He gets stuck in the middle of the battle field and is killed by Kauravas. This episode gives an important lesson that while facing any challenge one should have a complete strategy and plan of action without which it will be difficult to overcome the challenge and one may even have to succumb to it helplessly because of half knowledge.

11. After the Kurukshetra war is won by Pandavas and subsequently when they too die in due course Yudhisthir, the eldest one of Pandavas reaches heaven. When he is surprised to find Duryodhan in heaven, Narad Muni tells Yudhisthir, "Why are you surprised to find Duryodhan in heaven? He did his job as a king and fought the Kurukshetra battle with valour and he neither ran away from the battle field nor surrendered. He fought till he died with courage and hence he reached heaven." The lesson one should learn from the words of Narad Muni is that one should have conviction and courage to pursue one's goal till the end and should never give up in life irrespective of whether one gets success or faces defeat. Winning and losing are part of life and one should keep performing one's role/ duty unmindful of the results.

Mahabharat is also known as Jaya. There is a saying, *Yato dharma thatho jaya* which means where there is *dharma* (righteousness) there will be *jaya* (victory).

TUNEFUL SALUTATION

(Dramatized version of a devotional Telugu story)

D. Ranga Rao*

Scene I

As the curtain rises Satya Loka, the divine abode of Lord Brahma and his consort Saraswathi. Goddess Saraswathi is seated surrounded by seven female forms with bleeding wounds. They are seen weeping and sobbing in pain and agony.

Maharshi Narada enters stringing his mahati chanting Narayana! Narayana! He stops looking at the bleeding and sobbing female forms and is moved at the sight. He walks towards his spiritual mother, Goddess Saraswathi.

Narada: Pranams to mother! Who are these women mother? Why are there wounds on their bodies and why are they weeping?

Saraswathi: Blessings son! Didn't you recognize them? Take a close look at them. *(Narada walks towards them looking intently and turns to Saraswathi)*

Narada: Aren't they the ragaraginis, the seven fundamental notes of primordial music?

Saraswathi: Yes, they are. You identified them correctly. They are the ragaraginis, the sapta swaras, the very foundation of the art of music. The seven ring tones in female form. As for their wounds and their agony, ask them yourself the reason *(Narada paces towards them)*.

Narada: Oh you ragaraginis! Why do you weep? What is the reason for your wounds and distress?

Ragaraginis: Maharshi Narada! What can we say about our agony? If music is rendered properly observing the tune and beat and sung sweetly as laid down by the code rules, we feel excited and are transported to rapturous regions.

Narada: Yes. That is true. I too feel so and agree with you.

Ragaraginis: Oh great Muni! You are the spiritual son of the Goddess of music and learning. What is not known to you? The number of people who sing without mastering the rules of music and its intricacies is growing day by day in Bhooloka. They don't even bother whether their voices suit to produce classic musical notes correctly. Their gurus also do not

* Editor, *Triveni*

care to look into this aspect. The music these people produce is not pure and wholesome.

Narada: Yes. Yes. What you say is very true. I too have come across such situations in Bhooloka in my visits there. I feel pained on such occasions when the Goddess of music is dishonoured.

Ragaraginis: You asked us about our wounds. Our bodies are getting wounded with the awful music that is being rendered in the most unscientific manner in Bhooloka. The more they sing imperfectly the ragas out of tune the more our bodies get wounded and the more we suffer. That is the problem.

Narada: How will your wounds be healed then?

Ragaraginis: If music is rendered without false notes and by sweet voices in the mortal world our wounds will be healed.

Narada: God's creation is very strange. It contains both good and bad. There is divinity and devilry going hand and hand like light and shade, happiness and sorrow, beauty and ugliness. In the same manner in music too true notes and false notes get mixed up. That being the case, how can mankind be without those who render false notes while singing? This seems to be one of the secrets of creation.

Ragaraginis: Oh great musician what you

said is true. But if the number of those who sing awful music is reduced, our old wounds and sufferings will be lessened to that extent. That is our hope.

Narada: Is there no way to cure you of your old wounds?

Ragaraginis: Your mother should tell us what is to be done to help us. We came here seeking her help.

