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Chief Editor

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TRIPLE STREAM

DR. SIR RAGHUPATI VENKATRATNAM NAIDU (A Great Teacher of Teachers)

I.V. Chalapati Rao *

Dr. Sir Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu's 151st Birth Day is being celebrated all over the State now. He was one of the greatest teachers commanding great respect and hero worship from his students. Although he was conferred knighthood by the British government and occupied prestigious positions in administration like Vice-Chancellorship of Madras University, he considered himself basically a teacher and social reformer. For his missionary zeal in spreading spiritual values and social regeneration by his lectures to his students and the public he was called 'Brahma Rishi'.

He was born in 1862 in Machilipatnam. His father was Subedar Appayya Naidu, an army officer. As his father was transferred from place to place, Naidu's education shifted frequently from place to place, this giving him an opportunity to study Hindi, Urdu and English along with his mother tongue Telugu. When his father was transferred to Hyderabad, he studied in Chaderghat School where Sarojini Naidu's husband Aghorenath Chattopadhyay was a teacher and a reputed scientist.

Venkataratnam Naidu's collegiate education was in the famous Christian College of Madras. Prof. Miller was the famous principal of the Christian College. Naidu was influenced by him to such an extent that he

used to refer to him often in his speeches. Young Naidu was also influenced by *Sufi* philosophy and *Bahmoism*. The inspiring lectures of Pandit Sivananda Sastry attracted him to Brahmo philosophy and spiritualism. In spite of the opposition of his family, he remained true to *Brahma Samajam* to the last.

After getting M. A. degree in 1891, he joined as professor of English in Pachiappa's College Madras. After four years, he joined Noble College of Machilipatnam. His lectures made him the favourite of his students. He made a deep study of the famous English poets and prose writers like Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Ruskin et al. Great leaders like Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Mutnuri Krishna Rao, Editor of *Krishna Patrika* and Devulapalli Krishna Sastry were his students. From 1899 to 1904 he worked as principal of Mahboob College, Secunderabad. His lectures were published in 5 volumes under the title *Message and Ministry*.

The turning point in his life was in 1904 when he was selected and appointed as Principal of the famous Pithapuram Rajah's College, Kakinada. When the vacancy arose, applications were received and screened and finally there was keen competition between two candidates- Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastry (known as silver -tongued orator) and Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu. It was a

tough contest. Members of the committee were divided fifty-fifty! As chairman of the Committee, the Maharajah of Pithapuram had a casting vote. After careful consideration and consultation with Pandit Viresalingam Pantulu, he selected Venkataratnam Naidu. The reason given is :it is not enough if the Principal is a great scholar. He should be an agent for social change. Thus, he became the most popular Principal of P.R. College and retired as its Principal in 1919, having worked for 23 years in P. R. College. It was an epoch making period in the history of Kakinada. One of his oft quoted declarations was "Cut half an inch below my heart, you will find P. R. College there".

The Maharajah looked upon Venkataratnam Naidu as his guru and in consultation with him did many things beneficial to the people, especially the poor. Education was free to women and Dalits. The Maharajah's palace was made an orphanage. Liberal donations were given for the cause of the removal of untouchability, uplift of the depressed classes, eradication of social evils like drinking, the practice of child marriages, devadasis, nautch parties etc. In the heart of the city, a palatial building situated in an extensive site of 36 areas was donated to the college in addition to another site opposite Brahma Samaj. Brahma Samaj itself was a donation of the Maharajah on the advice of Venkataratnam Naidu. Naidugaru as he used to be called, spent all his income to help destitute women. When the Maharajah offered to gift a house to him, he politely declined it. He called the orphanage Rosary, the college Nursery and *Brahhma Samaj The Sanctuary*.

He was Vice-Chancellor of Madras University for more than 3 years and afterwards he was Vice-Chancellor Emeritus, filling several posts of influence. Government recognized his contribution to education and social reforms and conferred upon him titles like *Rao Bahadur*, *Dewan Bahadur* and the prestigious *Kaiseri-hind* medal.

The Maharajah of Pithapuram was then the Prochancellor of the Andhra University. He proposed the name of Naidugaru to the post of Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University. When the British government declined to do so, he resigned as Prochancellor. In his resignation letter, the Maharajah stated "No disrespect is meant but self respect is saved". Such was his attachment to Naidugaru.

At the time of his demise, Naidugaru wrote a will in which he stated: When I die , my wife's photo should be placed on my heart, a piece of sandal wood wetted with the tears of the Maharajah should be placed on my body and the funeral fire should be lit by my student, Dr. Vemuri Ramakrishna Rao. A strange will indeed! Such was his love for his students. His "heart was boundless as the sea and his love as deep" (Shakespeare). When he taught the plays of Shakespeare, he used to spend a whole hour to explain and expand on three or four lines. The text was a pretext in his hands. Under its guise, he used to cover the entire gamut of liberal philosophy and ethics.

Sometimes he announced to take a private class. He was late. It was getting dark. The students waited for him patiently.

Attendance was not compulsory. Yet, not a single student missed the lecture. That was the attraction of quality teaching and inspiring teacher.

The editor has the privilege of being

an old student and Principal of the Pithapuram Maharajah's College with which Dr. Venkata Ratnam Naidu inseparably identified himself, and had the honour of being felicitated as one of its distinguished students in the centenary celebrations.

ANGER HAS A-VISITED

Sai Shivanarayana*

The momentary prick
Is the catalyst
as suddenly
it grabs hold of your feelings
rendering you devoid
of reason or logic

It's intensity is vast
uncontrollable; though often
unjustified it churns up sentiments of
frustrated hatred,

Blindly it directs a man into
a swirling whirlpool
of profanities
as he, in its grip
unleashes his tremendous
potential energy
in the form of

Evil words and gestures-
He is exhausted

..... The aftermath -
Is broken hearts,
wounded feelings,
A sad stunned silence;

For the moment's impulse
Has rendered the offender numb

With shock at the revelation
Of hatred;
With sorrow at the rupturing
of love's bond;
With self-justification
at lowered self-esteem.....
He is tense.....

The explosion has churned up a plethora of ill
feelings
Their constant evocation
cool in to the molten mass
of hate;
Anger has-a-visited
and the result is
too terrible to conceive....
Why?
Was it worth it, my friend?

* A National Talent Scholarship holder; A First Year Computer Science Student of VJIT Bombay - a genius, prodigy with spiritual knowledge and innovative ideas - his life was cut short at the full tide at the age of 16 years.

PROBITY IN PUBLIC LIFE Whither Standards?

P.S. Ramamohan Rao*

Corruption has become a staple of Indian discourse of all hues and at all levels. It has become all pervasive and rampant. Everybody talks of it; but nobody seems to be really concerned about it. No critical observer of the Indian scene will disagree with the conclusion that along with bureaucratic red-tape it constitutes the most formidable obstacle to India's emergence as an economic superpower, if one were to accept policy waffles, wobbles and flip flops as unavoidable handicaps of a democratic polity. On the International Corruption Index, India brings up the bottom of the ladder in the company of countries with whom it would not otherwise like to be associated. Corruption in India has become a cancer eating into the vitals of the Indian polity and economy. Therefore, tackling it brooks no delay nor complacency and vacillation.

What should we do? Where do we start? A vast apparatus to combat corruption has indeed been erected both in the States and at the Centre. But it is targeted and focused mainly on the permanent bureaucracy. Arrangements to deal with corruption and malfeasance at the political level had been, at best, tentative and half hearted. It is necessary to appreciate, in this context, that eradication of the evil of corruption has to be a top down process and not bottom up. If the political leadership of Government is dishonest

there is no way that the bureaucracy can be insulated from corruption. Transparent and simple procedures combined with the use of the latest technology at the ground interface between the government and the ordinary citizen will no doubt reduce harassment and corruption in relation to the mundane concerns of the latter; but they can't improve the fiscal affairs of the State and the productive efficiency of the economy. Probity of the political leadership is a sine-qua-non for the sustained growth, prosperity and well being of any nation.

Unfortunately, the principle of jurisprudence that a person is presumed to be innocent till he is proved guilty in a court has been invoked, ad nauseam, to not only shield politicians whose reputation is under cloud, but to allow them, unfettered, to handle the affairs of the state in responsible positions of power and authority. Ignorance of law on the part of the ordinary citizen has been used to obfuscate and evade the issue of corruption in high places. To clarify the law of the land, presumption of innocence relates to a criminal offence and not to misconduct and malfeasance in public affairs or even inefficiency and negligence.

To illustrate, a Government servant, entrusted with the custody of a large amount of money, may have misappropriated the money. While it may not be possible to establish the criminal offence of

* Former Governor of Tamil Nadu

misappropriation in a court of law, the Government servant can still be held responsible for causing serious monetary loss to the state on the circumstances of the case and removed (or even dismissed) from service. An engineer may have deliberately or by default permitted the construction of a substandard and defective irrigation dam or building. It may not be possible to get him convicted in a court on charges of corruption but the facts and circumstances of the case could provide complete justification for axing him from service. A Tax official may have connived with leakage of revenue for return favours in the future. Such conduct may not provide the ingredients of a criminal case even while constituting enough basis for exit from government employment. Thus, while it may be difficult to establish direct culpability, an irrefutable inference of constructive responsibility could be warranted.

These examples, even if they relate to government servants only, should help to make the distinction between what constitutes criminal misconduct and conduct which amounts to wrong doing, in violation of well recognized principles of probity and is therefore considered unbecoming of a person charged with public duties and responsibilities. To preserve such a distinction and to enable the state to deal with the errant behavior of corrupt officials, without necessarily having to haul them to a criminal court in each case, a set of rules, popularly known as 'Conduct and Discipline Rules', had been framed by the Governments at the Centre and in the States. For a criminal offence, the standard of proof, for holding a person guilty is that of 'being beyond the shadow of all doubt of an ordinary and prudent person. In a disciplinary case, the

standard is one of preponderance of probability thrown up by the facts and circumstances of the case. It has been accepted by the highest court of the land that the facts and circumstances surrounding a case of misconduct by a Government servant may not warrant a conviction in a criminal court but could still justify his dismissal from service. A related aspect of this distinction is that while innocence is presumed till a verdict of guilt is handed down by a court, an acquittal by court doesn't necessarily confirm such presumption of innocence. An acquittal may have been warranted by insufficiency of evidence to satisfy the standard of proof for criminal conviction described above. It can be due to benefit of doubt given to the accused on the nature of evidence. It can also be an honourable acquittal which alone will justify the presumption of innocence even after acquittal. That is why the principle of jurisprudence cited acknowledges the possibility indeed the necessity, of a hundred guilty persons escaping punishment to ensure that not a single innocent person is convicted. It may be argued that politicians and the like, engaged in public affairs, are not government servants and therefore criminal conviction can be the only bar to their continued involvement with such public affairs. Here again, there is a blanket of public ignorance which needs to be lifted. In relation to corruption, government servants only were originally considered to be public servants by virtue of the provisions contained in Section 21 of the Indian Penal Code which prescribed the nature of remuneration as the determinant of who is a public servant. Till the prevention of Corruption Act, 1947 which adopted this definition in Section 21 of Indian Penal Code, came into being, corruption among government servants

was dealt with under Sections 161 to 165A of the Indian Penal code, and later, in conjunction with the Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance 1944 which was promulgated to deal with the rising level of corruption in government as a result of world war II purchases. Owing to the narrow ambit of the definition of Public Servant Under Section 21 of Indian Penal Code, the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947 was found inadequate to deal with public figures who are not government servants. Therefore, under a new and comprehensive Act brought on the statute book in 1988, in response to the growing evil of political corruption, the definition of public servant was enlarged to cover various public functionaries including MSLA and MSP. The nexus was changed from the nature of remuneration to discharge of public duty. This has put public persons elected to representative institutions of governance on par with government and Quasi-Government servants.

It is by now clear that even the revised Anti Corruption Law has not provided an adequate answer to the needs of probity in public life for the simple reason that in accordance with the jurisprudential principle cited earlier it lets off far more persons than it punishes. (A hundred guilty may escape lest a single innocent person is punished). What is worse, public figures have been taking shelter under the presumption of innocence during the pendency of criminal trial to continue in office or assume new offices of public duty and responsibility. Having thus held on to public office, they spare no device that ingenuity can provide and the loop holes in procedural law afford, to procrastinate, prolong and frustrate the trial till it becomes infructuous.

The obvious remedy to this state of affairs is to draw a parallel with the government servants who are also public servants on the principle that what applies to goose should also apply to gander. In the case of a government servant, gross impropriety or serious misconduct, irrespective of whether it warrants a criminal prosecution or only departmental disciplinary action, is met with suspension from service. He is thus rendered "hors de combat" or put out of further mischief to public interest, till his case is decided either in court or in the disciplinary enquiry. Even where the court acquits a government servant, he is liable to removal from service on the basis of evidence which may not be enough. to return verdict of guilt but is sufficient to uphold the charge of grave misconduct or gross negligence in the discharge of duty.

Since government servants have long tenures of employment, such disciplinary provisions as suspension, dismissal etc., had to be incorporated in the 'Discipline and Conduct Rules' governing them to protect public interest. In the case of public representatives elected to Legislative Assemblies, Parliament, Local Self Government Institutions etc., and who have short fixed tenures, conventional wisdom has been that public will take notice of acts of misdemeanour and malfeasance on the part of their elected representatives and teach them an appropriate lesson at the next election which can't be far away. But Indian experience has shown that, for a variety of reasons, outside the scope of discussion, this doesn't seem to happen at all. Therefore there is a compelling need to devise in relation to elected public representatives measures parallel to 'Discipline and Conduct Rules' applicable to

government servants. These could be embodied in the form of a general code of conduct on the lines of the election code of conduct and can be accorded the status of a secondary legislation subordinate to the People's Representation Act so that they have the force of law.

Analogous to suspension from service in the case of government servants, a bar to holding a public office during the pendency of an enquiry into one's conduct can be raised in respect of a public figure already elected to a representative institution. In respect of those seeking election or reelection any such enquiry could act as a disqualification to contest till the outcome of the enquiry. Even as it is, similar provisions exist in respect of MSLA, MSP etc., who have incurred the penalty of disqualification from courts adjudicating on election petitions, but have appealed to higher courts against such verdict. Pending the disposal of the appeal, superior courts have barred MsLA and MsP from voting etc., without depriving them of their elected status or emoluments.

Now the question arises as to who will conduct enquires into allegations of corruption against elected representatives. The present practice of entrusting such enquires to the anti corruption agencies having jurisdiction over government servants etc., doesn't seem appropriate for many reasons which need not be enumerated here. India has already toyed with institutional arrangements like the Lokayukth in the states. At the center there has been a proposal since a long time to legislate for the creation of the office Lok Pal. To our knowledge there is no political party which has opposed the institution of Lok Pal

in principle. In practice, however, the necessary legislation is always on the back burner, raising serious doubts as to the sincerity of the political establishment in having such an institution. As for the Lokayukthas in states, their jurisdiction has been severely circumscribed to convert them into some kind of grievance redressal authorities.

The urgent need is to bring on the statute book as early as possible a comprehensive Act for the constitution of Lok Pal at the center and Lokayukthas in the states with adequate jurisdiction to cover all elected representatives including the prime minister and chief ministers. All allegations of wrong doing against public figures should be probed into only by these Institutions who will also recommend, in the event of the allegations being found having substance, whether a criminal prosecution is warranted during the prudence of such enquires and criminal prosecutions. If instituted thereafter, the concerned persons should be barred from holding any public office. This will automatically create in them a vested interest to cooperate with the enquiry/prosecution and clear themselves of the allegations if they are truly innocent. The Jurisdiction of these institutions should be confined to corruption in public life and not extend to criminal prosecutions against public figures involved in political action in the form of mass protest, demonstrations, strikes etc. The burden of this discussion is that the standard for probity in public life should be not conviction in a criminal court but propriety as determined by suitable independent institutions, specifically constituted for the purpose. Having adopted the West Minister model of parliamentary form of governance, India has given a deliberate

go by to the various conventions guiding England which doesn't have a written constitution. Political corruption is said to have been rampant even in England during the 18th and 19th centuries. But such stringent conventions of propriety have been evolved over time to govern the conduct of public representatives in England that cabinet ministers are forced to resign at the slightest whiff of scandal or wrong doing. Ministers in Tony Blair's government have had to resign on such minor improprieties like a telephonic call to the concerned to fast track the issue of a visa for the 'nanny' of the minister's child or the grant of British citizenship to a generous contributor to the construction of a 'millennium' project started by the Government.

