



Eternal Light

J.N. SINGH

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821
Si 64 E

FOREWORD BY
M. Hidayatullah



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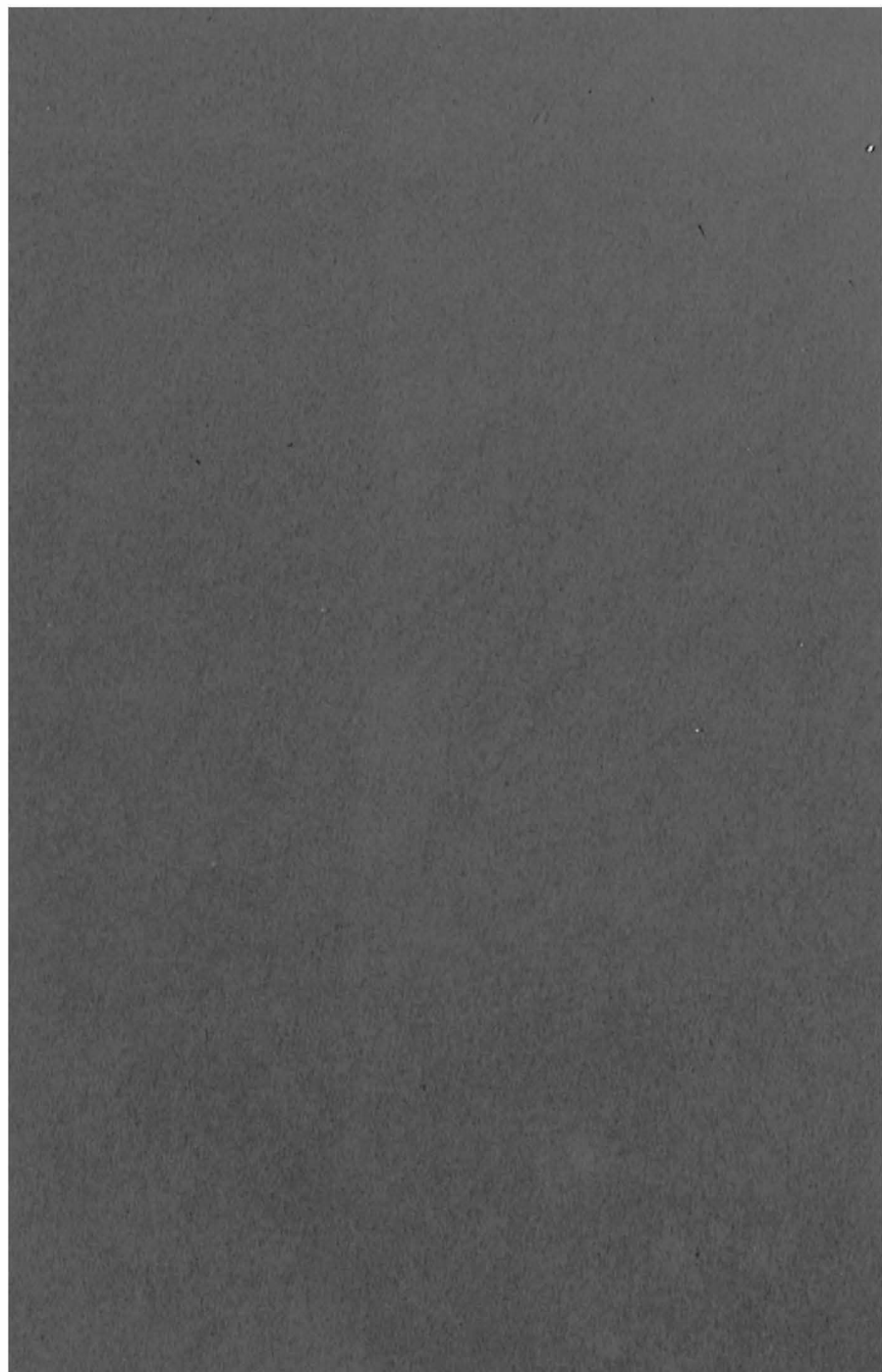
.... He (the reader) must take the mood as in the poem Ad Die Memorium where there are tender feelings with the description of the Shoe-shine Boy's household. . . .

.... There is mixed grill here and the reader will have to consult his own temperament remembering with Goethe that modern poets mix too much water with their ink !