Narada: (Turning towards Saraswathi) Mother! Is there no way to cure the wounds of these unfortunate damsels?

Saraswathi: Why not? There is a way son. (She hesitates)

Narada: Tell me what it is mother! Why do you hesitate?

Saraswathi: If a truly competent and highly proficient signer sings, all their wounds will be healed. (*Narada raises his eyebrows and looks around with wide open eyes expressing a sort of self importance*)

Narada: Mother! We play only on our musical instruments. We have knowledge of classical music but we are not singers. We are only devotees. Yet it is universally acknowledged that myself and Tumbura are great musicians. Hanuman is reported to be a great musician who is capable of melting rocks when he sings. Then there are the Gandharvas who are also great singers. But who is the best and the most competent among us, mother?

(Saraswathi's face lights up with a smile)

Saraswathi: Who else? In this universe and creation it is Lord Shiva himself. If he sings the wounds of these ragaraginis will be healed at once.

Narada: *(A little peeved)* Shiva! I know that Lord Shiva is a great dancer but I do not know about his singing abilities.

Saraswathi: You are mistaken Narada. If Shiva sings it will be as divinely musical and gladdening as his thunderous dance which is exciting.

Narada: *(Doubtfully)* Shiva singing. . . I think it can be arranged and it will be as rare as his Tandava. His singing is also possible *(almost talking to himself)*.

Ragaraginis: Maharshi! If only you take up this task and make Lord Shiva agree to sing, you would have helped us to get our wounds healed.

Saraswathi: Yes, son. It is you who should undertake this impossible task and make it possible.

Narada: If it is ordained so, I will, mother, with your blessings. My mission in life is to render help to establish justice, peace and harmony..

(Narada leaves for Kailasa chanting Narayana! Narayana!)
The curtain falls.

Scene II

Kailasa as the curtain rises.

Snow white mountains all over. On a vast level ground Lord Shiva is seen performing his divine Tandava dance in great ecstasy. Parvathi, his consort is also dancing with her Lord with great animation.

The primordial couple dance now separately, now together mingling into each other at a frenzied pace. Now Lord Shiva is seen, now Parvathi. From the right it is Shiva. From the left it is Parvathi, the ardhanareeswar image. Next moment they separate themselves, pacing their steps to the beat of the damaruka of the Lord. Narada is transfixed at the rarest of the rare sight.

At the conclusion of the dance the divine couple resort to their seats on a mound to rest.

Shiva: Narada! When did you come?

Narada: Parameswara! I lost the measure of time witnessing your divine dance. I am blessed .By the way Lord, the time has come for you to sing also.

Shiva: Time for me to sing? Tell me clearly what you mean.

Narada: What is not known to you in this universe, Maheswara! Yet you want to hear me tell you what it is. Let it be as you wish.

In Satyaloka I saw ragaraginis suffering torture from bleeding wounds. I saw them weeping and sobbing in the presence of my spiritual mother Saraswathi.

Parvathi: Why were they suffering from bleeding wounds?

Narada: The bodies of Ragaraginis got wounded by musicians of Bhooloka singing out of tune. So they are in pain and sorrow. My mother, the muse of fine arts, told me that if Lord Siva sings the ragaraginis will be cured of their misery and sent me to you.

Shiva: I will certainly sing but on condition that the one who listens to my singing should be my equal.

Narada: (In surprise) Your equal? Who is that listener, that is your equal, Swamy?

Shiva: It is Maha Vishnu who is equal to me.

Narada: Maha Vishnu! If that is so I will take his consent and come to you. Permit me to go. (So saying Narada leaves bowing to him in reverence chanting Narayana! Narayana!)

The curtain falls.

Scene III

Vaikuntha

Lord Vishnu is seen lying in yogic sleep on the seven hooded Adisheshu on

sheerasagara, the milky ocean. His consort Lakshmi is sitting at his feet.

Narada stands waiting gazing at the divinely handsome form of Lord Vishnu to wake up from his serene repose.

Lord Vishnu wakes up after a while.

Narada: Pranams to Srimannarayana!