India had missed its opportunity of setting such high standards of public conduct at the time of Independence and immediately

thereafter. On the other hand, it has slid so low, through foot dragging and persistent ambivalence (Pratap Singh Kairon and Biju Patnaik being exceptions proving the rule) as to rank near the bottom of the International Corruption Index. We need to reverse the slide by prescribing stringent standards of probity in public life instead of providing shelter to public figures of suspect integrity behind the argument of not having been convicted in a court. As was emphasised by Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh himself some years ago, during an inner party discussion, the standard should be one of not only Caesar but even Caesar's wife being above suspicion. Or should we be reconciled to the most minimum standard as one respected political leader, fond of humour even at his own expense, quipped in private "These are days of common minimum programmes".

***.

A DISH OF ICE CREAM

In the days when an ice cream sundae cost much less, a 10 year old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table.

A waitress put a glass of water in front of him.

"How much is an ice cream sundae?"

"50 cents," replied the waitress.

The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied a number of coins in it.

"How much is a dish of plain ice cream?" he inquired. Some people were now waiting for a table and the waitress was a bit impatient.

"35 cents," she said brusquely.

The little boy again counted the coins. "I'll have the plain ice cream," he said.

The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table and walked away. The boy finished the ice cream, paid the cashier and departed.

When the waitress came back, she began wiping down the table and then swallowed hard at what she saw.

There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were 15 cents - her tip.

Courtesy : Internet

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE IN USA

M.L. Swamy*

My First visit to USA was in the year 1964. At the age of 39, when I was Executive Engineer in the Government of Andhra Pradesh, Government of India deputed me for training in "Construction Equipment Study" under the plan "United States Aid for International Development(USAID)". I stayed in US for six months. In those days very few Indians were traveling to United States. Also very few officers were deputed by Government of India to US, mainly under the Colombo plan, Rockefeller Foundation, TCA and USAID. I think not more than 50 officers are sent annually for such training. In our batch, we were five, one each from Damodar Valley corporation, West Bengal state and Central Water Commission and two from Andhra Pradesh. My first visit to US was a feeling of bewilderment, from two engine Dakota aircraft, a non-pressurized plane flying below the clouds to the big four engine pressurized jet planes flying far above the clouds; from 12 feet wide single lane metal roads to multi lane asphalt and concrete roads; from ordinary buildings with few stories to skyscrapers with more than 100 stories and many others. The first thing that struck me was the cleanliness, orderliness, punctuality and the sense of duty among the people and their readiness to help and guide the visitors and others.

My first experience at the New York airport was memorable and entertaining. We,

in Andhra Pradesh, are very fond of very hot, spicy and red pickles with Mango and flowing oil. My mother in her usual way packed me on my journey to USA, a big bottle of Avakkai Mango pickle. In those days these bottles were not sealed, to make them leak proof. We usually tie a white cloth around the bottle. When my baggage was opened at the customs counter in J.F. Kennedy Airport, New York, the pickle bottle had come out first. During the long journey, the oil leaked out and the white cloth wrapping the bottle became brilliant red. The customs officer at its sight was baffled and frightened and cried "Blood, Blood" and asked me with anxiety "What is this?" It took me considerable time to explain to him about the pickle, as a part of our daily food. He finally let me go, of course, with my lovely bottle of pickles!

At first I did not like the American food, nor the Chinese or any other food. We had no Indian Restaurants in US at that time. In fact there were very few Indians in US. I was for some time practically living on bread and my favourite Avakkai pickle. We were always searching for any Indians, who can give us Indian food. Sometimes, we used to find some Indian couples in departmental stores, where they came for some purchases. We could recognise our ladies by the dress (saris) they wear. When we spotted them and rushed to approach them, they used to avoid us and quickly leave the stores and go out of our sight. They knew our intentions. Poor things, they

* First Engineer in Chief, PWD, AP (Retd.)

must have been fed up with feeding unwelcome guests like us. One day, in a departmental store, we spotted a single lady wearing a sari. We, as usual, went to her. She did not avoid us. We introduced ourselves and asked her as to which places she hailed from. She replied that she came from Pakistan. We were shocked and slowly withdrew; because India and Pakistan were in very bad relations at that time and war between the two countries was imminent. Our funny concept at that time was that the people of Pakistan are our enemies. How could we ask our enemy to give us food? We slowly slipped away.

Apartheid was at its peak in US at that time. Blacks called Negroes at that time (now called African Americans), were looked down upon as a race and were ill treated by the whites, who were in turn hated vehemently by the blacks. These blacks, when they met us on the walkways of towns and cities, used to embrace us as our color is brown (non white). They used to express their hatred towards the whites. Already, there was a black movement headed by Martin Luther King. While I was in Chicago, I saw a large group of people called Black Muslims: They hated the whites vehemently. I, myself, had an experience of this apartheid. I was in Tennessee, with Tennessee Valley Authority, visiting their great Hydro Electric and Thermal projects. One day an officer of TVA took us out for dinner in Chattanooga, Tennessee, to a white restaurant. We sat at the table. Time was clicking but no bearer came to attend at our table. After 15 minutes, our guide went to the Restaurant manager and told him about the delay. The manager said he would ask one of the bearers to attend to us. Another 15 minutes lapsed and our guide went to the

manager again. We asked him as to what happened and he told us that the Manager was helpless. The bearers refused to serve us, as we are blacks. They did not relent even though they were told that we are all Indians and not blacks! We had to leave the Restaurant. That was the height of apartheid, especially in the southern states of US!

We had seen so many Engineering works, bridges, tunnels and projects. During our stay, we had visited 22 states out of 50 states in US. Even the Americans staying in US used to say that they themselves had not seen so many states and the places and things we had seen and studied.

After my return to India in June 1965, I called on our Hon'ble Minister for Public Works. He asked me what my impression about USA was. I told him it is great and said 'Sir, for India to reach that level of development it will take 20 years?' The minister smiled and said 'No, Swamy, it will take 100 years for us to reach their present level. By that time, they will be again 200 years ahead of us'.

Americans are sociable. I visited many American families and was their guest. They were nice, free and hospitable. I cannot forget one American family even now after four decades. Once I was at Portland, Oregon. While staying at YMCA, I came in touch with an American couple. They were impressed with us and invited us for dinner at their place. They stayed in the town, Oswego Lake, about 30 miles from Portland. We spent an evening with them in their scenic house on lakeside. During our conversation, she asked me about my children. I told her that I have a son and two daughters and that my son was 12

years old and was in 8th grade in school. Then she said 'You send your son to US for studies'. I told her 'We have no one in US to look after him. How can he come here?' She affectionately said to me 'Swami, why do you say that? We are here and we will look after him. Send him here'. What a fine gesture? That impressed me very much. I encouraged my son to study well and go to US for higher studies. He took it up seriously and studied

well, became a Gold medalist in Bachelor's in Engineering in the Andhra University, India and took his MS in the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. He came to US in 1976 and took his MS in computer sciences from Pennsylvania University, Philadelphia. Americans are friendly people. Even after four decades, I still remember the wonderful faces of this great couple of Oswego Lake!

SPIRITLESS TIMES

Dr. Emmadi Pullaiah*

How phony, murky and nightmarish,
The present scenario is!
The elements disgruntled and the unscrupulous
are dismantling the deep structure
of society with desires sinister and salacious.
conscious is the poor man,
but drowsy and a passive onlooker is he
like a tiny boat in the tempest fierce.
Even the virtue - incarnates
and the visionary heavy weights,
are passing a glance at the pall of gloom,
descended on the hate -filled world,
with a routine life humdrum and prosaic.
Temples, churches, masks,

the abodes, sacred and divine,
are inciting communal riots
and fanaticism, developing
vendetta religious and
vindictive emotional quotient.
Judiciary where justice a far cry,
is marching ahead with philistine's view,
plundered are the clients, helpless victims
with delay inordinate.
Books of law are the same
but verdicts differed in courts different.

Sense of caste, creed, race and region,
are causing emotions and abhorring
tendencies, creating ripples in the mass,
burying the concept of globalization.

* Retd. Reader in English, Warangal

The challenge has always been that "good people" don't know how to win elections.
-- Fela Durotoye

THE ASPECT OF 'SPACE' IN R.K.NARAYAN'S FICTION

Dr I. Satyasree*

Feminists across the globe consider 'space' for women as a crucial aspect. They contend that a woman needs her 'space' to enjoy freedom and equality in equal measure which in turn, ensures to establish her identity. It is in this context that 'space' plays a pivotal role in the lives of women.

In this paper, I would like to analyse the aspect of 'space' sanctioned to women characters by R.K.Narayan even from the early days of his writing career. It is generally understood that R.K.Narayan's women characters seldom venture out of the confines of their homes and that their movement is restricted to Malgudi. However, it is observed that all his women protagonists enjoy the privilege of freedom and equality, which led to their empowerment.

Savitri, in *The Dark Room*(1938), Bharati in *Waiting for the Mahatma*(1955) Nalini in *The Guide*(1958), and Daisy in *The Painter of Signs*(1976) move in and out of Malgudi on several occasions, at their own freewill. R.K.Narayan, in these four novels, indirectly hints at 'domestic space', 'public space', 'creative space', and 'universal space' that he grants unconditionally to these four most popular women protagonists.

R.K.Narayan, in his very first novel, *The Dark Room*, presents Savitri as an

independent woman, who sulks in the Dark Room whenever she feels that her husband brushes aside her viewpoint and tries to dominate her. Narayan asserts that the Dark Room, which was a part and parcel of every Indian home in the past, is symbolic of a woman's 'domestic space'. Savitri resorts to *the Dark Room* as a protest to demonstrate her annoyance and silent anger against her husband, Ramani.

In *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Bharati is portrayed as another independent and strong-willed woman, who joins Mahatma's camp during the independence struggle. She takes an active part in politics as a devoted follower of Gandhiji, delivers speeches on public platforms thereby showing that a woman's space has extended from domestic sphere to the public domain. The dais is Bharati's 'public space' and from here, she expresses her deep concern for India's freedom. She articulates her patriotic feelings in a very clear manner and commits herself to this noble cause. She is admired by everyone for her service motto.

In his all-time classic, *The Guide*, R.K.Narayan shows that Rosie, who transforms herself as Nalini, fights for her 'creative space'. Artistes need 'creative space' to express themselves through the medium of art. Rosie is ridiculed by her husband, who does not appreciate her creative talent and commitment to dance. Rosie is depicted as highly individualistic in her thoughts and deeds

* Associate Editor, Triveni

and focuses on dance with single-minded devotion. She is a creative artist who goes beyond the boundaries of Malgudi, travels all alone to international destinations such as Srilanka, giving dance performances as a means of self-expression.

Daisy, in *The Painter of Signs*, chooses the tough job of canvassing about the benefits of having a small family. She travels extensively to small villages, sometimes in bullock carts, to counsel the illiterate villagers about the advantages of Family Planning. The entire society becomes her platform. She takes upon herself this responsibility and works with a missionary zeal. Her 'space' expands

beyond all limits and attains universal character. Narayan stretches all the limits of 'space' in case of Daisy and grants her 'universal space', which has no restrictions.

Therefore, from a study of the four novels, we understand Narayan's feminist perspective in granting 'space' at different levels, to his women protagonists, who enjoyed freedom. He gave this freedom and 'space' to his women characters when most of his contemporary writers did not even visualize it. This shows that Narayan was much ahead of his times in the aspect of women's 'space'.

LEAVE IT ALONE

Dr J. Bhagyalakshmi*

Who would like to peep
Into the unconscious mind?
Well, one may try at one's peril
Be assured it is no pleasant sight.
No better than a junk room
With hanging cobwebs
Broken pieces of memorabilia
Torn books
Furniture that should be consigned to fire
One can't even find a way in
Leave alone its pleasantness
It is good that

The door is shut
Opening only to throw much more junk
Of which we have no account
When night is dark
You are asleep
Strange creatures
Crawl out of that store
Sometimes scaring
Sometimes alluring
At times puzzling
For which you have no clue
Leave it so and be happy
But never try to open the door
Else, you will be opening Pandora's box.

* Poet, New Delhi

OLD OR YOUNG, IT'S ALL IN THE MIND

T.A. Venkateswaran*

The river is always old. The water is always new.

- Satguru Sivananda Murty

Is there a river that was born after we were born? Is there anything new on the earth, other than what has already been created? Has there been any change in the pattern of movement of the aspects of our earthly life? Have we conquered death? The strange thing I thought about life on this planet is that nothing stays and everything is moving towards where and for what, we are yet to know.

Without elaborating, we can conclude, "Life is nothing but a series of circumstances, ever changing, non-stop".

From birth to death, all of us go through a series of circumstances, predictably similar, with the differences just superfluous. Life is full of little troubles, agreed. If we rise and treat life itself as nothing more than a little trouble, then, it would become obvious that even birth and death are nothing more than changing circumstances.

This is what we, who are growing old, should realise and retain. Tell me, who is not growing old?

Do not **fear impermanence**. As soon as life enters the womb, death starts stalking us. Night and day follow each other. Here, death follows life. "Death is an event whose proximity is unlimited and distance very

limited", my Master would say. Death has no great respect for excellent health *et al.* One can die in the pink of health. When it chooses to knock us down, nothing can save us, no deals can be struck and no bargains made. Thus, our life, whether we are just born or a century-old, is nothing more than a drop of dew, tantalisingly poised at the edge of a blade of grass.

Our illustrious ancestors point to that very same tiny droplet to illustrate a great point. Granted, this drop of dew would disappear immediately after dawn but, not before swallowing the magnificent Sun and reflecting it gloriously. So, while life is nothing but proximity to death, living lies in putting it in its place and expressing the glory of creation. Therefore, whatever the span that destiny chooses to offer us, let us lead a lively existence. Understand the impermanence of everything, radiate inner cheer and keep walking.

What is new? Who is old? How old is the Sun! How new are its rays! It is ever old and absolutely new every day. Like the caress of a loved one, a lilting tune or an enlivening smile of a child. That which remains fresh despite the ravage of time and freshens our spirit is new. In that sense, worry is old because it makes you older. Hope is new because it makes us younger. As long as we are alive and conscious, there is hope for improvement. There is a duty to be cheerful! And, that is the most natural thing to be. One

who laments about what is gone is old even if he is twenty. One who is optimistic and looks forward is young even if he is eighty. Are you old or young?

Withering shell. Waxing spirit. The strange thing about the human body is that as soon as it starts growing from the stage of the tiny dot, the process of decay also sets in. Like life is always followed by death, growth is accompanied by decay. The prospect of disease smiles slyly in between. It is also said the body and the mind are inseparable. No doubt, one impacts the other. However, on closer scrutiny, the mind has such a sway over the body that one tends to believe that the physical structure is but a projection of the mind stuff. Have we not seen sad souls in young and healthy bodies? Have we not come across those frail old people who laugh heartily, jolting their withering manes? Dissatisfaction makes us old and jaded. Contentment and cheer keep us incurably young. As you grow older, let the mind grow younger!

Achieve peace. Arrest ageing. My master whose quotes adorn this little write-up used to say: "Peace is happiness. Happiness is not peace". Often, we chase happiness and in that unwise pursuit embrace unhappiness.

Happiness will have no meaning if it is fleeting, leading to misery. That is why he said, "How does it matter whether it is a white stone or a sparkling blue one, if you break your teeth with it?" How true!

Contentment is the threshold of peace. We should be content with what we have and also what we do not have! We must be content with our troubles too! This is cheer, pure, simple and natural. This is attitude, lofty and dignified that schools of philosophy cannot offer. In life, contentment is wealth. In creativity, satisfaction is death. Spirituality governs both! Like the body that is growing and decaying at the same time, like life and death walking alongside, let the calmness of contentment and the spirit of positive restlessness co-exist, under the unblinking eye of the Spirit. This is the recipe that keeps one young forever. Are you old or young?

Every river has already reached its sea and is going towards it every day. The story was over in the first scene and the narration keeps going!

One who knows this is young. I am young enough to tell you this!

Courtesy: *The Hindu*

Forget yesterday - it has already forgotten you. Don't sweat tomorrow - you haven't even met. Instead, open your eyes and your heart to a truly precious gift - today.

-- Steve Maraboli

IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN BHARATI MUKHERJEE'S "ANGELA"

Sharadha Palakurthy *

Bharati Mukherjee is one of the important writers of Indian Diaspora. Mukherjee's first collection of short stories *Darkness* (1985) narrates the stories of immigrants in the Silicon Valley and reveals their never-ending quest for identity. Besides the crisis of the characters, Mukherjee's short fiction focuses on the theme of immigrant identity and the immigrant experience in America.