M. Hidayatullah
(*From Foreword*)

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DEDICATED
TO

*The Memory of
The Valiant Warriors
Who Fell
In the Sacred Cause
Without Shedding Tears,
Fighting for the Creation
Of
A Balanced, Just and Equitable
Society,
Smilingly
Facing
The Enormous Challenges
Of the Age,
Inspired
By
Nature, Devotion and
The 'Spark Divine'.*

FOREWORD

Mr. J.N. Singh writes poetry in English and also Urdu and has many compositions to his name. The present is a collection of thirty one English poems which he has written in his leisure and sometimes while on a journey from one place to another. Some subjects are familiar such as the Chatwala and the Shoe-Shine Boy, some are unfamiliar topics as the Unbeaten Charisma. In the former one expects what the poet will say, in the latter the mystery of the title is solved only when the poem is read. Each poetic theme is sought to be illustrated by line drawings, sometimes one for a poem and sometimes more than one. Indeed, in his Art of Poetry (*Ars Poetica*) Horace said that a poem is like a picture: one strikes your fancy more, the nearer you stand; another, the further away. This pleased but once; that, though ten times called for will always please. It is always a question whether the poem is the result of nature or of art. True poetry is only the feelings coming in rhythmic language, and the Rythmical Creation of Beauty, as Poe put it, when describing the Poetic Principle.

Mr. Singh's poetry shows as many moods as metrical schemes. Of course he does not use the standard metres such as Gay described, nor are the lines composed on the metrical feet about which Coleridge composed a whole poem. The poet here keeps pace with the modern trend which even the English Neo-poets affect, and to which even the test of the finger, which Dr. Johnson said was necessary for Donne cannot be applied. *Non satis est puris versum perscribere Verbis.*

Many Indians have written in English and earned name.

Tagore won the Nobel Prize, a full eleven years before W.B. Yeats who nominated him for the prize. Tagore originally thought and wrote in Bengali and used blank verse, when he wrote in English. His thoughts were deeper than words and the language was secondary. Toru Dutt, on the other hand, thought and wrote in English because by upbringing and education she was more English. Sarojini Naidu thought partly in English and partly in her own language but carried it all by her mastery over the rhythms of language. Yet in the eyes of discerning persons, the pieces stand apart.

I do not know with whom to classify Mr. Singh. He eschews rhymes completely. They are either the rudder of the ship of verse or the rocks on which such verses are wrecked. In any case Milton thought that they are used to set off "Wretched matter and lame Meter" in his famous preface to *Paradise Lost*. Therefore, the reader who goes for such adjuncts in Mr. Singh's poetry will be disappointed. He must take the mood as in the poem *Ad die memorium* where there are tender feelings with the description of the Shoe-Shine Boy's household:

His father was a drunkard, sire,
the mother was a whore,
both sisters were the cheap call girls
and brother was a 'chor'

There is mixed grill here and the reader will have to consult his own temperament remembering with Goethe that modern poets mix too much water with their ink !

Vice-President's House
6, Maulana Azad Road,
New Delhi-110001

M. Hidayatullah

PREFACE

I am presenting in my book of poems (blank-verse) my feelings, sentiments and ideas, gathered over a number of years, based on the sheet-anchor of my experiences in various capacities and fields of activity and at different places and in different facets of life.

The experiences of life so gained by me, find, inter-alia, an apparent and unmistakable reflection in these poems.

They, by all means, do contain an out-burst, instantaneous and spontaneous, of my attitude towards life, chastened and chiselled, moulded and shaped, by the not too few problems and challenges of life. They, in fact, represent an over-all out-look of a man, traversing ahead smilingly, with valour and fortitude across the straight path, resisting all distractions, allurements and temptations, yet fighting with courage and optimism the battle of life. It is this attitude which, I feel, flows into all these poems, relating, as they do, to sundred and wide-spread activities and experiences vis-a-vis man and nature, social and economic disparities, divergent occupations, vocations and characteristics of individuals and the struggles and problems of life.

The poems reflect the attitude of an individual moving ahead with magnanimity and tolerance, an indomitable spirit and a sustained balance, amidst the awesome, yet beauteous mountains, the frowning, yet delectable terrains — inspired by nature and the animal world in full display—towards the tryst of destiny.

Besides, a modest endeavour would be seen reflected

althrough, pointing towards the ultimate triumph of love and harmony, the dismal failure of the horrendous and the disdainful proclivities of the thermo-nuclear age, the moral values, after-all, asserting themselves in the shape of an accord between science and the spark-divine.