Vishnu: (Smiling) Narada! What brings you here! Didn't you find a chance to create some commotion somewhere?

Narada: Where is the dearth for conflict and commotion in this universe, my Lord? As long as they exist I am not worried. But Swamy! You are the super director of the play of life in the worlds. I am only a cog in the wheel.

Vishnu: You have grown clever, Narada and speak artfully.

Narada: No Sire, everything is your grace. By the way Swamy. I've come on a divine mission.

Vishnu: Divine mission? What is it?

Narada: It is not exactly a divine mission. It is something like that.

Vishnu: Tell me clearly without mumbling.

Narada: I saw the seven ragaraginis in female form suffering from wounds inflicted

on their bodies by the singers of the mortal world, Bhooloka, singing out of tune in rakish voices. They were in the presence of Saraswathi who told me that if Lord Shiva sings their wounds would be healed. I went to Kailasa. Lord Shiva agreed to sing but laid a condition.

Vishnu: A condition? What is it?

Narada: Lord Shiva said that he would sing only in the presence of the most competent listener and his equal.

Vishnu: Who is that best listener equal to him?

Narada: Yourself, Lord Vishnu!

Vishnu: Me? Who said it?

Narada: Lord Shiva himself named you.

Vishnu: (*Smiling*) So you came to persuade me to accept Shiva's proposal to be the guest of honour at his concert!

Narada: It is so Swamy.

Vishnu: All this is for the welfare of the world. Isn't it so? I'll certainly be there with Shiva to hear him sing. Tell him so.

(*Narada leaves with a bow chanting Narayana! Narayana!*)

The curtain falls.

Scene IV

Kailasa as the curtain rises.

Himalayan heights: A wide silver white mound. Lord Shiva is seated in padmasana. Lord Srimannarayana is seated to his right. Goddess Parvathi is seated to Shiva's left. Beside her Goddesses Lakshmi and Saraswathi are seated. Lord Brahma is seated by Saraswathi's side. Young Vinayaka enters with his cymbals to keep time. Kumaraswamy the instrumentalist arrives with his mridangam. Maharshi Narada is seen moving about busily looking after the arrangements. The ragaraginis enter and sit weeping and sobbing a little away opposite Lord Shiva. Nandeeswara arrives and stands guard at the entrance to prevent visitors rushing in.

Lord Shiva commences his singing.

Oh! What celestial music! Music everlasting in nature . . . a yoga . . . a raga yoga . . . a mellifluous and honey sweet nectar of vocal torrent, . a superb combination of bhava, raga, tala. . . a divine admixture of musical notes of supreme harmony . . . an endless flow of music of the highest order.

As the singing reaches the crescendo the wounds of ragaraginis get cured in the soothing healing touch of primordial music.

The ragaraginis stand up folding their hands in ecstatic joy and join the Supreme Lord in singing expressing their gratitude as music divine fills the air.

Lord Vishnu and other guests too stand up applauding.

Narada: Glory be to Gods. Music has its charms.

The curtain drops.

[A dramatized version of a Telugu story, *Raga Vandanam* by D. Srinivasa Deekshitulu published in *Srisaila Prabha* Monthly. Courtesy: *Srisaila Prabha*, Srisaila Devasthanam, Srisailam, Andhra Pradesh]

MURALS

A Annapurna Sharma*

I pity the threatening shadows
Trying
To dig a dagger
To arrest
Elementary convulsions
Violent and lethal
The rainbow murals guffawed
And danced
To the tune of
Oncoming traffic
My eyes search

The orb of the moon
For a benevolent hand
To thrust
A piece of bread
Into the dark tunnel
My tongue wags
Like a dog's tail
My limbs squirm
Like a dissected earthworm
Witnessing
The casualty of
Time
A mural
Painted with my brown blood
On the walls of civilization

* Poet, Writer, Madanapalli

Golden Article reprinted from *Triveni*, January- February 1931

THE ARTIST'S SOLUTION TO THE WORLD PROBLEM

C. Jinarajadasa, M.A., (Cantab)*

In spite of every religion and every philosophy that exists, mankind will never give up asking certain questions concerning the origin of things. In far-off days in India, men asked: "At whose behest doth mind light on its perch? At whose command doth life, the first, proceed?" (Kena Upanishad). In spite of the answers given by the Upanishads, we still ask the same questions. Till lately, in the history of civilisation, two types of answers are familiar to us; they are the solutions offered by religion and philosophy. The answer of religion is either that all life is the action of a Personal God, a Creator, or that it is the manifestation of an Impersonal Principle, an Absolute; the answer of philosophy is largely to show that in man himself is the solution.