Bharati Mukherjee's resolve to leave Canada for the United States "is a movement away from the aloofness of expatriation, to the exuberance of immigration." Her stories "celebrate a set of fluid identities" as "Indianness is now a metaphor, a particular way of partially comprehending world." There is a sense of resistance arising out of a sense of a glorious heritage and a sense of pride in the assimilation. In the process of assimilation, resistance to the life style of the alien country comes to the fore in the immigrants.

The story in the collection of *Darkness*, "Angela" narrated in the first person, unfolds the theme of immigrant experience of a refugee from Bangladesh, Angela settled in Iowa. Angela, the protagonist, is a lady from Bangladesh, adopted by an American family, named Brandons who make her new land assimilate

into the new world.

The story opens with a Brandon sister named Delia, in a coma after a car accident, where her adopted brother Kim from Korea and her adopted sister, Angela from Bangladesh who was with her during the accident, escape with minor injuries.

Angela's emotions for Delia and her beloved Orrin show the resistance to the realities of the new world. "My sisters are hopeless romantics."

The assimilation process is projected through the narration of her relations with the Brandon's family and with the staff at the hospital. The narration of her relation with Delia vividly illustrates:

"I've been her sister for less than two years but we know each other's things. Bad and good. Even Orrin points out, You've come to know better than any of us".

This sense of assimilation in Angela is further depicted when she remembers her earlier life in the orphanage in Bangladesh as she fades out the life in the land of her roots. "I am Angela, the angel. Angela was Sister Stella's name for me. The name I was born with is lost to me. The past is lost to me. I must have seen lot of wickedness when I was six, but I can't remember any of it. The rapes,

* NIT Warangal

the dogs chewing on dead bodies, the soldiers, nothing”.

Though her past remains ugly, she always represents a sense of reluctance to be allegiant to her roots. "I've been blessed, the lord keeps saving me."

Moreover, the interest of Menezies, an unmarried Indian immigrant, in Angela and the way she looks at him also makes clear her intention to remain a successful immigrant. "He came to America as a professional, too old to pick on some things."

The unfavourable and painful memories of her past often reinforce her willingness to assimilate and emerge successful. "A girl with braids who used to race through wet, leachy paddy-fields, now skates on frozen water: that surely is a marvel."

The realization of her transformation is evident when she states, "The coach has put me on the varsity of cheer leading squad to make me feel wanted. I'm grateful. I am wanted."

The resistance in Angela originates in her past. The way Angela has been saved from the accident and the way she was nursed back to life after having been tortured by soldiers in Bangladesh makes her traumatic.

Angela gets carried away by the interest and love shown by Dr. Menezies, "in spite of [...] bony, scarred and plain face" that she possesses is imperative of her realisation of her belongingness to her native land.

Her indifferent attitude to the

approach of Dr. Menezies is also evident from her statement "only a doctor could like this body." She also gets reminded of her place when all the members sit together for a huge pork roast. "Pigs aren't filthy creatures as they are back home." "Company isn't formal and wearying as it was in the orphanage."

The conversation of Angela's dad with Dr. Menezies is evidence of resistance.

"We have deep feelings, but we aren't a demonstrative family. Fellowship is what we aim for. A parent's grieving would be a spectacle in Bangladesh."

The narration of the process of assimilating of Dr. Menezies, Kim and herself offers an instance of resistance. Dr. Menezies "approaches the new world with his stethoscope drawn; he listens to its scary gurgles. He leaves the frolicking to natives. Kim and I are forced to assimilate."

"We are alone. At last."

"Where did everyone go? We seem to be the only idle ones around here."

The intimacy and the support that Angela receives from Dr. Menezies often juxtaposes her past with the present - the wish to pursue physical therapy and serve the poor.

"We come from the same sub-continent of hunger and misery: that's a bonus."

"You will have to fly, Angie. Make your own life. No shilly-shally, no depending on other people here."

"You are the strong one. I can tell you." (19)

As she always remembers Mrs. Grimlund words. "I have been safe for a purpose."

In spite of the tragic past in her native land, she believed in getting assimilated.

"There's no telling who'll be taken and who'll be saved. I wait for some sign. I've been saved for a purpose."

The purpose is to serve 'the handicaps, delinquents and destitutes of tropics through physical therapy. To fulfill her dream, she rushes to Dr. Menezies as she believes that only a doctor could love this body, but in her surrender to get assimilated, she says, "I can feel leeches gorging on the blood of my breasts." Despite Angela's efforts to assimilate, the past haunts her and resists her.

A MOANING MENDICANT

Kalavati Tiwari *

"A handful of rice Amma; A handful of rice",
Along the streets in the afternoon, he cries,
"Offer a morsel of food with thy mighty hand",
Begging he from door to door on the hot sand.

His stomach and back seemed one
with hunger,
Almost nude, with naked feet, he staggers,
To get a small quantity of bread,
His tattered, worn-out rag, he spreads.

Who heard his cry? 't was but few,
Slammed the doors to his face, a few,
Banged some the windows with a roar,
Reluctant, returned he, with a heart sour.

Cuddled he bringing knees to his chest,
Retired he desolate to restless rest,
Tossed throughout, waiting for dreary dawn,
Rose to his feet he to stutter the same slogan.

"A handful of rice Amma ! A handful of rice !",
Along the roads in the morning, he cries,
To get a handful of food stale and stink,
Stretched a bowl he sorrowful,
sordid and shrunk.
A blot and blemish on our Independence,

As many survive still in pecuniary Ignorance,
Who is there to alter their life deplorable?
Neither Presidents, nor Ministers
nor Honorables.

* Lecturer, Narsapur

When widely followed public figures feel free to say anything, without any fact-checking, it becomes impossible for a democracy to think intelligently about big issues.

-- Thomas L. Friedman

THE WORLD WISDOM REVIEW

Steve Maraboli*

I was at a restaurant last week with a friend. We had a delicious Chinese meal. It was a small space and the tables were set close together. One couldn't help but overhear bits of other people's conversations.

A lot of what I overheard was about the restaurant, the food it served, its decor and also there was talk about the service. One supposes this is normal, as most of us tend to comment about our present environment and situations.

What was surprising to hear was that there was a lot of conversation about what was 'wrong'.

There were many comments flying around - 'The noodles are bad, I would have added more sauce to make it flavourful', or 'I don't think the lighting of this place is good, it needs to be more dim and aesthetic' or even 'The waiter can't even speak English well enough to explain what schezuan means!'.

We're so quick to dismiss, to undermine efforts, to pass judgement that every other thing is 'wrong'. It is as though we are trained to find fault and point it out and this makes us feel bigger and better we think!

One would imagine that we are all connoisseurs of pretty much of everything.

We know best. We do this in so many situations, whether it is visiting a place, going over to a friend's house, meeting someone for the first time, etc. there is always something that we must criticise. In fact if we find everything satisfactory or up to the mark. then we are perceived as being 'easy to please.'

The question is, is 'easy to please' a bad thing? Does it mean we don't have enough taste, or are not sophisticated enough? Does it mean we are 'common'?

What would happen if we criticised less and appreciated more?

Many of us are scarce with our compliments because we don't want to be taken advantage of. Being someone who is 'hard to please' doesn't necessarily translate into having better taste or being more cultured. Besides is being 'hard to please' something that we want to be?

It may be easier to push down so we can rise up. A quick fix way for us to feel better about ourselves. But this our feeling of being superior is short-lived.

There is grace in encouragement and appreciation that supports people and situations to prosper and bloom, it is all encompassing and allows space for everyone to benefit and grow.

Someone asked Osho, "Why do I like

* An Editorial of *The World Wisdom Review*
(Courtesy: *Eluru*, 47)

so much to criticise people and complain against life."

He said, "Everybody likes it. To criticize people, to complain against people, gives you a good feeling. Criticising others, you feel you are higher; complaining about others, you feel you are better. It is very ego fulfilling.

"With the dropping of the ego, you will find almost a whole world disappearing. The whole world that was knit around the ego falls away completely, and you start seeing people in a new light. Perhaps the same person that you might have criticised in the same situation... instead of criticising him you feel a

great compassion for him, a great love, a deep desire to help. The same person and the same situation you would have complained against, now your eyes are different; you see things differently. Perhaps you will see that in his place in this situation you would have behaved in the same way, there is nothing to complain about.

"Your outlook will become more human, more friendly... a deep acceptance of people as they are.

"Let today be the day... You speak only the good you know of other people and encourage others to do the same".

THE SAVIOUR

Abdulrashid Bijapure*

When the Changezi hordes closed in
we looked skywards, sent a prayer.
The dark clouds thundered:
Death for the weaklings!

The barbarians trampled us.
We remembered you.
My heifer was slain.
They snatched the amulet from my chest
And blew the roofs of our huts.
You were nowhere around.
Why did I run into the desert?

The juice of the cactus-thorn
alas, gave back a wretched life.

With a frown and a smile
now you have again come,
reminding me of the pledge
to our farm and the village?
Don't raise your finger thus
to that face invisible?

Where were you
when the world was crumbling?
A damned life expecting an accursed death.
Where were you, our saviour
when the earth was shaking?

* Poet, Dhule, Maharashtra

A STUDY OF PATHOS IN JAMES JOYCE'S DUBLINERS

Dr. J. Ravindranath*

James Joyce has made his mark as an eminent Irish writer whose story collection, *Dubliners* brings out the pathos of the city and small people in it who struggle for survival and show exceptional powers of endurance and survival. The tragedy in his stories is palpable in the irony between the realities of life and their bitter or hard circumstances. In Joyce's stories one finds characters from all sections of society. The determined mother Mrs. Kearney, the dutiful daughter Eveline, the unsentimental Duffy, the victims of conditions such as Gallhaer, clerk Farrington, extravagant Jimmy, curious and frightened child, the disappointed youngster in *Araby*, the good-hearted Maria—all of them are memorable portraits which evoke sympathy, empathy and compassion in the hearts of the readers.

Joyce's descriptive powers are striking. A simple line or two tell a lot. His keen observation helps him portray the physical features of the characters, realistic streets of Dublin and miraculous moments which bind or part people. Chandler's remorse, the faint perfume of Polly that attracts Doran to commit folly, Jimmy's persistence with cards despite losing, the youngster's visit to *Araby* street to fetch something for his beloved, the refusal of Eveline to depart with her love for a better life, the chasing of cat by Mahony, the guilt and gloom felt by Father

Flynn told from the boy's perspective—all these testify to the craft of the story telling by Joyce.

In Joyce stories one finds an eerie and familiar at once. In 'The Sisters' Joyce narrates the story from child's eye, brings out the curiosity of the child, humanism of Father Flynn, his simple desire to visit his ancestral home along with his sisters and the religious guilt over the breaking of the chalice. The boy's friendship with Father Flynn was not liked by Old Cotter. When the youngster goes along with his aunt to the house of Father Flynn, he feels annoyed at discovering in himself a sensation of freedom in the wake of Father's death. The boy's aunt takes him to the house of sisters Eliza and Nannie with whom Father stayed. The latter's dream was to see the old house again where they were born in Irishtown in a noiseless carriage. Eliza tells that Flynn was found deranged by Father Rourke, the clerk and another priest in the chapel inn at midnight in a confession box over the accidental breaking of the chalice by the boy.

In another story, *An Encounter* we find how children seek adventure at playing truant to school, hopes of escaping tediousness of school and the fears of children when they meet strangers with obsessive or deranged minds and feeling grateful for help from pals whom we think stupid. The story strikes a chord in the reader's heart across the countries and decades bringing him nostalgic school life. Leo Dillon, Mahony and the narrator plan a day of meeting. In the class,

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Father Butler chides Dillon for reading a story *The Apache Chief* instead of Roman History. The narrator and Mahony meet on the bridge, walk along the North Strand Road, pass by Vitriol works and reach the Wharf Road. Mahony playing the Indian chases a crowd of ragged girls, stones flung at them by two small and ragged boys and is prevented by the narrator from charging on them. They reach the quay, watch the spectacle of Dublin's commerce, talk of running away on the sea and feel the waning influence of home and school on them. They come across a strange man who inquires of them whether they like reading or and sweethearts. The stranger with a pair of bottle-green eyes talked in whispering and mysterious tone, repeating the phrases and "his mind, as if magnetised again by his speech, seemed to circle slowly round and round" on a topic. When he finds Mahony chasing a cat and roaming about the field, the stranger refers to him as the rough and unruly boy and prescribes whipping for such boys and those who talk to their sweethearts. The boy leaves the scene and calls Mahony as 'Murphy' who runs to him feeling penitent for despising his friend a little and thinking of himself as smarter.

In the story *Araby*, we find the fervour of adolescent lover. He wants to show his love for the sister of his friend by going to Araby and buy something for her. Joyce's observations regarding the delicacy, obsession and risk-taking on the part of the young lover are so true and moving in capturing the fleeting moments of awareness of love. Every morning the young man used to lie on the floor in the front parlour watching the door of her house. He confesses that her "name sprang up my lips at moments in strange prayers and praises

which I myself didn't understand. My eyes were often full of tears (I could not tell why) and at times a flood from my heart seemed to pour itself out into my bosom. I thought. I thought little of the future. I didn't know whether I would ever speak to her or not or, if I spoke to her, how I could tell her of my confused adoration. But my body was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires." One day she asks to him if he was going to *Araby*. He promises to get her something if he went. Joyce writes how the desire to please one's love sees school work and delay as unbearable. At last, when the boy reaches the street after a tedious train journey, it was too late in the night. He tries in vain to draw the attention of a young lady involved in frivolous talk to two young men at a stall selling porcelain ware.

In *Eveline* one finds a struggle in the heart of a young girl torn between her loyalty to family and the yearning to escape the routine of a drunken and aggressive father. She has lost one of her brothers and another is far away. She has been taking care of two school going children. Frank promises her new life and is ready to take her to Buenos Ayres and offer her a respectable life. In the last moment Eveline pulls herself back unmindful of his calls from the boat to follow him. In the last two lines, Joyce describes the insuperable condition of her life. "She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition".

After the Race is another story of a middle class youngster who goes on partying after the race with four of his friends. The

youngster called Jimmy was provided university education by his father who used to have nationalistic views and made money as a butcher in Kingstown and Opening shops in Dublin and other suburbs. After Jimmy and his friends won a car race, he invites his upper class friends for a dinner in his home. During dinner Jimmy's father who okayed the move finds it hard to subdue the argumentative young men. Afterwards, the young go on to an American yacht, drink, dance and play cards and Jimmy was the loser in the card game. Though he knew of his eventual regrets, he couldn't restrain himself.

Joyce shows the yawning gap between one's ideals and reality, the discomfiture of the characters, compromise and insurmountable wall of reality that thwarts the aspirations of the middle class for freedom and the pursuit of joy.

In the story called *Counterparts* we find a clerk named Farrington who has been addicted to drinking even during office hours

and postponing his work. On a specific day, he draws the ire of his boss for his negligence and even gives a repartee that ruins the day for him. In the evening he goes out and visits various bars along with his friends. He feels simmering anger, revengefulness, humiliation, discontentment, pawns his watch, spends his money, loses his reputation in a match and comes home. He takes out his anger on his child Tom who is helpless and innocent. Joyce's middle class characters find the gap between their ideal and reality unbridgeable, fall on this side of wall and suffer a lot. Dublin can be any town or city in India. Farrington can be any clerk 'Suryarao' in Andhra Pradesh. Joyce's depiction of middle class life has its counterpart even in India.

Although Joyce was merely twenty five year old when he wrote *Dubliners*, he has shown profound grasp of human soul that is free and mysterious. After a century also Joyce's *Dubliners* is appealing to a remote reader in India cutting across time, space and religion.

A PAINTER ATOP

Dr. R.M.V. Raghavendra Rao*

We don't look at the sky, why?
It's so hot to look at it!
Or so dark, frighteningly!
It's not so, not always necessarily.
Our lives blindfolded with care,
"we have no time to stand and stare."
This evening after walking under its blankness
As I looked up, I found a painter,
Seated atop a gigantic ladder,

Half-seen only, he made me shudder,
For his canvas was huge like the universe
Uncomprehended even by bards of yore in
their verse,
My eyes could not wait to dazzle,
At the widespread rainbow-puzzle.
From side to side, shade to shade,
I could see and scan the maker's demeanour.
It filled me with wonder after wonder,
That such a one also made the thunder.