The sincere, earnest and modest endeavour, made in all good faith, seeks, infact, to epitomise Man and Nature and in the long run the victory of 'Right' over 'Might' and 'Beauty' over 'Power'. The book, would, I am sure, unravel, to any careful reader, a sustained quest of reality, eternal truth and light.

However, it is for him (the reader) to assess and judge the results.

My thanks are due to all my friends, co-workers and well-wishers. I would like, in particular, to express my gratitude to friends like Dr. R.K. Seth and Shri Vikas Ingole, who have helped me in various ways in the publication of this book. I cannot help making a mention, in this connection, of my dear wife, Satyawati, who has stood by me through thick and thin, in shine and rain, and been a source of sustained inspiration to me all along.

It may, however, be of interest to the reader to know that these poems were, by and large, composed by me, while travelling from place to place.

I am also thankful to M/s Pragati Publications and M/s Roopabh Printers who have been instrumental in the early publication of the book.

S-379, Greater Kailash II,
New Delhi-110002.

J.N. SINGH

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Eternal Light

The darkness on the horizon,
bristling with a void
impregnable,
has since been replaced
by a glow out of a well of
ignorance.

The pale light of the moon
has been eclipsed
an' the scintillating starrel
glow suppressed.
Is this glow above
substituting the over-
spreading bleakness
descending on the
horizon—
a portent of 'kindly light'—
or a harbinger of
disenchantment ?

I know not, what to say—
the time reflects on the horizon
what it really was.



It has been substituted by hope
and expectancy,
knowing not,
it's a gift from the angels
sitting in heaven,
admiring the zeal and fervour
of men,
inhabiting this world—
replete with depression and
despondency—
now smiling with blessings
and words of cheer,
bon-voyage.

• •

•



Rapture—Come Back

Thou hast a heart of gold, beloved,
where floweth the lithe of love.
Thy bossom is full and round,
O dear!

Wherein lie the secrets of thy
youth.
Thy arms art long and strong,
like steel,
which grip the hearts of thy
lovers.

Thou raineth, 'manna' upon them
all
and poureth the nectar drink.

Thou art eternal, O my love.
and perish, thou shalt not,
though a thousand storms
may hit thee above
and fiercest tempests be around,
a volley of volcano erupts
within

and severe quakes abound—
 thou carest not for such a
 trifle
 and standest firm thou art.

Many a time defiled thou wast
 at hands of alien foes;
 but resurrected anew thou
 every time
 to lick and heal thy wounds—
 and suckle and nurse generations
 new.

Thou never lost thy eternal
 charm;
 thou art so young, so sweet,
 so lovely, lively and loving;
 O, let me kiss thy feet;
 my love, my darling!

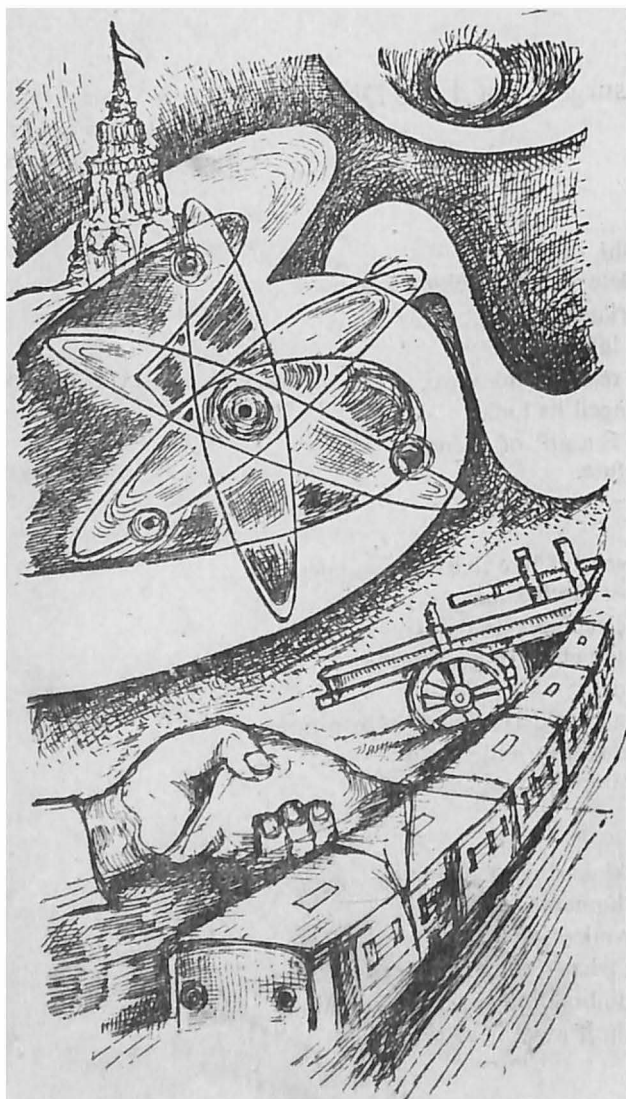
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Resurgence of Love Divine