With the rise of modern science, another answer is offered to us which, summarised briefly, is that all life is the result of a mechanical process due to forces inherent in the composition of matter itself.

* Sri Lankan Theosophical author, having published more than 50 books and more than 1600 articles in periodicals during his life. [16-12-1875 - 18-06-1953]

'Evolution' is the word which sums up the solution of science to the world problem, just as religion sums it up in the word 'God' or philosophy in 'Unity'.

There is yet another solution to the world problem, to which so far little attention has been paid. It is that given by Art. Scarcely any seeker for truth looks to Art as having solutions to his puzzles, for mankind mostly looks upon Art, the cult of Beauty, as merely the embellishment of activities, the result of refinement and sensitiveness to civilisation. That Art may have a solution to the world problem equal in rank or value to that of religion, philosophy or science, is perhaps a novel theory.

But it is that theory which I wish to propound, though I cannot expound it here at any very great length. Indeed, somewhat as a pioneer, I have to feel my way far more by intuition than by clear mental sight; and hence there will necessarily be many gaps in my exposition.

Let us start with an example, that of a rainbow. Suppose one were to ask, "What

is a rainbow?", we shall certainly have the scientific explanation, that it is an effect due to the refraction of light, as that light is broken up by prisms made by falling raindrops. That explanation is true. But it is only one explanation. But a second explanation, not less true, is that of Art: "A rainbow is an exquisite thing of beauty." The two truths do not contradict; nor do they supplement each other, for they move on two different planes. But what will be the effect of a rainbow on a sorrowful man or woman who sees one? It will be to suggest a "way out", for however brief a time, from the prison-house of grief, by offering pictures to the mind, or tenderesses and realisations to the intuition. Does not an artistic reaction to the beauty of a rainbow contain a solution to one part of the world problem?

I have before me as I write a small picture by Manishi Dey, the size of a postcard, of a Madras jutka and pony. The moment I saw it, I "fell in love" with it, and purchased it. My heart went out to the pony, and every time I look at him I feel that he is the archetype of all the suffering jutka ponies of Madras. Certainly he is bony, and depressed; but the artist has made him near to my heart. I know that that picture whispers to me one tiny part of the great answer which I am seeking. Opposite to me on a bracket on a wall are two brass lotahs picked up for a few rupees the other day in Calcutta, and a tiny earthenware cup (its worth is one-twelfth of an *anna*) found in Benares some years ago, and now

mounted in a glass case; I know they too whisper some part of the great solution. My shelves are full of books describing this or that solution to the great problem; but so do my artist, my brassware maker, and my potter. For where Art is, there too is something of a great solution.

Who can describe what type of solution is offered by a great landscape? It cannot be stated in words; yet a solution is there. We cannot describe in words the formula for an algebraical equation; the formula is a sequence of symbols, and yet to the mathematician the sequence gives an illumination, a solution. I know by experience that the following lines are true, for they describe the way that a landscape, or the painting of one by a great painter, affects me.

Once,
On looking from a window on a land
That lay in silence underneath the sun-
A land of broad green meadows, through
which poured
Two rivers, slowly widening to the sea-
Thus as I looked, I know not how or
whence,
Was borne to my hush'd expectant soul
That thought, late learned by anxious-witted
man,
The infinite patience of the Eternal Mind.

What a different type of a solution to the riddle of life is offered by a great piece of architecture, for instance, that of the Taj and its attendant mosques and

gardens. It is as if some great Divine Thought had descended to earth and become materialised in marble, with an aura of green trees and sunlit water. So too is the effect of Borobudur in Java.