* Camp: Houston, USA

DEATH

Siluveru Sudarshan*

Perhaps we most of all wonder about those we love. Where are they? Why are they spirited away from us? A Brief good - bye, and then they disappear behind the veil of death. He is thinking "I am leaving my loved ones; will I ever see them again?" And those whom he is leaving behind also think, "I am losing him. Will he remember me? Will we meet again?" But through it we learn much. We should give our love to God only, which is eternal.

At death, we forget all the limitations of the physical body and realise how free we are. The soul feels a joyous sense of relief and freedom. We exist apart from the mortal body. Every one of us is going to die some day, so there is no use in being afraid of death. It is a state of rest, a pension from this life. When death comes, we have to laugh at it. Our real self, the soul, is immortal. We exist, and that existence is eternal. This body has come, and it will vanish, but the soul, essence within it will never cease to exist. Nothing can terminate that eternal consciousness.

Even a particle of matter or a wave of energy is indestructible. As science has proved, the soul or spiritual essence of man is also indestructible. Matter undergoes change, the soul undergoes changing experiences. Radical changes are termed death, but death or a change in form does not change or destroy

the spiritual essence. The body is only a garment. How many times we have changed our clothing in this life, yet because of this we would not say that we have changed. We are just the same an immortal soul, a child of God. The word death is a great misnomer for there is no death. When we are tired of life, we simply take off the overcoat of flesh and go back to the astral world.

The *Bhagavad Gita* speaks beautifully and solacingly of the immortality of the soul. Never the spirit was born, never shall cease to be, never was time it was not. End and beginning are dreams! Birthless and Deathless and Changeless remained the spirit forever. Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the house of it seems (11-20).

It is temporary emancipation given to us when karma, the law of justice, determines that our present body and environment have served their purpose or when we are too weary or exhausted by suffering to bear the burden of physical existence any longer. To the elderly, it is a pension earned by years of struggling through life. For all it is a welcome rest.

But when we look at the process of death with the eye of wisdom we see that after all it is merely a thought of God passing through a nightmare of change into blissful freedom in Him again. Once we get off that delusion we see that death was not so bad after all. We realise that our mortality was only a dream

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and rejoice that now no fire can burn us, no water can drown us, we are free and safe.

Just as different people vary in the duration and depth of our sleep, so do we vary in our experiences after death. The good man who works hard in the factory of life goes into a deep unconscious restful sleep for a short while. We then awaken in some region of life in the astral world. "In our father's house are many mansions."

"Those who love god and put their trust in him go there when they die. The astral body is made of shimmering light. It is a beautiful and enjoyable world".

Death is not the end of things, but a transfer from physical experiences in the gross domain of changeable matter to purer joys in the astral realm of multi-coloured lights.

"The astral world is infinitely beautiful, clean, pure and orderly." There are no dead planets or barren lands. The terrestrial blemishes - weeds, bacteria, insects, snakes - are absent. Astral Planets maintain the even temperature of eternal spring, with occasional luminous white snow and rain of many - coloured lights, astral planets around in opal lakes and bright seas and rainbow rivers.

There is no war in the astral land between man's body and solids, oceans, lighting and disease. All forms of vibration function in harmony with one another. The souls, the rays on which they tread and the orange rays they drink and eat, all are made of living light. Souls live in mutual cognisance and cooperation, breathing not oxygen, but the joy of spirit.

"Friends of other lives easily recognise one another in the astral world." Why do we cry when our dear ones die? Because we sorrow for our own loss. The Lord is ever new, and by his infinite magic wand, renewing death, he keeps each created object, each living being ever manifesting, ever remodelling itself into a filter vehicle for his inexhaustible expressions.

Death is the culmination of life. In death life seeks rest. Death automatically dismisses all bodily pain just as sleep banishes the weariness and aches of the hard worked body. How glorious is life after death! We will be free in the astral heaven, unhindered by physical limitations. We do not know what is going to come to us in this world, we go on living and worrying. Those who die are pitying us; they are blessing us, why should we grieve for them? when a dear one dies instead of grieving unreasonably realise that he has gone to a higher plane at the will of God, and that God knows what is best for him. Rejoice that he is free. Pray that our love and goodwill be messengers of encouragement to him on his forward path. This attitude is much more helpful. Of course we would not be human if we did not miss loved ones, but in feeling lonesome for them we do not want selfish attachment to be the cause of keeping them earth bound. Extreme sorrow prevents a departed soul from going ahead toward greater peace and freedom .

A worldly person fears death.

A seeker of truth is hopeful of conquering death.

A lover - divine loves death.

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL

Malini Seshadri*

We only have to open our minds and our senses to take in beauty and spread it around.

When you hear a catchy tune, do your feet tap out the rhythm? When you see a beautiful natural scene or a splendid piece of architecture, do your spirits soar? Of course! Because our brains can recognise and enjoy beauty in all its forms. We all have the potential to recognise beauty, but we have to develop the skill. We must learn to look for it not only in galleries and museums and from mountain tops but in the streets around us. We must interpret the word beyond the narrow sense of beauty contests! Otherwise: we will forever be condemned to what the poets like to call a "brutish existence".

Unfortunately, students get caught up in rushing from college to home to tuition classes. We forget to develop this sense of beauty that nature has gifted us. We soon get used to being in the midst of disorder and ugliness. We walk by a pile of garbage in the street without even noticing the smell. After a while, it does not offend our senses any more. But if we develop our 'beauty skill' early in life, shoddy clumsy things will offend our sense of aesthetics, just as a false note in a song makes us shut our ears in protest. If everyone makes an effort to develop a sense of beauty, the world would be a more beautiful and orderly place to live in, and our lives would be enriched. Surely our senses were designed

for more than just ensuring survival? Surely our brains were wired for more than just "getting ahead" in life?"

Beauty in ideas

Ideas and thoughts can be beautiful too. Though you cannot touch, taste, hear or smell them, you can still "sense" their beauty.

To add beauty to our lives, we don't have to open our bags or purses and take out money to buy it. We only have to open our minds and our senses to take in beauty and spread it around. Beauty is not just in what we see or hear. It lives in the most unexpected places, waiting to be discovered and admired.

There's beauty in designs of things from industrial products to cathedrals. There is beauty in an enigma, even such as one framed by Arthur Conan Doyle, and there is beauty in a solution to the problem.

Can we develop our sense of beauty? Yes, and we can make a beginning in very simple ways. For instance, close your eyes and listen carefully. How many sounds can you hear? Just what are these sounds? Which ones do you find pleasant? Do you remember hearing those sounds before you close your eyes? Why?

By becoming more aware, we can all learn to make every day a beautiful day.

*freelance writer

Courtesy: *The Hindu*

RAJA RAMMOHUN ROY - BHAGIRATH OF MODERN INDIA

Dr. Sir R. Venkatratnam*

Rammohun Roy is distinctly different from the other great men of India before his day. He is the father of a new race of Indian heroes. He heralds a new epoch in Indian history. His illustrious predecessors were mostly sages, a few philanthropists, some patriots. But he was the first and the greatest nation-builder that India has produced.

His spirit ramified into diverse branches covering the whole area of national life. In his career is illustrated the harmonious play of that cycle of forces which by their conjoint operation evolve and shape out a modern nation. In range of vision, in reach of sympathy, in versatility of powers, in variety of activities, in coordination of interests, and in coalescence of ideals - in fine, as realising an all-round, all-receptive life in its manifold fullness, Rammohun Roy in a unique figure in the history of India - if not in the annals of the race.

He had fraternized with different schools of learning in their cloistered seclusion; he had plunged into the predominant theologies at their prime sources; he had communed with nature in her sublime solemnity; he had mixed with his kind in busy bustle; he had widened his vision with extensive travels; he had passed through the ordeal of domestic chastisement and social ostracism; he had mourned for the victims of dire famine; he had writhed in heart at the

ghastly sight of the immolation of helpless widows. Here was one that could truly say, "whatever concerns man is dear to me, my heart is the home of all the race". Such was the rich outfit with which he set out on his great life journey as the forerunner of a new era. A great teacher, famous Principal of P.R. College, Kakinada and former Vice-Chancellor of Madras University.

Comprehensive past all comparison as was the Raja's view of a full life, he was essentially a religious genius. His faith in the saving, regenerating power of the spirit was unbounded. To him a progress not impelled by a religious force was worse than inconceivable - it was degenerating, degrading. To the myriad ills of India, the sovereign remedy, according to him, was a living faith in a wise and living God, not a cloistered faith that scorns and shuns society, not a busy care-worn faith that assigns the leisure hour to a hurried worship, nor the prudent faith that imparts a God to watch a truant world, nor yet a speculative faith that pre-fixes a creator to a law-governed universe. It was a personal communion with an imminent spirit, an implicit trust in an all-regulating providence. It was a faith to which the universe was a consecrated temple, conscience a sacred oracle, duty a divine ordinance, truth the imperishable gospel, love the perfect rule, and life a progressive pilgrimage. It was a faith that interpreted law as the method, force as the will, and matter as the localised potency of God. It was a faith that esteemed the world as a reflection, and

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history as a panoramic presentation of the nature and the purpose of the Deity. With Rammohun Roy this faith furnished alike the enduring basis and the cementing strength of a united and vigorous nation. Religion he held to be a natural, irresistible instinct in mankind, an appetite that knew no satisfaction till it realised itself in a felt contact with the Supreme. This, the keynote of his works with a persistence of purpose that is marvelous for his times and surroundings.

The hope and assurance of a reviving nation springs largely from its "storied past". Therein lies the evidence of national possibilities the guarantee of national solvency and in a large measure the impetus to national endeavour. Rammohun Roy's translations of the Upanishads, his elucidation of the Vedanta, his exposition of the Gayatri, his defence of Hindu Theism - all these were suggested and sustained by his patriotic and nation-building purpose. He reiterates with tireless insistence that the most authoritative scriptures of India proclaim the absolute unity and omnipotence of the Supreme Being; recognise Him alone as the object of worship, and His worship alone as the way to beatitude, and declare the inseparability of pure morality from true worship.

It may be worthwhile dwelling a little on the spirit in which the genius of Rammohun Roy interpreted and used the national scriptures. It was in the spirit, as Max Muller has pointed out, not of a prudent adherence to mere antiquity, but of an honest search for seeds of imperishable truth, that he sought to lay down the Vedanta of the Upanishads, stripped of its strange and disguising coverings, as the basis of the new national life. Among the national scriptures he valued the

Upanishads for their divine authority of eternal truth; among the great "world books" he welcomed them for their bracing, cheering national air. Free yet authoritative, true yet familiar, lasting yet homely, imperishable yet national, the Upanishads were to him the national (swadeshi) type and mould for Universal Religion. Thus did he regain a national scripture for the rational soul, and furnish to the nation that hope and confidence from the past which is the indispensable precursor to national growth and expansion.

Rammohun Roy, the restorer of the Upanishadic Vedanta as the deepest insight of the Hindu (the Eastern) genius, was likewise the interpreter of the richest expression of the Semitic (the Western) genius - the heart of Jesus. The India of Rammohun was not - could not be - the India of the Rishis. A momentous change over the entire field of Indian life had resulted from the contact of Hindu and Mohammadan civilisations, culminating in the immortal declaration of Guru Nanak that he was neither a Hindu nor a Mohammadan, but "the equal soul's brother" of both. But heaven had ordained India to be a yet vaster spiritual Prayag of the world, the sacred confluence of the mighty world-currents of East and West. A more comprehensive synthesis than had hitherto been realised - had hitherto been possible - had to be attempted: a reverent garnering of "the wisdom of the East and the West." In this devout spirit of genuine yet thoughtful enthusiasm Rammohun Roy submitted his "Precepts of Jesus, the guide to peace and happiness" to the world, as an elevating spiritual and ethical code.

Nor need any suspicion be entertained that this coming of the East and the West would have any denationalizing

tendency for the East. To lower uplifting ideals, to impair inner vitality, to weaken a chaste 'passion for the Past' is to denationalize; but to swell the stream of life with incoming currents, to drain out its accumulated impurities, and to level down its hindering barriers of prejudice is truly to renationalize. This was an intuitive perception of Rammohun Roy, who was not only (to use Prof. Sir M. Wiliam's language) "the first-earnest minded investigator of the Science of comparative religion that the world has produced", but also (as Prof. Max Muller put it) "the first to complete a connected life - current between the East and the West", the inspired engineer in the world of faith that cut the channel of communication, the spiritual Suez, between sea and sea, land-locked in the rigid sectarianism of exclusive revelation and set their separate surges of national life into one mighty world-current of universal humanity.

Another prominent harmonising element of the new spirit that Rammohun Roy poured into the ancient heart of Aryavarta is the universality of spiritual revelation. To him the presence of rich saving truth in every great religious dispensation was an axiom, the direct approach of every soul to its Deity an implication, a corollary, of spiritual worship, and the ultimate salvation of all a guarantee of God's immeasurable love and invincible righteousness. How liberalising and harmonising this new spirit is, may be realised through the work and examples of those who have been vivified by the inspiration of the Raja's life. Where it may be asked save in a liberal monotheistic church, could be fostered the spiritual versatility of Keshub Chunder Sen, and the "catholic wholeness" of Ranade?

But a few words are needed to sketch Rammohun's application of the new spirit to the wants and demands of the age. Here too, the Raja's synthetic spirit served to elevate the social sentiment and to enlarge the social outlook of the country. In fact, it is here that his nation - building purpose stands out prominent even to the casual observer. The ethical method of the East is personal discipline, of the West social service. The ethical end of the East is self-refinement, of the West, social efficiency. But to the higher harmony of a soul that beholds in East and West the two wings of the same mansion of the Heavenly Father, may not the true ethical gospel lie in the self realizing fulfillment of the individual through social service and the protection of society through individual development? It was through the coordination of individual and social interests that Raja Rammohun Roy employed the new spirit typified by him in furthering national progress in all directions. How he lived every day of his life for his country and for humanity: how he toiled and spent himself as under his great Master's eye: how he dedicated his talents and resources to the religious moral, educational, social, political and economic needs of his nation: aye, how his spirit went forth and his arm was stretched out in sorrowing sympathy or rejoicing fellowship, even beyond the confines of India - all that is forever incorporated in the story of the race. Verily, Rammohun is the Bhagirath of the ever-expanding stream of modern Indian Life.

(Abridged from the Presidential address of Sir R. Venkata Ratnam at the Theistic Conference, Calcutta, 1906).

Coutesy: Dharma Saradhi

THE LAST CAB RIDE

Twenty years ago, I drove a cab for a living. One time I arrived in the middle of the night for a pick up at a building that was dark except for a single light in a ground floor window.

Under these circumstances, many drivers would just honk once or twice, wait a minute, then drive away. But I had seen too many impoverished people who depended on taxis as their only means of transportation. Unless a situation smelled of danger, I always went to the door. This passenger might be someone who needs my assistance, I reasoned to myself. So I walked to the door and knocked.

"Just a minute," answered a frail, elderly voice.

I could hear something being dragged across the floor. After a long pause, the door opened. A small woman in her 80's stood before me. She was wearing a print dress and a pillbox hat with a veil pinned on it, like somebody out of a 1940s movie.

By her side was a small nylon suitcase.

The apartment looked as if no one had lived in it for years. All the furniture was covered with sheets. There were no clocks on the walls, no knickknacks or utensils on the counters. In the corner was a cardboard box filled with photos and glassware.

"Would you carry my bag out to the car?" she said. I took the suitcase to the cab,

then returned to assist the woman. She took my arm and we walked slowly toward the curb. She kept thanking me for my kindness.

"It's nothing," I told her. "I just try to treat my passengers the way I would want my mother treated."

"Oh, you're such a good boy," she said. When we got in the cab, she gave me an address, then asked, "Could you drive through downtown?"

"It's not the shortest way," I answered quickly.

"Oh, I don't mind," she said. "I'm in no hurry. I'm on my way to a hospice."

I looked in the rear view mirror. Her eyes were glistening.

"I don't have any family left," she continued. "The doctor says I don't have very long."

I quietly reached over and shut off the meter.

"What route would you like me to take?" I asked.

For the next two hours, we drove through the city. She showed me the building where she had once worked as an elevator operator. We drove through the neighborhood where she and her husband had lived when they were newlyweds. She had me pull up in front of a furniture warehouse that had once

been a ballroom where she had gone dancing as a girl.

Sometimes she'd ask me to slow in front of a particular building or corner and would sit staring into the darkness, saying nothing.

As the first hint of sun was creasing the horizon, she suddenly said, "I'm tired. Let's go now."