Delhi, of yore,
replete with bullock-carts and
carriages,
has lately,
for reasons unknown,
changed its looks;
this is a gift of science—
I refute.

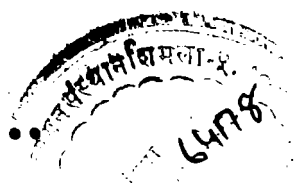
Movement like that of gossamer
across the frowning sky—
hope replaces despondency—
not the effect of a scientific
mind,
but a conclusive proof of inspiration
from within and
blessings from above.

The tinkering of sympathy
and humanity—
inter-mingling
with what soul can achieve,
in combination with love divine,
worth, if any, by science;



discord, eliminated not by scientific
 mind—
 but the supremacy of light from
 above,
 crushing the frightening products
 of horror—
 resulting from the lop-sided
 advance
 of the so-called modern age,
 moving hand in hand
 with what the urge from within
 and scientific talent can produce,
 herein,
 the upper hand being that of
 soul
 and not the horrid science;
 else divested of human love
 and the thrust for a common good,
 science could only produce
 agony and disaster
 of thermo-nuclear age.

Bullock carts and carriages
 jostling by at a slow moving
 pace—their
 jerks now stand replaced by racing cars
 and the flying trains,
 substituting the ancient modes
 of journey,
 in this premier town—
 result,
 not of the diabolical engine of
 science,
 but the inspired accord of Man,
 restraining the frightful race
 of Science—
 the flashing-beacon,
 light divine.





Ad Die Memorium

Though ages have passed since I met her last,
yet the flame of love is still burning bright.
Hope is there, we'll meet somewhere
to share the bliss of love delight.

I hope 'gainst hope, she'll come at last,
and dog my ears at the chirp of lark.
At every knock my heart jumps high
she's come: she's come: O hark; O hark!

There's eternal darkness all around
wherein struggles my soul love-lorn,
an' with a sodden heart I pray to God,
this darkest night may never see a morn.

• •



The Postman—Harbinger of News

The call of duty
took me far from the metropolis—my home—
in circumstances,
queer and grotesque.

Distance
was no bar
to reminiscences sweet,
spent in the company of my love—
at the tryst near home,
approachable only through lanes, narrow
and tracks labyrinthine—
a place lonely down-the-stream,
where the water of the river,
with light shimmering,
beckoned pedestrians
to pause and descry
the thick grooves of trees,
the alluring panorama in full display—
the fading light of the sun—
scintillating through the heavy lush clusters,
'green valleys and pastures new'.

The place had acquired
in my heart



a halo unforgettable
and charisma indescribable.

Hand in hand,
gazing into each other,
sometime clasping—sometime relaxing—
Lo !
How beautiful the place was
and how sacred the rendezvous
with a ring of light shining
and spirits rising.
The call from the post of duty
left me no alternative
but to break away from the lonely place,
where my heart lingered,
long distance notwithstanding.

Even a letter
from my love
kept my heart panting
and legs trembling.
Lo ! there comes the postman
with a cover in hand, •
bringing news,
good or bad,
I knew not;
snatched I the chit from the postman's hand,
standing in dismay
and aghast at my impatience;
breathing fast and, staggering.
kissed I the sacred epistle
with the warmth of my puff
and the touch reminding of the tryst,
where I had stood day and night,
at times, too happy over the touch divine.

The epistle was my only sheet-anchor
 boosting and sustaining—
 a frail body that I had turned into—
 love driving, though stamina lowering.
 The postman was
 my lone carrier of inspiration
 and sustenance.

The duty ending
 my travail also,
 with hopes bright and expectations driving—
 at last came the cherished rendezvous,
 which had sustained me for days and nights,
 I now know not.