It is when we come to music, that the solution given by Art to the great problem is profoundest and most lasting. Thus speaks Adelaide Anne Procter in her *Lost Chord*:

*I know not what I was playing,
Or what I was dreaming then;
But I struck one chord of music
Like the sound of a great Amen.
It quieted pain and sorrow,
Like love overcoming strife;
It seemed the harmonious echo
From our discordant life.
It linked all perplexed meanings
Into one perfect peace,
And trembled away into silence
As if it were loth to cease.*

That one single chord of ten notes should link "all perplexed meanings into one perfect peace"-does not that prove that Art has a solution to the great problems? It is only when we come to the 'abstract' music of the West-its sonatas and symphonies-that we find the majestic power of music, especially in this particular aspect which I am considering of Art as offering solutions. Every sonata and symphony of Beethoven-particularly Beethoven-has to me a solution. What that is I cannot state in words. It is the same with every musician's composition.

Consider the solution to the problem whither death leads offered in the three great "funeral marches" of Beethoven, Chopin, and Wagner. They tell us of Something, greater, nobler, more majestic than anything we know in our human experiences, more poignant in sorrow, more radiant with hope, more certain than life itself. I think the Upanishad gives a faint realisation whither great music leads. "What no word can reveal, what revealeth the word, that know thou as Brahman indeed, not this which they worship below." Of all the three funeral marches, it is Wagner's that moves me most. It describes the life history of Siegfried-the love of his father and mother, his heroic youth, the curse on all three, his glory and his failure, the strange karma of it all-by the interblending of musical 'motives,' in a slow march so awe-inspiring and majestic, that one feels that the composer is uttering truth, describing not only why an earthly hero must cease to be but also why a whole cosmos must come to its cessation.

All who know what Western music at its greatest can be feel immediately that it was a far-reaching truth which Browning uttered when he said:

Sorrow is hard to bear and doubt is slow to clear,
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and woe;
But God has a few of us, whom He whispers in the ear;
The rest may reason, and welcome; 'tis we musicians know.

So Art too has its solution. The poet, the sculptor, the painter, the architect, the musician gets a flash of that solution, and states it adequately or inadequately in his creation. Not less a great dancer also. But as to the dance, do we not know in India that Shiva is ever dancing a cosmic dance, and that the flow of His rhythm is in the

clouds as they fly and in the branches as they wave? Let us certainly be thankful to the saint, the philosopher and the scientist for showing us 'the Way'; but not less thankful to the artist that he too is showing us that Way, even if his own feet are not yet treading it.

WHY WORSHIP HIM

M.V. Satyanarayana*

To one who got no form, I give a form...
a body, face and a smile, enamouring!
To one who got no traits, I give a calm
demeanor, kindness and worldly yearning.

I carve a niche for one who's everywhere,
call it a shrine and try to guard Him too
by dove-sentries on spires and tantric snares
at sills and recite Vedic hymns to woo!

The one who can't be pleased, I try to please
with flowers, burning wicks and fine
incense!

That orphan spirit, sans a name, I try to
freeze

in thousand names and sing with sweet
cadence!

Why all this vain worship...one may cavil.
Because He's there in my karma as well!

* Writer and Poet, Nellore

BOOK REVIEW

Farewell Ring and Other Stories

Author: Reddy, T. Vasudeva, . New Delhi: Authors Press, 2019. Pp. 154. Rs.395/- \$20.

It is Dr Reddy's first book of short stories. I knew, till the book reached me, Dr. Reddy only as a poet, novelist, and critic of repute. It was a pleasant revelation for me. To satiate my curiosity, I read the book from cover to cover and found that the author is as chiselled and adept in his stories as he is in his poems, novels, and criticism. The book has 20 stories to tell in a plain style. These stories, as the author avers, in his Preface, are "based on real situations with which I am [he is] directly connected or for which I [he] was an eye witness. The element of fiction is less and the degree of realism is more" (9). Some of these stories have already appeared in print in Journals of repute and an anthology, *The Elusive Genre : A Collection of English Short Stories*, Series 1, (2016) edited by Saikat Banerjee.