We drove in silence to the address she had given me.

It was a low building, like a small convalescent home, with a driveway that passed under a portico. Two orderlies came out to the cab as soon as we pulled up. They were solicitous and intent, watching her every move. They must have been expecting her. I opened the trunk and took the small suitcase to the door. The woman was already seated in a wheelchair.

"How much do I owe you?" she asked, reaching into her purse.

"Nothing," I said.

"You have to make a living," she answered.

"There are other passengers."

Almost without thinking, I bent and gave her a hug. She held onto me tightly.

"You gave an old woman a little moment of joy," she said.

"Thank you."

I squeezed her hand, then walked into the dim morning light.

Behind me, a door shut. It was the sound of the dosing of a life.

I didn't pick up any more passengers that shift. I drove aimlessly, lost in thought. For the rest of that day, I could hardly talk. What if that woman had gotten an angry driver, or one who was impatient to end his shift? What if I had refused to take the run, or had honked once, then driven away? On a quick review, I don't think that I have done anything more important in my life. We're conditioned to think that our lives revolve around great moments. But great moments often catch us unaware-beautifully wrapped in what others may consider a small one.

**A true story by Kentnerburn
Courtesy: The Internet**

No man's life, liberty, or property are safe while the legislature is in session.

-- Mark Twain

The Constitution is not an instrument for the government to restrain the people, it is an instrument for the people to restrain the government - lest it come to dominate our lives and interests.

-- Patrick Henry

TAGORE'S PORTRAYAL OF A HELPLESS WOMAN IN: "ELDER SISTER"

T.V.N. Prasanna*

Many stories of Tagore are devoted to the theme of exploitation of women. In the most glaring manner this theme is revealed by the author in *Elder Sister* (1985). Tagore, in this story, shows that the middle class, in spite of their education, were still sticking to old, cruel feudal practices. Jaigopal, one of the main characters of the story, is a typical representative of the middle class.

In the story *Elder Sister*, Tagore depicted a brave woman who sacrificed her life for her younger brother. Jaigopal, one of the main characters of the story, was a typical representative of the middle class. He was an idle man who lived at the expense of others. His wife Shashikala was a modest, kind hearted woman.

"Tara, the women's neighbor in the village, shortly declared her verdict: 'Fire be to such a husband's mouth'. At this Jaigopal Babu's wife felt much hurt; it did not become womankind to wish, in any circumstances whatever, a worse species fire than that of a cigar in a husband's mouth. When, therefore, she mildly disapproved the verdict, hard hearted Tara cried with redoubled vehemence: 'I were better to be a widow seven births over than the wife of such a husband and saying this she broke up the meeting and left'".

Shashi said within herself, "I can't imagine any offence in a husband that could so harden the heart against him". Even as she turned the matter over in her mind, all the tenderness of her loving soul gushed forth towards her own husband now abroad. Throwing herself with outstretched arms on that part of the bed whereon her husband was wont to lie, she kissed the empty pillow, caught the smell of her husband's head, and, shutting the door, brought out from a wooden box an old and almost faded photograph with some letters in his handwriting, and sat gazing upon them. Thus, she passed the hushed noontide alone in her room, musing of old memories and shedding tears of sadness".

She loved her husband deeply and obeyed whatever was ordered or requested. The smooth married life of Jaigopal came to an end when Shashi's mother gave birth to a son, who was the sole inheritor of the family. Jaigopal left his wife having thought that he would not inherit anything from her family. His love towards his wife was centered round her wealth. Through him Tagore portrayed a class which was greedy, selfish and money-minded. Shashikala's life became very hard. In addition to the separation from her husband, her parents also died, leaving the child in her hands. Kind-hearted Shashi started to look after the child. She had great attachment to it. Meanwhile Jaigopal returned to her house with a secret ambition to possess the property of the child. He thus became the guardian of the

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child, named Nilmani. Shashi started hating her husband when she knew of his malicious intentions. She took upon herself the task of protecting her brother from her evil husband 'Even if you cut me to pieces, I won't return', replied his wife. 'You all want to kill my Nilmani, who has no father, no mother, none other than me, but I will save him.'

'Then you remain here, and don't come back to my house, 'cried Jaigopal indignantly. Sasi at length fired up. 'Our house! Why, 'tis my brother's!'

'All right, we'll see, said Jaigopal. The neighbours made a great stir over this incident. If you want to quarrel with your husband, said Tara, do so at home. What is the good of leaving your house? After all, Jaigopal is your husband.'

By spending all the money she had with her, and selling her ornaments, Shashi saved her brother from the jaws of death. Then she heard that the big property which they had in Dwarigram, where their dwelling - house stood, the income of which was more than Rs. 1500 a year, had been transferred by Jaigopal into his own name with the help of the Jemindar. And now the whole property belonged to them, not to her brother."

Jaigopal went back to his house. The middle class despite their education were still sticking to old cruel feudal morals. The Deputy Magistrate refused to help Shashi when she approached him because she was an unprotected woman. Jaigopal was an acquaintance of the Deputy Magistrate and he succeeded in getting hold of Nilmani's

property. Shashi narrated the whole story to the Magistrate and requested him to look after the orphan. The Magistrate took the responsibility of the child and promised her that he would reconsider Nilmani's case. Shashi went back to her husband and they started living together. When Jaigopal knew about what she had done, he killed her. Shashi had anticipated her death. Though she was helpless, she took the decisive step to save her brother from the grip of her cruel husband. She thus martyred her life for her brother.

Shankar Basu opines: "Her death symbolises the awakening of woman. In the character of Sashi a splendid picture of Bengali women has been revealed. Their brave, decisive and kind nature capable of loving intensely and struggling for justice has been reflected in the story".

The news of her death flashed the next morning as a natural death, caused by cholera, and her body had been cremated in the night itself. Nobody made any comment on that. The neighbour Tara would sometimes speak out what she thought, but people told her to keep her mouth shut. The narrator ended the story expressing his doubt whether Shashi could fulfill her promise to her brother that he would see her again.

Bhattacharya rightly analysed the deep feeling of Shashi towards her brother. Unlike the helpless heroines in other stories Shashi could defeat her husband's malicious motive of stealing her brother's property. One sees in Shashi a representative of the courageous Indian women who are willing to give up their lives for noble causes.

KOTAMRAJU RAMA RAO : An Outstanding Journalist

T. Siva Rama Krishna *

Outstanding Journalist and Parliamentarian Kotamraju Rama Rao's brilliant memoir - *Pen as my Sword* reveals that Literary gladiators, Journalists, Editors, Writers and administrators are more powerful and capable of exercising greater influence in the world than soldiers and warriors. Either they create new things or give new life to what is already in existence. Thus, the pen wields greater power and influence than the sword. Really, K. Rama Rao was the Knight-Errant of Indian Journalism.

Kotamraju Rama Rao was born on 9th November, 1899, in a middle Class Brahmin family in Chirala, Prakasam District of Andhra Pradesh. His elder brother K. Punnaiah was well-known as a great editor of *Sind Observer* of Karachi for thirty years. Punnaiah educated Rama Rao in every way. He was not only his great brother but also his first guru in journalism. Punnaiah and C.Y. Chintamani moulded Rama Rao into a great Journalist.

Rama Rao had his schooling in Rajahmundry and Kakinada and after a brilliant academic career and a year's tutorship in Pachayappa's College, Madras, he proceeded to Sind and plunged into Journalism. There he helped his brother as Assistant Editor and gained rich work experience. Later, he became editor to

Humanity (a weekly) an organ of the *Brahmo Samaj* and Social Reform Movement in South India. thus in 1917, he had his first initiation in journalism there.

In fact, Rama Rao's whole journalistic adventurous career reads like a glorious romance of a voyage of discovery on the high seas under stormy skies. It is so typical of the uncertainties and thrills of the Fleet street, With the solitary exception of Potan Joseph, no journalist in India has changed more papers or gone through the vicissitudes of the most precarious profession with greater fortitude and courage.

With this rich work experience Rama Rao joined *the New Times of Karachi* as Sub-editor to the paper. Later, Rama Rao attended the Amritsar, congress sessions presided over by Motilal Nehru. And as a result of this he got a chance to join *the Leader* of Motilal Nehru, established in 1920, as a Sub-editor on Rs.100/- a month. At that time C.Y. Chintamani (another famous Andhra) was there as Chief Editor of *Leader*. Then they had differences of opinion over the issue of formation of Andhra Province. Consequently, out of Andhra Pride and self respect Rama Rao left the paper for good.

Then he joined the paper, *Advocate of India* of Bombay as editor and between 1923-27 for 4 years he served the evening news of *Times of India* and later on *Times of India*. Thus, Rama Rao lighted his brilliant

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torch in Bombay for a longer period than elsewhere in India. It was there that he earned his name and fame in a big way. He could reel off columns of editorials in 10 minutes. David Walker of *Times of India* marveled at the speed with which he was dictating editorials. Rama Rao reported a series of articles on Rajasthan and Jaipur Jamboree of the Indian National Congress for *Hindustan Times*.

It was said that Rama Rao was the nearest approach to Garvin's heat without light. He had volition, fire and passion.

In 1928, Rama Rao served *Pioneer* as editor. Later, he joined *Swarajya* of T. Prakasam. Out of sheer loyalty and devotion to Prakasam he worked there along with Khasa Subba Rao, K. Eswara Dutt, G.V. Krupanidhi et al. They were Casabiancas of Indian Journalism.

Later, Rama Rao joined the *National Herald* (of Jawaharlal Nehru) as its Founder Editor. Nehru asked him to see Rafi Ahmed Kidwai. When Rama Rao called on Kidwai, he had a good look at Rama Rao's short unimpressive figure and asked him whether he (Rama Rao) could really take charge of a paper, really? - Rama Rao saw the sting of the remark and retorted in gentle raillery, "Yes, that is about the only thing I have learnt to do".

Rama Rao says with pride and satisfaction - that with the editorship of the *National Herald* he reached the peak and pinnacle of his career, the fulfillment of his life's ambition. He said that the years he spent on the *Herald* were eventful. He braved the

wrath of the bureaucracy and became a popular hero. He acted as the sleepless sentinel of the congress fortunes in U.P. which almost adored him. The Allahabad Professors used to marvel at his powerful writings. It was a time of trouble and turmoil. The nationalistic complexion of the paper, Rama Rao's flair for smart headlines and his powerful editorials brought him into clash with the government. He was prosecuted and jailed for 5 months. After his jail term he rejoined the *Herald* again. But when he had differences of opinion with them again he immediately resigned. Another famous journalist of Andhra Pradesh M. Chalapati Rao succeeded him as editor of *Herald*.

Rama Rao served *Searchlight* of Patna as Editor and helped in building up the circulation of that paper which was then in doldrums. For some time he ran a weekly - an organ of the Indian National Congress. Thus, he served on more than 25 papers. It is really a record break. Rama Rao had run the whole gamut of newspaper work on a number of newspapers. He had drained the journalistic life to the dregs - so to say. As a free lancer Rama Rao wrote a number of Skits on a variety of topics of human interest, to various newspapers.

Rama Rao's *Pen As My Sword* is an impressive record of a lively picture of a period in India's political and social history with delightful pen portraits of Men, Matters and Memories.

In Andhra, we have the Kotamraju Brothers as in Western India there are the Natarajans, Self made men -- Punnaiah and Rama Rao -- They are a Study in Contrast.

Physically, Punnaiah is tall and Rama Rao short; politically the elder is smoother and the younger a stormy petrel; temperamentally the former is a settler and the latter a globe trotter; and from the worldly point of view one does not miss the ground under the feet; while the other does not allow any grass to grow under them.

For some time, Rama Rao was P.A. to Mahadeva Desai and Deputy Secretary to Gandhiji. Gandhiji called him a great editor; Nehru called him an outstanding figure in Indian Journalism. Rajaji called him a frank and fearless editor. Netaji admired him for his disinterested and dispassionate manner. In 1949, Rama Rao accompanied Nehru as P.R.O., It was really an eventful trip. In 1950, in the congress of working journalists he advocated strongly for press council of India. He always fought battles for better living conditions of working journalists. In 1954, Rama Rao attended the International Press Conference in Brazil as a leader of the Indian delegation of press representatives. For some time he was adviser to the Central Government for five year plan publicity. He trained a band of young Journalists with zeal, ambition and discipline. He was a purist and perfectionist and hard task master.

A great Parliamentarian:

In the first elections for Free Indian Republic, Rama Rao was elected to Rajya

Sabha from Madras Presidency (1952-54). In Rajya Sabha Rama Rao made impromptu speeches on a variety of subjects. He made 50 speeches in all -- in two years -- a record unapproached by any member and the unofficial congress benches in Rajya Sabha.

He was a brilliant debater and parliamentarian. Thus, he gallantly sailed before the wind on his wings of impromptu eloquence. His speeches were collected in a book form and it was released. His journalistic friends used to say "Instead of dictating editorials you are speaking out editorials".

In 1965, while travelling from Patna to Delhi, Rama Rao died in a train accident. In Lucknow, his street, garden and U.P. Press Club were named after him. During his Birth Centenary Year, a postage stamp was released in honour of his memory by Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, the then President of India.

Thus Kotamraju Rama Rao, as an outstanding Journalist, editor and Parliamentarian, and keen student of politics and public affairs and noble humanist brought name and fame and honour to Mother India and Fleet Street in general and to Andhra Desa (where he was born and brought up) in particular. Really, he was a Man with a Mission.

Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies.

-- Groucho Marx

AHALYA

Radha Murthy*

Ahalya is one of the important and controversial characters of the epic Ramayana. According to the puranas, Brahma created a beautiful damsel and named her Ahalya. As a responsible father he wanted to find a suitable husband for her. There were many contenders for her hand, one of them being Indra, the king of all devatas. But Lord Brahma decided to give her away in marriage to Gautama maharshi who was a great gnani [wise one] the most respected rishi and the author of Dharma sastras. He could not be compared to Indra in good looks, wealth and glamour. Yet Brahma found rishi Gautama to be the most suitable husband for his daughter. After marriage Ahalya left Brahmalo, came down to Gautama rishi's ashram and was leading a happy peaceful married life with him. Rishi Gautama had acquired tremendous divine powers through long years of austerities and penance, Indra was always insecure of his position as the king of devatas and also of his throne. He feared danger from Gautama and wanted to rob him of his divine powers. Apart from that Indra was besotted with Ahalya's beauty and wanted to possess her by any means.

One day, when Gautama had gone to the river for an early morning bath, Indra disguised as Gautama quietly entered his cottage. He approached Ahalya, praising her beauty spoke to her softly and said, Oh beautiful one; I am totally gained over by your

charm and grace. I want intimacy with you now. That is why I have come back from the river, please oblige me", Ahalya was surprised at her husband's unusual behaviour. He was pure and austere and was an embodiment of Dharma. He would never express such a desire. So she replied that this is not the right time for a rishi to be intimate with his wife. For that Indra said "My dear, a Kamuka i.e. a lustful man overpowered by passion cannot wait for an appropriate time. Oh, the slender waisted beauty, please fulfill my desire". Though Indra very cleverly disguised himself, his words 'lustful man kamuka' betrayed him. Ahalya recognised him and with full knowledge that he was none other than Indra the Devaraja crossed all moral standards and yielded to the amorous love of Indra.

Once they both were pleased, Ahalya hurried Indra to leave the cottage, saying it is better for both of them, if he leaves the cottage before her husband returns. Indra hurried out of the cottage fearing that Gautama might return any time, but Gautama did return and came face to face with Indra. Indra was shocked to see the rishi holding the grass or dharbha in his hand resplendent with piety. Gautama recognised Indra immediately and understood in a flash what had happened. He was with rage and cursed Indra to become a eunuch, since he had committed the most ignoble sin. Turning to Ahalya he cursed her, saying "you shall live in this ashram doing penance for thousands of years. You will be invisible to other's eyes and will wallow in dust.

* Writer, Hyderabad

You will not partake of any food but live on air".

In his unchecked anger, rishi Gautama by cursing Indra and Ahalya lost some of his divine powers. So he set out for Himalayas to resume his penance and regain some of his lost powers. Ahalya started crying bitterly in deep shame and remorse. Since rishi Gautama was kind and compassionate, he was moved by her tears and told her, in the distant future lord Rama would walk in to their ashram, and she would be delivered from his curse after serving and worshipping Rama Chandra. Then she would come back to Gautama purified.