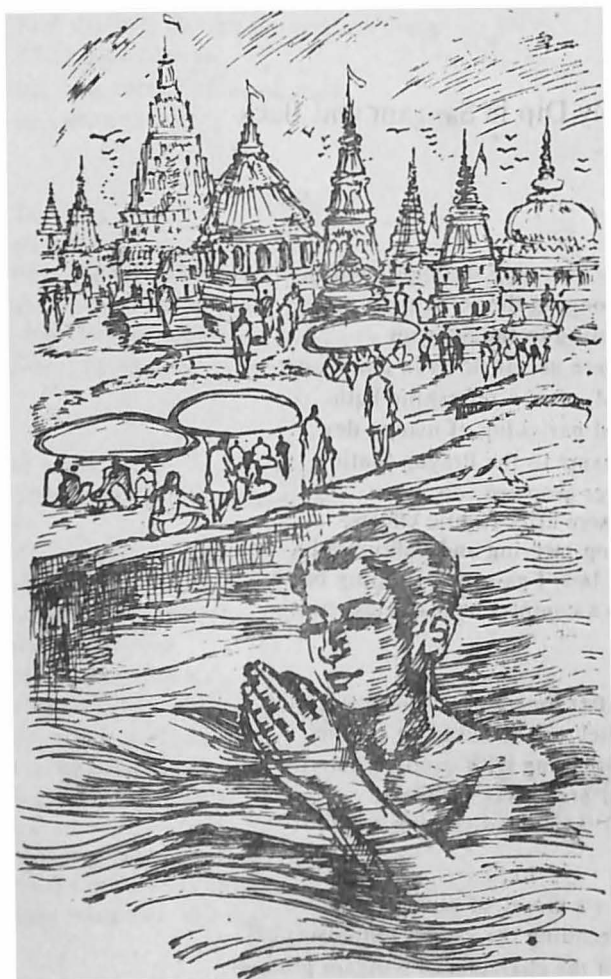
At last a feather in my cap,
 enemy having been vanquished:
 lo !
 there reappeared the lightening shadow
 of spirit divine,
 recalling and restoring
 feelings pent-up
 and reviving the holy touch,
 came back I to the old rendezvous
 with added zest and fame
 of conquest anew —
 which She liked all the more—
 Delhi,
 my birth-place,
 also the seat of my love,
 glimmering and shining.

Holy Dip in Sangam and Back

After braving through a multitude of men,
thronging the serpentine paths
leading to the Sangam
where nectar flows in abundance—
and, after a refreshing bath
and partaking of manna dew,
I came to the Prayag Station
over-crowded too,
where after frantic efforts,
long tarrying and baffling ado,
at last, I gained a sleeping berth
in a compartment of class two.

After long and tedious traversing,
back to the bubbling station,
humming with sundred activity
of breathless multitude
going in and coming out.

In a mood of reverie
recalling the sacred reminiscences
of the charisma of Sangam great—
I dozed into slumber,
snoring, as usual,
forgetful of the world.



Know I not the number of hours
 the night had passed,
 when with a terrific dash
 the racing train came to a grinding halt;
 I awoke with sudden abruptness
 to find to my amazement,
 Delhi had come;
 'chai garam',
 'pan, biri, cigarette'
 'babu--Puri garma garm'
 came the voices shrill,
 rending my ears,
 from the four corners of the platform
 and, after feasting on a 'puri garam'
 and a 'kullhar' of hot tea,
 out I sprang from the burning inferno—
 what a relief it was !

Tongawalas and Rickshawalas
 thronged outside the station,
 but none would take me to my rendezvous
 without charging exorbitant fare, crushing—
 and when at last—
 an old rickshawala with his beard flowing,
 in spoilt shirt and dirty pyjama,
 graciously took pity on my plight and
 condescending with a loving nod,
 offered to take me to the 'Katra Neel'
 of fame in the bristling Chandni Chowk.



I tipped-off the rickshawala
 and got into my beloved's narrow, congested,
 squalid, dingy house,
 hardly enough to contain together
 two or three souls—
 its capacity awfully limited indeed !

Rested awhile,
 exchanged alluring words and looks,
 gazing into each other—
 a most charming and glorious feat,
 which I have never known or heard before —
 was the ancient lore
 of the scantily dressed and shabby 'patasewala'
 and vendors crying hoarse —
 'Khaiye Kali Jaman',
 'Shahtoot Thande'
 'Tarawatē dimag aur dil',
 I partook of some with my beloved
 with relish and delight
 I cannot describe.