The title story, *Farewell Ring* - is about a school teacher, Raghu, who has been transferred to Ramapuram, a far off village. The school has been without teacher for about ten months. It shows how our education system works. He transforms the school from paksala and panasala to pathsala by his dedication: with the help of

students clears the compound of one room school of all weeds and plants some flower plants. At his new school, he is helped by his student Padma, the only daughter of the village headman. In her, he sees his own daughter, who is no more now. At home he has old parents and wife. He wants to be near his home to serve his old parents and for that purpose he gives his wedding ring to the officer, as bribe, to get himself transferred to his village. After one year he is transferred: all the students and people of the village are sad, but also happy that he is going back to his own place and bid him farewell.

At his village school, Raghu serves with dedication and at the time of his retirement, his students and staff members give him a gold ring as retirement gift. After two years of his retirement, he decides to go to his old school at Ramapuram. When he reaches there, he comes to know that his favourite student, Padma, whom he addressed as Chinny, was getting married. She also feels very happy to see her teacher at the time of her wedding. He had nothing to give her as wedding gift so he takes out his ring, the retirement gift, and gives it to her and blesses her. Thus, he is deprived of two gold rings: the wedding and retirement. It also throws light on the corruption prevalent in society and poverty of the honest workers. This story also shows

the state of affairs of our schools. The schools and education should, in fact, be at the top priority, but alas: "'Who cares for teaching? Neither the Government, nor the parents, nor the teachers.'" It is a powerful jibe at the society including the politicians.

The last story of the anthology is *Simian Culture*. Raghu, a School teacher, visits his home in the village in Summer Vacations and comes to know how the crops are disappearing because nobody likes to work in fields due to various Government's freebie schemes. Apart from that the crops are destroyed by monkeys and elephants. Besides, the drought conditions further aggravate their problems. Agriculture is no more a beneficial proposition. And then is an episode in which the monkeys' unity is shown better than human beings: a young monkey dies after a fall from the tree on a cemented floor. All monkeys come there; they try to revive the dead one, but fail; then they mourn its death and thereafter it is picked up by a big monkey and taken towards the Peepal tree to lay it down there in shadow. Raghu tells, his classmate, Krishna, that their unity was commendable and "There is much to learn from them, in some ways they stand role models; wherever there is good we have to accept. Whether it is ant or elephant, man or monkey

it is immaterial; we are all living beings and traces of the One Omnipresent Lord".

The stories of this book teach the readers one or the other moral values that we seem to have withdrawn from.

These stories, based on real incidents, as the writer says, make the readers think and think positively about the problems that we face and know for ourselves the reality of things at first hand knowledge. These stories are best bet for the money spent and provide not only great joy but also teach values. These have certainly added to the repertoire of short story writing in India, nay world. These are as true and sincere as Mulk Raj Anand's story, *The Lost Child*, which was also written after a real incident in his life. How I wish this book be recommended by the architects of syllabi for study at school, college and university level to the young minds! Such an effort will produce a generation more compassionate and understanding Indian values and problems to preserve and solve. The book deserves a place in each and every library where the people are prone to learning good things. Congrats Dr. Reddy!

D. C. Chambial,
Editor, POETCRIT, Maranda, Kangra, HP

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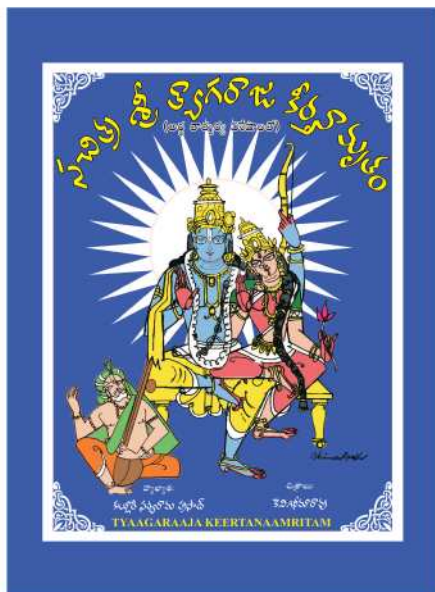


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