Ahalya obeyed her husband and remained mingled in dust invisible to people. She did penance for thousands of years and at last Shri Rama came to the forest accompanying sage Viswamitra to protect the sage's yagna. The sage showed him the serene cottage of Gautama which looked desolate.

He narrated Ahalya's story and asked him to enter the cottage so that Ahalya could be redeemed from her curse. Rama followed his guru's orders and as soon as his sacred feet touched the premises of the cottage, Ahalya became free from Gautama's curse and began to take shape from dust particles into human form. Due to the penance done by her she had emerged with enhanced glory, and worshipped Lord Rama. The next moment rishi Gautama appeared at the cottage and after praising Rama's glory accepted Ahalya again as his wife.

This is the story of Ahalya as narrated by Valmiki Maharshi in Shrimad Ramayana. But many authors who came after him wrote different versions of Ramayana giving rise to many doubts. One of them is about Ahalya. Did Ahalya recognise Indra as an imposter? Or did she yield to him mistaking him to be her husband Gautama? This doubt might have haunted many readers.

FOR NO FAULT OF THEIRS

V. Lalithakumari *

The sight of buds that are to bloom
In a day or two thrown with full grown ones
Their tiny form, their puny build
Their pitiful look, their pitiable plight
Never fails to touch a tender chord
Of my sensitive heart; or am I foolish
A greedy mind or a lazy hand
Has brought about their untimely end

The infant buds are made to vie
With partners strong and unequal
The later make their lives fulfilled
The tender ones are rejected and swept out

There are many in this unjust world
That suffer a lot for no fault of theirs
It would be unwise to question God
For, as for Karma one pays the price

* Poet, Guntur

THE FUTURE FOR INDIA

Manju Bonke*

Let us scroll down the calendar of events of the year 2013 and shockingly we will witness almost every day terrible happenings: a cyclone, a tidal wave, a hundred thousand people washed away, a Himalayan river in spate, an earthquake, an epidemic, air poisoning, food poisoning - who can keep count of the casualties? A professor attacked in his classroom, gang rape; is there no end?

There is a steep decline in standards of conduct, a frightening erosion of values and a sharp turn towards disorder. There are alarming signals of national ill health. There is an itch to live fast and dangerously, refusing, to think of the future, any future.

According to the Hindu fable, when the ocean is being churned what first ripples up is the deadliest poison and the nectar comes long after. We too are now witnessing the billowing of the disturbed waters and the fumes and froth of the churned out poison.

Is the world completely doomed beyond recall, or is this darkness a necessary prelude to a wonderful dawn?

Miracles are constantly happening in this seemingly matter of fact world, and we do not see them. India attaining freedom was perhaps one of the greatest. There is no precedent in the entire world's past of a nation unarmed and downtrodden by one of the most powerful empires of the age, a nation old, divided into little kingdoms and tired by

centuries of foreign servitude, a nation that had lost all sense of self respect and was on the verge of perishing, suddenly making up its mind and after a few years of sporadic protest, resistance and filling and emptying of jails, making its rulers bestow upon it the most precious gift- a volunteer abdication- an independent India.

This was a Divine Intervention.

While Sri Aurobindo played a significant part in India achieving her freedom, he also repeatedly emphasized that India's political freedom was only the first step to a larger function India had to perform for herself and the world. She was to free herself in spirit and show the rest of the world how spirit can reign over matter.

During the years since independence, India has been making a gallant effort at economic regeneration but what is most unfortunate is that in the process of planning for regeneration she has shackled herself with debt, debilitating habits and divisive regional pulls.

The fight today is not against colonial power but against all that is false within ourselves. We have thus to change ourselves before we are strong enough to change others or change our environment. We have to crack the mould of our egoistic impulses into a powerhouse of Divine endeavour, and engage ourselves in bold and purposive ACTION, putting our trust in God.

India has been the home of immense aspiration and intense search after the Good, the Beautiful and the True. The dimming of the fire in the hearts of her inhabitants and the palling of the light in their minds are therefore the gravest of tragedies that we face today. The hope of the future is in the renaissance and resurgence of essential India.

A spiritual revolution is the answer!

The Mother in mid 1970 launched a new movement 'Sri Aurobindo's Action'. Sri Aurobindo's Action is a Force which will help India come out from its despair and regain the role as the Guru of Nations, a right which was won previously by its own tapasya and Sidhi.

Courtesy: Sri Aurobindo's Action

A NATTY NYMPH

Dr. Suresh Chandra Pande*

Perhaps
He was a holy hermit
A Pilgrim - Parivrajaka
Once at early dawn
He forgot involuntarily
Diurnal rituals like
Prayer and worship
Chanting beads on rosary
To placate deities
Posted respectively
At respective quarters
An abrupt tumult
Providence seemed piqued
Clouds roared and roared
Rain began to patter
And lo!
Amid warmer skies
The hazy sun

With wee little smile
Enjoyed silvery snow fall
The hills, the trees
And the landscapes
All virtually looked
Like ice lands in transit
Aghast!
The pilgrim urged
Why this . . . ?
Interrogated entity
Commanded sagely
Go to the Himalayas
A natty Nymph
Is waiting wisely
To receive thy prayers
Bemused hermit mused
Moved fast forward
In holy pilgrimage
With hopes
Now imminent.

* Poet, Anandpur, Nainital, UP

GLAMOUR QUOTIENT

S. Ramnath*

Generally in the days gone by, not very long ago, whenever a person was called for an interview for a job his/her suitability his intelligence quotient (IQ) used to be considered. Then came the computer age where besides IQ, emotional Quotient or EQ started being tested. Sometimes in the name of testing EQ embarrassing questions used to be asked. Sometimes for certain types of employment a third angle has been added the "Glamour Quotient".

Like going to a doctor for ailments going to the beautician, hair dresser etc has become a big ritual, fixing an appointment in advance, being there in time with proper dress, getting your facial or haircut by your earmarked person has also become a routine now. Where in the days gone by, a visit to the barber's shop used to be more for reading Filmfare and Stardust. Cosmetic surgery, dentistry, has become a specialized stream of study and such medical professionals are in great demand these days.

The human body is also subjected to various repairs like correctional surgery maintaining youthful looks maintenance of youth through botox injections, facials, massages, hair colouring, pedicure, manicure

etc. are like regular servicing of a vehicle or any other mechanical device at regular intervals. In fact, it would be a great idea if some of the beauty parlours or saloons start an annual maintenance contract for the human body.

Many a time people resort to plastic surgery by choice rather than out of necessity. I am reminded of a joke where a person approached a plastic surgeon and said that he wanted the contours of his face changed through plastic surgery. The doctor quoted a heavy fee. The patient immediately asked what would be the charges if he supplied the plastic himself.

A beautician's course is a specialised science. This has helped to create a new breed of entrepreneurs. This has also created an awareness among people to take care of their body proving thereby that external appearances are not deceptive.

The beauty tips and beauty products are not new to India. We have had them through the ages. They used products like haldi, chandan, aloe vera etc which were sans chemicals. The glamour quotient indeed has become a part of the human armory whether male or female. Oops! excuse me I have to leave now. I have got an appointment with my beautician who has been waiting for a month.

* Chartered Accountant, Hyderabad

MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CONTRADICTIONS AND CONFLICTS

Dr. G. S. Rao*

There is a feeling, not without justification, that the Ram Rajya (Welfare state) as envisaged by Mahatma Gandhi is still a distant dream. In spite of considerable economic progress made, it has not alleviated the suffering of a large section of people. There may be many reasons for the present state of affairs. Among them, this article emphasises that there are a number of contradictions and conflicts which need to be addressed, for the country to make real progress and promote peace and harmony in society. It is said that the elixir of life is happiness which has to come from peace and harmony in society. Even after 66 years of independence, there are deep divisions in society - based on religion, caste, language and class, which affect peace and harmony. Sufficient attention is not given to the impact of 'Contradictions and conflicts' as it is not directly felt. But it has a silent detrimental effect on harmony. Let me identify the causes underneath the contradictions and suggest ways and means to overcome them. 'Unity in Diversity' this is an oft - repeated Phrase. It needs to be considered in depth. Diversity is an existent fact, whereas unity has to be fostered. The country needs unity among all its constituents to achieve proper economic and social progress and to meet external threats. The reality, however is, for partisan reason the rhetoric of leaders is always on diversity and pluralism to the relative neglect

of 'unity'. The proper approach has to be to remove tensions and promote amity among diverse groups, and should not be to inflame differences and prejudices in the name of pluralism. A proper balance should be maintained between promoting the culture of individual groups and integrating them into main stream of national ethos.

The proverb 'Prevention is better than cure' is externally valid but is hardly followed. The need for inter - religious harmony is talked about only when communal riots occur and the need for amity among various castes only when a dalit hamlet is attacked in U.P. or Tamil Nadu. But the euphoria soon disappears.

National spirit has declined in recent times. In Pre - independence days, it inspired people in fighting the external enemy. It is equally important even now to fight the internal enemies viz. Divisive forces, poverty, disease etc. The country needs to regain its lost national spirit. Before independence, social reform movements played an important role in reformation of society. After independence, the movements seem to have faded out, but the need very much exists. The nature of society is of paramount importance in maintaining peace and harmony. The value system, human relationships, mutual trust, attitudes of tolerance and compassion contribute to the harmonious functioning of civil society. Divisive forces, extremism,

* Retd. Scientist, Hyderabad

unregulated freedom, widening economic disparities, undermine the harmony.

There are many contradictions - major among them are: religious, casteist, economic, language and regional. Religious animosities, invisible and dormant, have a deleterious effect on the country's progress. They become a menace when fundamentalism and extremism take violent form. Religious leaders have a responsibility to take affirmative action against such deviant people. Similarly it is necessary for civil and community leaders to continuously educate people on the curse of casteism. India has a serious disadvantage in not having a common national language with the consequent problems of communication and movement of people across the country. More vigorous efforts have to be made to make people in non - Hindi speaking regions to learn Hindi without any coercion and without detriment to regional languages. Another serious aspect of friction among people is the growing income disparity. Here, apart from the several steps being taken by the government, the corporate sector may be persuaded to increase its CSR (Corporate

social responsibility) from the present 2% of profits to 3% towards society.

While governments have to play a major role in solving social and economic problems, NGO's can supplement these efforts. Community level activities can play a significant role in this regard with active people's participation. Media also must play a significant role in spreading the peace message. Organised effort on a sustained basis is necessary, and for this, a central institution has to be established to coordinate the efforts of different agencies which may be involved. The Institute may formulate a suitable programme for promotion of harmony in religion, caste and society.

In sum, it may be stated that adequate attention has to be paid for overcoming the contradictions and conflicts in the society in order to achieve real national integration and progress. True peace and harmony in society are achieved only when every citizen in India emotionally feels that he is an Indian first and foremost.

EPITAPH

Dr. Manas Bakshi*

Moonlight on earth bed
Crying for the full moon
Drought-hit fallow land
No hope for shower, soon.

Feelings drying up
Behind fallen feathers,
Love seeking shelter

If possible, in live-together.
Cry of thousand years
In broken stones and bricks
Behind history of plunder
With inhuman tricks!

Hand that plucks a flower
Can't feel the plant's cry
Teardrops not visible always
Singe a mind till it's dry.

* Poet, Associate Editor, Bridge-in-Making, Kolkata

PLACES FOR READING

David Gunston

Most people who enjoy books have their own favourite reading places, whether on top of a mountain or in bed; for what the historian Ferrero called "the insatiable hunger for printed paper and reading matter," which is such a remarkable feature of human civilization, has its own particular preferences for place as well as time and diet.

For most people, probably, the best place for a book is the armchair, perhaps by the fire. But the great bookmen have always been nothing if not adventurous. Petrarch could and did read anywhere and everywhere: "Whether I am being shaved," he said, "or having my hair cut, whether I am riding on horse-back or taking my meals, I either read myself or get someone to read to me." At the other end of the scale in adventurousness was Richard Hooker, who was once discovered reading Horace while he tended his own small flock of sheep "in a common field," as his servant had gone home to dinner.

Reading in the open air is a delight to many, but few pursue it with the tenacity of G. K. Chesterton, who was once seen on lonely Moor, in Yorkshire, on a cold spring day, leaning against a tree so completely absorbed in the pages of his book as to be unaware of the heavy rain falling.

Books as traveling companions were recognised by the enlightened long before the arrival of railways and the railway-station bookstalls, such reading supports. J. A.

Froude asks, "What did passengers do on voyages when there were no novels?" If they could read, it seems they merely took other volumes: Petrarch made sure his little copy of St. Augustine's *Confessions* accompanied him on every journey he made, long or short.

Dr. Johnson raised a good point about reading on a journey. "If you are to have but one book with you upon a journey," he told Boswell, "let it be a book of science, for when you have read through a book of entertainment, you know it, and it can do no more for you; but a book of science is inexhaustible." On his famous tour to the Hebrides he took his own advice, reading on the journey such a seemingly unlikely to me as Cocker's *Arithmetick*.

Pliny the Elder loved to read whilst on the move, even in his chariot or sedan-chair. Napoleon had a special shelf for books fitted inside his coach, while Sir Julius Caesar, Master of the Rolls during the reign of King James I of England, had constructed the most elaborate travelling library of all -- a gigantic morocco-covered box, shaped like a huge volume and containing the forty-four classics which he took with him on every voyage.

John Addington Symonds seemed to take a long journey just for the pleasure of getting through a lot of reading on it: he is recorded as ploughing through Guicciardini's *History of Italy* on a trip from London to Florence quite regardless of the increasing

attractiveness of the scenery through which he passed. This made Maurice Hewlett comment that a man who could do that "could read Milton on top of a motor bus," which of course is something that has since been done countless times. For in the bustle of modern life a journey, however short, affords an unraveled opportunity for reading books.

Of almost equal popularity is the practice of reading at meals - a habit surely restricted only by the niceties of manners and family sociability. It has been said against this much complained-of practice -- and indeed it still is sometimes said to the young -- that eating requires all the attention, that blood drawn by a book to the brain should be allowed to support the process of mastication and digestion. However, many great men have read at the table, notably Stevenson, Johnson, Shelley, and Bernard Shaw, who often found the quiet of a prolonged mealtime the only chance of reading during a busy day.

Some of the books-with-meals addicts have gone so far as to define appropriate volumes for certain repasts. Charles Lamb always found Milton "a good supper book," but Leigh Hunt preferred to digest his tea or dinner with the latest book sellers' catalogues, ticking off buying them." Thomas Campbell said that to read Homer at breakfast each day had become, by long habit, necessary to existence, while R.L. Stevenson recommends for breakfast reading Aikman's *Annals*: they made him almost forget to eat his egg.

If the book is a good one, and grips its reader, it matters little where it is read.

Much worthwhile reading has been done, and in some cases still is done, in prison. According to Sir Edward Cook, only there does one find "the acid test of what is readable." Paul Verlaine actually taught himself English whilst incarcerated at Mons, and it is said that Napoleon's greatest joy at St. Helena was always on those days when the ship arrived, bringing him fresh books to add to his speedily devoured library of some 8,000 volumes.

Violent action, even, may not deter the true reader. It is said that Julius Caesar swam a river into battle with a sword in one hand and a book in the other, and many later generals have read in their tents whilst the battle raged outside. Lawrence of Arabia read Aeschylus during the desert conflicts in World War I, and the experience of solid reading's power to transcend battles and air raids and bombardments is fresh in many minds today.

Lying on a hearth, swinging idly in a hammock, soaking in the bath, waiting for an appointment, on an elephant's back surreptitiously during a dull speech, standing before the bookseller's stall - the born reader reads anywhere, anyhow. But few delights equal the book in bed, which is for most people reading *de luxe*. Sir John Squire once said, "The bedside book for me is the book that will longest keep me awake," and many will agree. As Sir William Osler put it: "With half an hour's reading in bed every night as a steady practice, the busiest man can get a fair education". It would be interesting to know what proportion of booklovers could echo Arnold Bennett's confession: "I invariably read in bed of a night."

Courtesy: *The Christian Science Monitor*

THE MEANING OF LITERATURE

Y.S.R. Chandran*

A Knowledge of the principles and the technique of Agriculture may help us to grow more food, of medicine to cure the patient, of Engineering to construct barrages and bridges; but unfortunately, we do not have any such principles to help us create great literature; and had we such, we would have several bards of Avon, in the place of one; nor are there any principles for enjoyment either, since if there had been any, then everybody would have the capacity to enjoy the classics, in the place of cheap detective fiction. In such a context, it becomes difficult to know exactly what is meant by the term literature: if it means mere writing, a capacity to black the paper, then any writing should be literature, we mean only that writing, which reveals certain skill, then books of science and philosophy also should be accepted as literature; the skill need not be revealed in writing alone, but sometimes it may be evident to the delectable ease revealed in conversation into which Dr. Johnson projected his personality; but in writing there is no flesh and blood; it is the cold print that meets the eye, and plodding on, is not possible except when it leads to a result.