The time was over—
 my beloved, all the time apprehending,
 the click of the foot-steps
 of her guardian dropping in.

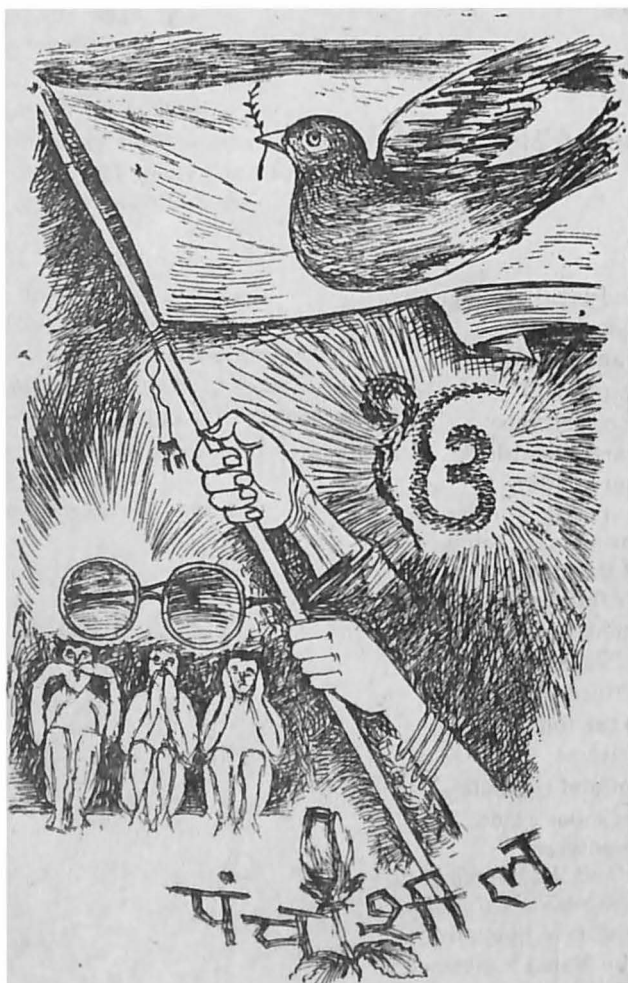
Off, I took leave of her
with heart in pieces
and clasping her hands with a loving grip,
tight and relaxing,
kissing them
with rapture unknown—
waded my way back
through the labyrinthine and crowded streets,
knowing not where I had to go for refuge
as my permanent abode.

Delhi—
a strange conglomeration
of posh and the down-trodden—
When will it come up again,
moving about like friends on parity,
though frantic efforts are being made by those
who count,
yet, I know not, when ?