If the result aimed at is the communication of certain information, Darwin's *Origin of Species* should be considered to be a great literature but it is commonly acknowledged that he belongs to the realm of science and not literature. He has

a certain skill in writing, but it is burdened by a pre-occupation with conveying certain information in terms of accuracy. It has the purpose of placing in the hands of the reader, certain facts observed in the course of his investigations and this cannot be called art, since art cannot have any direct purpose. Gibbon in his treatment of history may not be accurate, and may allow himself to be swept off by the tornado of his eloquence into certain inaccuracies of facts but here, though he may be largely considered a historian, he may be viewed as an artist, partially subordinating his purpose, and in so far as he does so, his history may be a striking instance of applied art which may be on a line with the applied mathematics and applied physics. There is what is known as pure art, even as there is pure mathematics. Keats in his *Nightingale* does not have any purpose; if he has any, it is to infect the reader with the ecstasy, the rapture of his enjoyment of its music. Here then is an instance of literature, pure and unsullied, and it should be easier to arrive at what is meant by literature.

Literature should mean the communication, not of information but of a certain experience, requiring great skill, it cannot be transferred from one to another mind. At one end is the author, and at the other, is the reader and the middle should be filled in, by a medium, necessarily, the language, carefully chosen, limning in, correctly the proto-type of the emotion touched off by the object of the experience.

* Former Principal, Hindu College, Guntur. He is no more.

In this connection the quotation from T.S. Elliot may be apt:

*We make out of our quarrels with others, rhetoric
We make out of our quarrels with ourselves, poetry.*

The experience demanded is not the physical experience gained by an author, going abroad, or on the globe-trot. Books of such kind rightly belong to travel and adventure and do not come under the definition of literature. Without seeing much of the world, one may speak of other countries, creating a make-believe of having been a denizen of those countries. Defoe, comes in handy, as the example of a man, who could speak convincingly of other countries without leaving his own and the Brontes should not be left out, since leading almost a cloistral life, they were able to immortalise themselves by novels of lasting value.

In all great literature, the natural expectation of the reader, the fond hope of having an enlargement of his experience, should be fairly or partially met and this may flow in through the intellectual, the ethical and the emotional channels. The effect produced by great literature is a cumulative effect of all these elements and in the literature of a lower grade, one or the other may dominate. For instance the intellectual element may predominate in the essay, history and the biography while human action and character in the drama and emotions are found in the lyric and poetry.

The greatness or the worth of literature, may not depend on its antiquity or

its appeal to the intelligentsia. If that were the criterion, *Beowulf*, since it has been the first work produced about twelve hundred years ago, should be considered a great piece of literature, but it is not. Therefore, survival for a great length of time, while being one of the marks of greatness, may not always be the infallible mark of greatness.

Immorality by itself may not be ruled out and by reason of its admission, literature should not come under censure. If such high moral criteria is set up, not a single classic can stand the test, and all of them have to be thrown over-board. The themes of the great epics such as the *Iliad* and the *Ramayana* hinge upon abduction, and the adoption of such a rigorous test, should make of us Platos, banishing literature altogether from the state. *Macbeth* and *Caesar* have murder as their themes; and *Hamlet* and *Oedipus* incest as their sources; it is not vice by itself that detracts from or contributes to permanence. Vice no doubt by the quick results achieved may exercise a fascination and prove attractive but it is its effect, its impact that is important. Vice, in spite of its dazzling career, ends up in ashes and it is the ultimate triumph of the good over the bad and the sublimation that is effected in the reader's mind, that makes for immortality.

Other distinctive nature of literature is that, while one text-book in Engineering which held the field for quite a long time, may be replaced by the latest, in the sphere of literature, there is not such scope for displacement. Because Goethe wrote his *Faust*, Marlowe's *Faust* does not become obsolete and both have their own value and are irreplaceable.

Popularity may not be the invariable mark of greatness; if so the detective fiction should be acclaimed as the best literature since it is more popular. The thrillers are the favourites; they are only the time killers enabling us to forget the tedium of a long journey. The elements they have of sensation, terror, excitement, suspense and horror, may make us slaves for a time. They are like the beverages or aerated waters which cannot be a substitute for invigorating food. The impression made by such a book is as fleeting as that made by a fellow passenger and the book of all times should be one to which we come back repeatedly and it should have an unwithering charm about it which should always be inviting and winsome.

Information is something which is unavoidable and natural for the author to give, because of his scintillating intellect, and acceptable because of the companionship courted by the reader. But if it is for the information of the useful or the practical type, the choice of literature is wrong since any guide book can give the required material. Books written with the purpose of imparting information and evoking a reformation live for a shorter duration; the topicality saps away their vitality. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has become out-moded because of the abolition of slavery, even Dicken's appeal suffers a limitation, because of his addressing himself to certain social conditions that do not obtain now. Gurazada does not have the vogue, he had a few years ago, because of the erosion . . . and conservatism that held us . . . last for long. It is for this reason that the immortals have not built their literature on the quick-sands of the shifting morals, conventions or the ills of their time and society, but on the basic, never

changing and primordial human passions such as ambition, jealousy, love and hunger.

There may be a general agreement on beauty being one of the constituents of literature, but there may not be a uniformity of opinion about what constitutes the object itself or in its diffusion of effect. In the former, the tiger with its stripes is the most entrancing animal but for its paw, the sleek, glossy shine, can easily replace the most glittering tie of the dandy but for its fatal fang. According to Santayana, beauty is pleasure objectified and yet everything that pleases is not beauty. The screw driver is not beautiful because it pleases by its usefulness; still if it is embellished properly by precious stones and gold, it may be a treasure of art. However, an object to closely associated with daily life can seldom be an object of beauty.

Beauty cannot be attributed to the symmetry of too mechanical a type. There need not even be that completeness which is generally associated with art. Size has nothing to do with beauty. For instance the smallest flower may emit the best fragrance, and the largest may be disappointing in spite of its attractiveness. The parrot and the squirrel in spite of their smallness are the most agreeable to the eye. Beauty therefore may lie even in small proportions of a fragment of a poem like *the Kublakhian* as well as the larger canvas of the epic and the drama or the novel. What is required is the poise and the balance that we come across in an art gallery of paintings and statues. A litterateur must evolve from out of the welter and chaos of his experience, a unity, a balance, and project the probability of a perfect moment in the reader's mind.

It is not the photographic representation that is required in literature even the photographs, while being true to the externals may fail to represent the character within even though the features are correctly drawn (limned). It is not for realism of which we have too much in the work-a-day world, but for an illusion, and interpretation, a criticism of life that we go to literature. It should take us into a fictitious world where the facts may not actually tally with those of the real world. Yet there should be a correspondence, however remote, with those of the real world. The poet should cast such a spell over the reader that his questioning spirit is lulled asleep and he is put into the mood of quiet acceptance by the willful suspension of disbelief induced in him. Once admitted into the strange dreamy world, the reader should feel that the events follow an inner logic of their own. Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* becomes convincing thus, and even the Bond story is probalised by the argument preceding it.

We do not go to literature for finding any solution to some of the vexing problems of the day, or for the problems posed by the author; if so, there should be no problems at all and no necessity for us to think, since the world has been born long ago and we have come up at a comfortable distance in point of time. What literature should and is expected to do, is to start a mental current in a given situation, sharpen our faculties and build up the fibres of the heart and soul.

Literature has a music of its own that appeals to anyone conversant or not with the language. Japanese poet who did not know English could appreciate Tennyson's *In Memoriam* though he did not know English

and he said it was not the language but the music that spoke to him. An expectation to find originality in literature is extravagant and fore-doomed to failure. All the plot sequences have long ago been exhausted; a slight variation is all that is possible. Shakespeare breathed fresh life into the dry bones of the readymade plots available at the time and even Kalidasa enlarged the fragment of a plot that he borrowed from our great epics. Then what all that can be modestly expected of an author is the capacity for recharging with life and emotion the long familiar themes by the evocative magic of his re-interpretative imagination.

A landscape, with a dense grove of trees with its branches filled by warbling birds, with a stream near-about purling in a musical manner, with the canopy of the argentine, many hued and shining with the subdued crimson of a mellowed sun, may appeal to the onlooker in different ways according to his sense of taste. The practical values may be uppermost in the case of some. The wood-cutter may speculate on the amount that may be realized by cutting the trees and disposing of the timber to a depot, the hunter on the possibilities of netting the birds, and the angler on batting the fish but the artist may look on without any of these sordid considerations and drink in the whole spectacle, filling in his aesthetic sense with delight, re-creating, and conveying his experience in a poem.

A certain style, an embellished, figurative expression, a capacity to use the common words with a new and unfamiliar significance, in short, making of the word a closely packed capsule for feeding the imagination, should be, one, and not the only, feature of literature.

The aim of literature is the good of the world. Our ancients have put it tersely *Viswasreyah Kavyam*. The individual author glimpses the vision and transmits the same to others through his work. It is for us to share the experience. derive the benefit of its formative and moulding influence over us. Life is experience. We live in, by and for experience. Life becomes fuller and larger in proportion to our communing with our

forbears. Literature is the fruit of what one does with one's solitariness. In this respect it is analogous to religion. It remains for ages as the reflection of the inner vitality of a race, a more authentic symbol of its qualities, spirit and culture, than many other perishable monuments of our fleeting triumphs; and in a wider sense, literature is the conscience and the first philosophy of the world.

THE VALUE OF KNOWLEDGE

A giant ship engine failed. The ship's owners tried one expert after another, but none of them could figure out how to fix the engine.

Then they brought in an old man who had been fixing ships since he was young.

He carried a large bag of tools with him, and when he arrived, he immediately went to work. He inspected the engine very carefully, from top to bottom.

Two of the ship's owners were there, watching this man, hoping he would know what to do.

After looking things over, the old man reached into his bag and pulled out a small hammer. He gently tapped something.

Instantly, the engine lurched into life. He carefully put his hammer away. The engine was fixed!

A week later, the owners received a bill from the old man for ten thousand dollars.

"What?!" the owners exclaimed. "He hardly did anything!"

So they wrote the old man a note saying, "Please send us an itemized bill."

The man sent a bill that read:

Tapping with a hammer... \$ 2.00
Knowing where to tap..... \$ 9,998.00

Effort is important, but knowing where to make an effort makes all the difference!

Keep studying hard. Don't give up!

**Courtesy The Internet
Sri Aurobindo's Action**

BHAKTI LITERATURE IN NORTHERN INDIA AND SOCIAL REFORM

Dr. Pitta Satyaparayana*

Philosophers who wrote on Bhakti defined it as extreme love of God. A man of any country who has any religion knows that he is a body and spirit also. But there is a great deal of difference as to the goal of human life. Western countries as a rule lay more stress on the body aspect of man. Those philosophers who wrote on Bhakti in India laid stress on the spiritual side of the man and this difference seems to be typical of the

Oriental and Occidental nations.

Our rishis are discoverers of spiritual laws. There are three spiritual systems in India. The one *Advaitism* negates *Jivatma* which is only a delusion. In *Dvaitism* there is Jiva infinitely distinct from God. Both are true. *Advaitism* made practical words from the plane of *Vishishtadvaitism*. It is *Vishishtadvaitism* - a small circle within a big circle (*Jiva* and God), motion regulated by the big circle. *Dvaitism* - small circle different from the big circle (*Jiva* and God), only connected by *Bhakti*. In *Advaitism* the small circle expands and coincides with the big circle.

It is apparent that in *Dvaitism* there is the mention of *Bhakti*. God (big circle), *Jivatma* (small circle) are deemed to be separate entities. In order to reach God, *Jivatma* takes the help of *Bhakti* or devotion

towards God. This is the connecting link. Thus *Bhakti* means to the end of union with God which is the goal of every creature.

Swami Vivekananda on Bhakti :

Swami Vivekananda attributes *Bhakti* to the mark of civilization. The uncivilized desire to wallow in the mire of the senses unable to see anything beyond. These can never be *Bhaktas*, they can never be true lovers of God. Thus the *Bhakta* sees the Higher. What can be a higher than God? But the path to God is long and difficult. Very few people attain Him but all should strive to attain that love of God.

Emerson's view:

In the words of Emerson a devotee to attain God is "A God intoxicated man" there is an infinite Omniscient Spirit behind, that can do everything, break every bond; and we are that spirit, and we get that power through love. Societies have come up above the materialism and aimed at the attainment of Spirit. These societies are called civilized ones.

Need for literature:

The civilization can be designated on account of the literature a particular society has had. The realization beyond the materialistic urge has been vividly described in order to make the concept of *Bhakti* clear.

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For the emergence of spiritual life we go to the perfect men who practiced the realization and the discourse they have made has entered the annals of literature.

Literature and society:

Social attitudes are reflected in the mirror of literature and literature has the capacity to prevail upon the society for the observance of certain rules or code of conduct. Changes in society and the thought process of literature are reciprocal. One cannot divide them at all. So every kind of literature in general and the *Bakti* literature in particular has an impact on the society for still higher values that are to be brought out by way of total re-vamping of an aspect under study. Thus *Bhakti* culture paved the way for social reform.

Popularity of *Bhakti* culture:

Bhakti demands the repetition of God's name incessantly. One need not leave away the household but he can maintain *Bhakti* leading family life. It does not require penance. These hardships are common to *Advaita* and *Vishishtadvaita* wherein the big circle God has to be reached by austerities of meditation, celibacy and other hardships practiced by hermits. Tulsidas the author of *Ramcharith Manas* declared that in the present age *Kaliyuga*, the repetition of God's *Nama*, the name of the Lord is enough to attain deliverance. The code of conduct is congenial to the moral of 'Live and let live' and so the *Bhakti* culture has gained coinage quickly.

***Bhakti* literature and Social Reformation in Northern India:**

The objective of the presentation is to project an angle of reformatory zeal of *Bhakti* movement and limit my study to Northern India.

1. *Buddhism* served as a social reform and arrested the domination of the priesthood and animal sacrifice in the religious rituals.
2. Kabir's worship of the Lord with devotion and observance of simple life with satisfaction brought home *Bhakti*. He condemned the religious rituals and advocated love of humanity. The communal riots were subsided by pursuing his literature of *Bhakti*. He was an illiterate and he asked people to 'study the two and a half letters of "Prem" to be wise.
3. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's *Brahmosamaj* brought social reforms and the *Sati* Act was passed in 1929 and put an end to killing of the wife along with the dead body of the husband.
4. Shankaracharya's *Advaitism* has promoted peace of mind and proposed the theory of one God merging Shiva and Vishnu to promote self-realization. His nationwide tours could establish unity in communal diversity.
5. Ramakrishna Paramahansa had brought a new angle of religion by thinking in his own way and he added the dimension of service to spiritual exercises. The rivalry that existed among the *Vishnavites* and *Shivaites* was undone.
6. Gandhiji preached tolerance among the people and religious fanaticism was

replaced by mutual love. He made his journal *Young India* as a tool for social reform.

7. Rabindranath Tagore gave new definition to temples. He is convinced that God lives in the sweat of the brow of toiling millions but not in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. He ennobled the working class and proposed activity as the basis for reaching God.

8. Amartya Kumar Sen proposed economic theories through his research papers by studying the cultural diversity in India. The study of philosophy and religions has served as a backdrop for his economic theories.

9. In Uttar Pradesh during Middle Ages *Krishna Bhakti* sprouted and flourished on account of the books of poems like *Sur Sagar* and proposed the love as the basis of *Bhakti*. Surdas is the epoch-maker.

10. Meera Bai had dedicated her life to *Krishna Bhakti* and gave the lesson of surrender to God.

11. The *Bhakti* Channels of TV have been educating people about our scriptures and ancient culture but it is sorrowful that they promote purely orthodox feelings. The media has to be under control.

Conclusion:

A word of caution is necessary as far as the practice of *Bhakti* is concerned, Hero worship is the main theme of the *Bhakti* cult. In a democratic society of equals, this trend will lead to the offer of license to a person. A man entrusted with power is prone to go astray. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has found the trend of people of unquestioned trust in a person. According to him checks and balances are to be exercised constantly in democracy. Mere worship of idols and continued meditation may not work out to adopt God's qualities. The present society should attain this welfare activity of seeing God in every person and to help him/her in the hour of need.

If this stature is attained, *Bhakti* literature will become a path finder for welfare society of perfect individuals.

Everybody today seems to be in such a terrible rush, anxious for greater development and greater riches and so on, so that children have very little time for their parents. Parents have very little time for each other, and in the home begins the disruption of peace of the world.

--Mother Teresa

A politician needs the ability to foretell what is going to happen tomorrow, next week, next month, and next year. And to have the ability afterwards to explain why it didn't happen."

--Winston Churchill

PASTURES- NEW IN TELUGU LITERATURE

Kandukuri Ramabhadra Rao *

Literature reflects the thought, mood, aspirations and experience of a people and moves like a meandering river widening and varying its course with the influx of contributory streams. The spread of English education and the study of Western Institutions and cultures made a strong and lasting impact on the life and thought of the educated in India.

In the Telugu Country Kandukuri Veeresalingam caught the new spirit and dedicated his life to social reform and the innovation of several forms in Telugu literature like the novel, the essay, the biography, the satire and literary criticism, after the pattern of those in English. These served as the nucleus for the vast range of modern Telugu literature. He forged simple and idiomatic prose as a fit vehicle for carrying out his mission. C.R. Reddy wrote *Kavitha Tatva Vicharam* the fore-runner of modern criticism. Tirupati Venkata Kavulu brought Telugu Poetry from its ivory tower of intricate chambers into the common place drawing room, dressed in native idiom and conversational ease. This was a period of transition from the old to the modern.

Gurazada Apparao who imbibed the modern spirit to the full, came like the morning star in the literary horizon before the dawn of the Romantic movement. He invented the simple metre *Mutyala Saram* as the vehicle

and used the simple diction of the spoken language for expression. His drama *Kanyasulkam* became a modern classic for characterization, scenic construction and the use of uninhibited spoken dialect.

Rayaprolu Subbarao, who, in a way, served his apprenticeship at the feet of Rabindranath Tagore in Shantiniketan began to pour forth his melodious verse with the flavour and sweetness of new expression and images of rural beauty and idealized love.

The Romantic spirit let loose by Gurazada and Rayaprolu captured the imagination of the younger generation already steeped in the poetry of the romantic school in English like Wordsworth, Shelly and Keats. Their mental climate was similar. Freedom, Nature, common man and his life, deified love, vision of any idealized world, interpretation of the stored past, formed the themes of their writing. There was a revolt against the conventional forms and hackneyed images and expressions. New experiments were made with techniques of composition.

The lyrical spirit of the Romantic period found a powerful new voice in Devulapalli Krishna Sastry. His *Krishnapaksham* marked a new era in modern poetry. His was a voice and there were many echoes. *Yenkipatalu* of Naduri Subbarao are unique, portraying pastoral life and love in chiseled, imperishable phrase. Kavikondala wrote poetry of the

* Famous Writer and Poet, worked in the AIR . He is no more.

Wordsworthian type. Viswanatha handled many forms with originality of construction and interpretation. Viswanatha Satyanarayana's writings particularly his monumental work, *Ramayana Kalpavriksham* which earned the one lakh prize of Jnana Pith were grand in range and power. He is a literary figure head and shoulders above all the writers of the modern period who left no literary form untouched with the impress of his colossal creative power.

Gudipati Venkatachalam raised furore by his novels written in powerful and poetic prose propagating the freedom of woman from the shackles of marriage and social bondage.

Mokkapati created *Barister Parvateesam* with a fund of humour. Radio Brought forth new technique of writing. Musical plays of literary merit were its contribution. The Gandhian spirit was embedded in several works of the period. It was a period of rich and varied production. Marxist philosophy set foot in the country. Russian Revolution drew the attention of the younger generation which was tired of the honeyed idealism of the Romantic Writers. Destruction of the old order and establishment of the new one according to the canons of Marx was believed to be the panacea for all ills in society. The scene shifted from Nationalism to Internationalism. The writer was committed to the rousing of the spirit of revolt. He was in search of new meter, new image, new phrase, new effect to save his thought. Srirangam Srinivas Rao known as Sri Sri poured forth this urge in a blaze. He discarded all conventional metres and chose *Matra Chandas* and verbal pun and

alliteration marshalling them into expression of tremendous power. He coined words and phrases to serve as proper symbols of his thought. He drew liberally from the techniques of the current poets in the West and made them his own with the alchemy of his genius. Thus he became the profounder and prophet of a New Era in Modern Poetry. Collection of poems *Mahaprasthanam* was a land mark in Modern Telugu Literature. Several of his feather, like Narayana Babu, Arudra and the Niagara poets made many experiments in this line. There was a lot of writing philosophy. The whole school was labeled "Progressive Writers".

Telugu literature from the advent of Progressive Writing parted into two broad streams, one upholding the old convention of theme and expression, though modified by the embellishments of the Romantic Touch. Reverence for ancient human values was sustained.

The other stream adhering to Progressive Writing in content and technique discarding all tradition and convention, the main thread being a social purpose either economic, political or social. Spoken dialect of new mintage is used to advantage.

With the advent of freedom and the establishment of socialistic pattern of democracy the old political regimentation in poetry writing slackened. There arose multitudinous fresh contending problems waiting for solution. Writing is concerned with the plane of intellect. Several theories like the Freud's are afloat to probe into the human mind and its behavior. There is intellectual conflict. Poems, stories and novels began to

flood with conflict as basis. Prose is taken to be the only vehicle capable of expression of the modern thought even in poetry. Suitable idiom is being shaped to fulfill the purpose. Writers like Kundurti and Tilak with classical background produced fine pieces of prose poems. Prose poem now reigns supreme.

A section of youth is uneasy about the lull created without a vehement revolt of the violent type for solving social problems. They formed into associations like *Digambara Kavulu*, Revolutionary Poets and began to hurl abuse, some times of the nauseating kind at their target. Some of them have the nerve of poetic beauty.

DANCING OF PRAKRUTHI (THE COSMIC DANCER)

Dr. M.V. Bharatha Lakshmi *

Assuming the form of Prakruthi
The cosmic dance descends down
On the Universe, jingling her anklet bells.

She, the independent Self and Unprincipled
Dances under the heavens of sapphire infinite
To the rhythmic beat of seven seas.

She dances revitalising the whole creation
Charging the universe with new vigour
Her reverberating toes awakening
the luminous spirit

Fulfilling and emerging as the wholesomeness.

She is the earth, she is the ocean
She is the boundless sky
She is the power behind the elemental forces
She is beyond the myriad gods
She is the ineffable spirit of eternity.

At the twilight, Rudra the dancer of destruction
Comes out of the abode of death.
Breathing fresh air in that effulgent
dance of grace,
Recedes with a sigh, bowing down to that
Splendid infinite independent spirit.

* Principal (Retd.) P.R. Govt. College, Kakinada

During his lifetime, Van Gogh sold only one painting, and this was to a friend and only for a very small amount of money. While Van Gogh was never a success during his life, he plugged on with painting, sometimes starving to complete his over 800 known works. Today, they bring in hundreds of millions.

Internet

SWAMI RAM TIRATH

Prof. Hazara Singh*

Punjab has been a land of seers, sages and martyrs, who made a rich contribution to the cultural heritage of India, as well as, to its revival and re-evaluation through their lofty precepts and noble practices. One of the latest among the galaxy of these spiritualists was Gosain Tirath Ram (1873-1906), remembered out of spontaneous reverence as Swami Ram Tirath. He was born in the village Muraliwala, district Gujranwala (now in Pakistan) on October 22, 1873. At the time of renunciation he reversed his name from Tirath Ram to Ram Tirath. Faced with almost all the disadvantages which destiny could offer, viz. loss of mother in his infancy, constantly indifferent health, early marriage and economic hardships, he attained academic distinctions, in his own words through: *solitude, fruitful use of time, and the will to work.*

In his B.A. examination of the Panjab University, Lahore (1892) he secured the topmost marks in elective subjects but was placed in compartment in the compulsory subject of English, thus, getting deprived not only of brilliant success but also of concomitant benefit in the form of scholarship or medal. This episode puts all educationists to serious thinking. Tirath Ram was not weak in languages. He was well-versed both in Urdu and Persian. Later he developed proficiency

in Sanskrit as well. To evaluate the academic progress of the Indian students through their proficiency in English had been an academically unsound approach. It resulted in a huge wastage of the otherwise intelligent youth at the college level. It also hindered the emotional integration between the educated few and the illiterate many.

This failure of Tirath Ram, too deep for tears, did not leave him dejected. Taking it in the spirit, that God willed so, he reappeared in the supplementary examination and obtained more marks than the topper of annual examination, but received no recognition as that was permissible only for the performance in the annual examination. In 1895 he repeated his performance in M.A. (Mathematics) through a first class first. His Principal, Mr. Bell of the Government College, Lahore, offered to get Tirath Ram nominated as a member of the Provincial Civil Service, then a very covetous achievement, but he declined gratefully saying that he got education to share it and not for personal gains. His preference was to become either a teacher or a preacher. He would say:

*Good company, books and prayer
make one the king of three worlds.*

He taught for some time at the Mission High School, Sialkot and later in Forman Christian College, Lahore, his alma mater for undergraduate education. Mathematics is an abstract and, for many, an uninteresting

* Poet and Freedom Fighter, Ludhiana, Punjab

subject. But he made his teaching fascinating by quoting suitably from Punjabi poets, like Bulleh Shah as well as from Indian and Greek myths. He used to refer to the principles of Mathematics while preaching his popular spiritual observation, 'renounce the maya and the world to attain bliss'.

He would define happiness i.e. bliss, as a quotient of 'necessities of life' as numerator and 'desires' as denominator. If the basic desires aiming at the comfort of body continue to outnumber the necessities of life, happiness decreases proportionately. If the desires could be reduced to the minimum the bliss would mount astronomically, because anything divided by zero leads to infinity.

Gradually, he realised that his employment did not leave him sufficient time for spiritual growth and the consequent emancipation. He accepted a part-time assignment at Oriental College after giving up his job at EC College. By the end of 1899 he resolved to renounce the world and retired to hills to the north of Hardwar.

According to him there are three ways to be one with God:

Karma Yoga: the path of righteous and fearless action,

Bhakti Yoga: the path of universal love and

Jnan Yoga: the path of wisdom through contemplation.

He chose the path of love for preaching his message. He toured both the East and the West there for. A few of his sayings are stated below to illustrate his

philosophy spreading love, understanding, righteousness and wisdom.

- A helping hand is better than lips uttering prayer.
- A community progresses not under great men stuffed with small views, but when it is led by modest people inspired by lofty aims.
- Sins themselves are a punishment and not a cause for punishment.
- Selfishness is the root-cause of all fear.
- Learning enables us to peep into the past, but wisdom reflects the future.
- No topic is as efficacious as happiness.
- Understanding of others comes only through loving them.
- A mother's life is prayer in itself. Her body is a temple of the Supreme.
- Some of his observations on national reconstruction keep serving as beacon-light for us.
- The most fruitful gift which can be given to a human being is to impart him knowledge. Charity removes his hunger for a day only, but knowledge enables him to earn his living all through his life.
- Patriotism does not mean to keep boasting of glories of the past.
- Dharam enjoins us to subordinate the caste distinctions to national fellow feelings.
- Our people need more a spirit of appreciation than the capacity of criticism. They should develop the sentiment of fraternity and love for honest toil.
- Independent thinking should not continue to be looked upon in India as a heresy. Blind faith in a dead language is an act of sacrilege.

BOOK REVIEW

Name of the Book: Salt of the Earth & Other Stories

Translator: U Atreya Sarma

Original in Telugu by: Dr Mallemala Venugopala Reddy

Vijaya Printers, Hyderabad. 2013

Pages xvi+160. Price Rs 200/-

For copies: atreyasarma@gmail.com

Salt of the Earth & Other Stories, well translated by U Atreya Sarma from the Telugu originals by renowned Telugu writer Dr Mallemala Venugopala Reddy rejuvenates the sagging spirit. I had already read a number of his Telugu stories including the originals of a few in the present volume. Down-to-earth with a clean narration and straight language and diction, they aim at the overall welfare of the society beset with the vicissitudes of the plebeian and the middle-class in small towns and villages.

Atreya Sarma, a good poet, sharp critic and meticulous reviewer has adopted the right technique of translation and succeeded in making his trans-creation sound original and authentic.

There are 16 stories in the volume, some of the very best of Dr Reddy's. The first one, 'Salt of the Earth' is a heart-wrenching tragedy with its steady tempo and excellent narration leading to a stunningly positive twist. In 'Better half indeed,' an aged couple, dejected by their children's ingratitude and indifference take courage to fine-tune their lives to face the trauma of old age in what is a sound practical advice to the ageing couples.

There is the light-hearted story 'The Maid, the Mistress and the Master' in which a beautiful house-maid hands over a wise and shocking rejoinder to her mistress. And in 'Bolts from the blue,' we see a different house-maid, Lakshmi, courageous, devoted, self-assured and dispassionate.

'Have mercy...and grant me death' is a story woven around a rich family of doctors, some living in India and some in US. Dr Reddy (a successful surgeon himself) deftly deals with ovarian cancer and logically supports euthanasia for the terminally ill. Another socio-medical story is 'Mothering heights,' dealing with infertility and surrogate mothers. It projects thought-provoking conundrums leaving a trail of bitterness in the readers. Has Atreya Sarma taken a cue from Emily Bronte's Wuthering heights for his title? 'A doctor with a heart of...' is a story where an arrogant driver of a government bus roughs up a passenger. The hero of this story - a bold and influential doctor - strongly stands against the driver and his union and teaches him a lesson with a message that any commoner with courage can successfully tackle such situations.

In 'The story that missed the bus' a young unmarried man succeeds in seducing his landlord's daughter only to ditch her. This part of the story hackneyed though, the genius of the author is demonstrated in the later part, in contemplating various ends to such a beginning and surprises the reader with a novel climax. A very impacting piece of writing the readers won't forget for a long time.

The one story that has really touched my heart is 'Twice dead' a harrowing tragedy, in which the young and beautiful wife of a farm servant, despite her great love for her husband, succumbs to a momentary temptation of

begetting a child through another man. As if to relieve the harrowing effects, we have a delicate romantic story in 'Angel in bed'.

MVS Sathyanarayana, Naupada

READERS' MAIL

The article of Dr. K Raja Mouli about Triveni is excellent. His letter to the Editor is superfluous. I already wrote to you in my previous letter as to how Triveni is fulfilling its objects in a sentence and Dr. Rajamouli's essay is an expanse of it. I congratulate Dr. Rajamouli for covering all aspects in detail, of course at the cost of repetition. It is the common impression of readers of Triveni that Triple Stream article in every issue overshadows the other succeeding articles. Your personality is reflected in each of your articles. You are a practical moralist.

Dr. C. Jacob, Narsapur

Some ills of Churchill - With reference to Churchill the writer, NSN Murthy, has already said, that Churchill failed in the lower class. But, the English teacher was very good, effective and used novel methodology to teach the language. For instance, he used to underline with various colour chalks different parts of speech in grammar class. The more he studied under him (Teacher), the more he gained groundings, essentials, knowledge, fluency in English, which gave him a big hand in his later life.

He was envious, and disliked Adolf Hitler's oratory power to sway the mood and opinion of the audiences. He was over

confident of winning in the General Elections post World War II. The unexpected and unacceptable defeat - from his point of view - made him so angry, gloomy and bitter, even to remark, "The British people are an ungrateful lot!" But, although they loved and respected him genuinely, they decided he was "unsuitable" to lead them in peace time, and always referred to him as wartime PM!.

During wartime, cargo ships could have spread for arranging essential commodities to starving Bengal. Citing World War II and, shortage of ships and personnel, he refused to consider the humanitarian crisis. The result: lakhs of avoidable deaths and sufferings.

V.N. Ramaswamy, Hyderabad

Your leading articles are perennial sources of valuable knowledge and inspiration to readers in general and to the youth in particular. Sardar Patel-India's Steel Man a glowing tribute to one of our greatest statesmen, is indeed a mini-biography highlighting his splendid achievements. It is interesting to read that despite differences on several important issues, Patel and Nehru supplemented each other and together they strove for India's development and progress.

M. G. Narasimha Murthy, Hyderabad

NEW MEMBERS

The following is the list of Donors/ Members who have joined the TRIVENI family during January- March 2014. The TRIVENI FOUNDATION welcomes them.

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AN APPEAL

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