• •

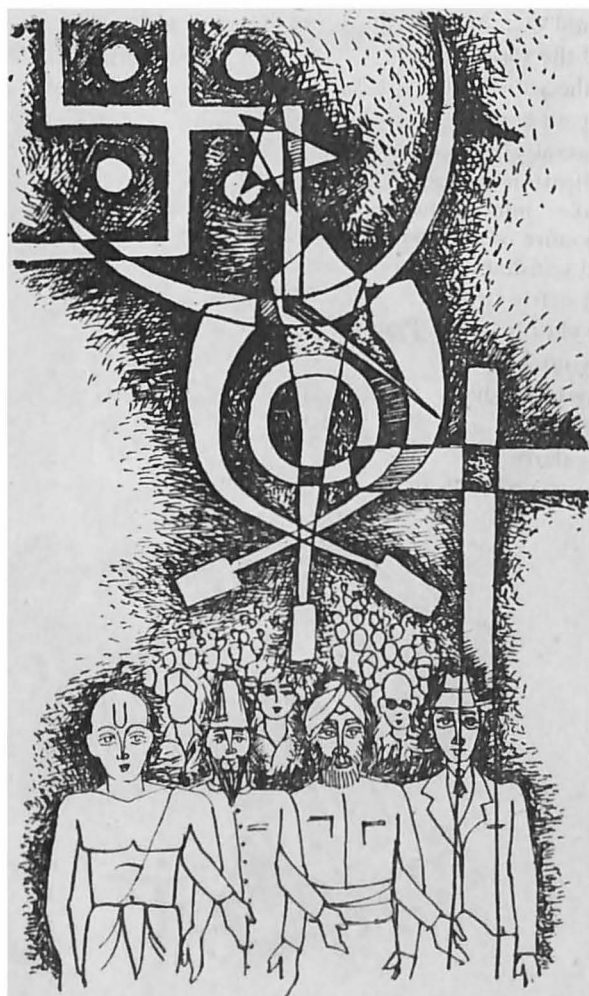
The Call of Harmony

Unite and break through
the vicious barriers
of folly and ignorance,
which result only
in violence and rape,
murder and bloodshed.
Be valiant and brave
and inspire fellow men
with fortitude and courage.
Earn the name of being
Gandhi's followers
and the inheritors of Nehru
with his Panchsheel
and the 'third world.'
Build up the foundations
of the universe
on cement and concrete—
pity, mercy and peace.
Dote on sacrifice,
harmony and the human form
in its facets universal.
Protect and save humanity
inspired by Nanak's message
of supreme sacrifice,



The lush colours
of your verses
hymning love and beauty
would then burst forth
and the waves
of the sea-storm
in your songs
pleasantly surface out
dedication veritable.
Make—none excluding—
a bonfire of materialism
and selfishness for good,
and deftly strike
the chords on the Piano
of your heart,
only to produce
melodies,
singularly
joyous and dedicated.

• •



Humanity Transcends All Barriers

**Friends : differences of caste, creed or faith
you need to extirpate;**

**Friends : whosoever comes to you, you need
to hug and embrace;**

**Friends ; blood is neither Hindu nor Muslim nor
Christian nor Sikh;**

**Friends : blood is after all blood that you never need
to let flow.**

• •



Delhi—Composite Culture

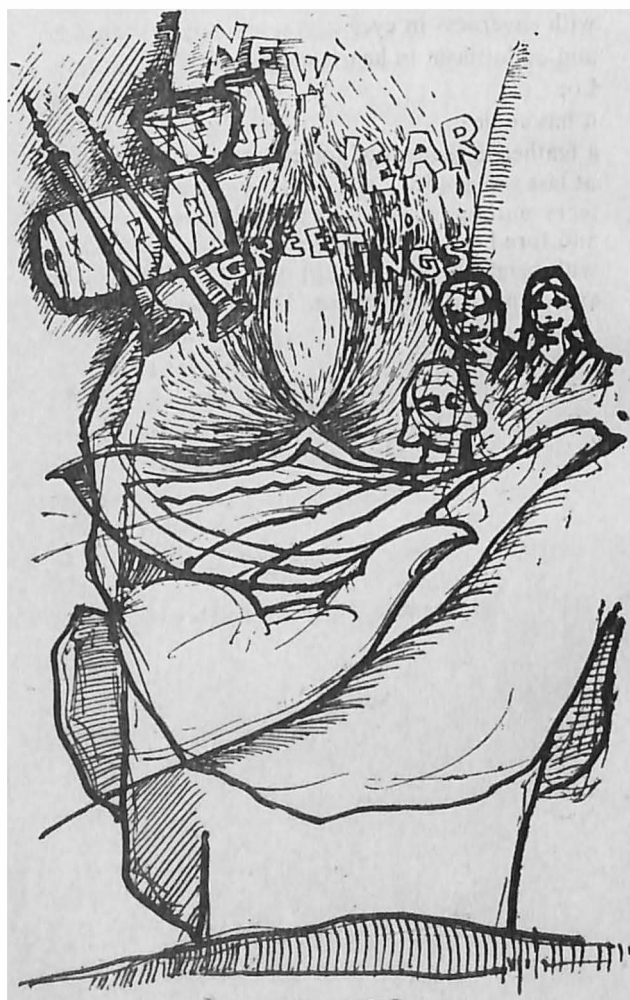
Delhi, this premier town,
of the largest democracy in the world,
occupies a position unique,
not only in the national main-stream
but also a place of eminence,
measured according to the international scale,
from the angle of culture ancient
and traditions hoary—
wonderful people
residing in various areas and terrains,
speaking dialects varying,
attitudes differing,
religions vying—
peopling this great country
with composite culture aglow,
over the vast expanse of the ancient land,
known as 'Bharat Mata'—
celestial and great.

As could only be expected
from the magnitude of this vast country,
stretching far and wide,

in fact,
a continent by itself—
types, classes and creeds
constituting the social fabric
at variance from one another—
the wealthy
living in sky-scrapers
with antenna towering over and above;
the middle-sized, content with earnings
to keep them alive with two square meals,
occupying small-sized homes,
which they adore with full-throated ease;
the under-dog and the impoverished,
languishing in homes,
dingy and squalid—
contrasts sprawling far and wide,
for which society is still striving
at levelling up and down—
earnest endeavours going apace,
looking forward
to a fair deal from heaven.
Alas—
not knowing when this triumphal march,

reaches the goal of unity,
harmony and equality,
which we are looking to
with eagerness in eyes
and enthusiasm in hearts enshrined;—
Lo;
it has come—
a feather in the cap of society;—
at last achieved !
faces smiling
and fore heads shining,
with bright hope,
expectancy and enterprise.

• •



A New Year Message

New Year Day and new songs—
a new songstress and a new orchestra—
their sweet music reverberates;
my heart beats high in a sequestered place,
where I now stand,
reminiscing
of the sweet melodies
once I heard with captivating lore,
in the company of
my love who is no more—
the light of the 'bazzm' and the divine-flame
burning bright,
I recollect with a heavy
and soddening heart;
may the New Year with a resplendent future
be welcome to you,
my friends,
and guide you on with music sweet—



I have now no charm for.
The New Year may bring you a message
of love and happiness,
emanating from me
who can enjoy its beauty and charm,
no more—
the sweet company I once had
but now stand deprived of—
the cruel hands of destiny,
with a frightful and cruel wrench,
having slit short my life's sweet possession—
I know not why;
perhaps it was some evil eye
which befell me in an accursed way,
leaving me bemoaning
the grievous loss—
the flashing beacon, the flame divine.

• •



Shoe-Shine Boy

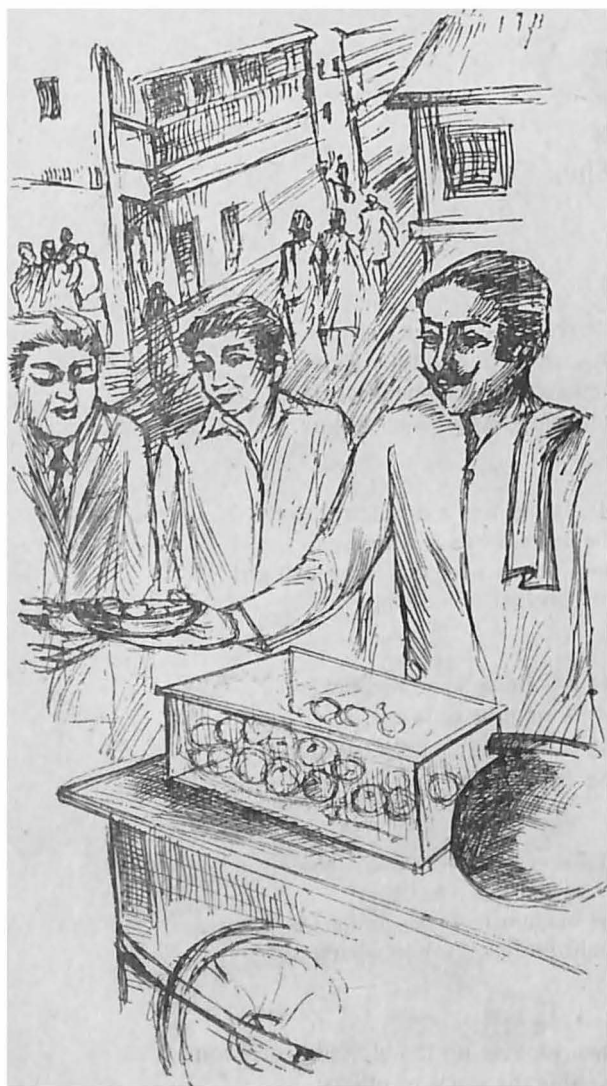
He left his home at a tender age
to earn for himself his living;
he never went home after that
and took he up shoe-shining.

His father was a drunkard, sire,
the mother was a whore,
both sisters were the cheap call girls
and brother was a 'chor'

He was hungry, he was naked,
never slept he on a cot;
the earth was his only bedding,
this was his daily lot.

Flabbergasted, left he his home,
to try his luck elsewhere;
the madam luck was against him, sire,
could find he a job nowhere.

Then took he up the blessed profession
to shine the shoes of others;
barefoot the poor boy, still is;
who cares for him, who bothers!



Chatwala

Around the corner of the street,
there sits a man,
with improvised make-shift stand,
selling spiced and assorted fruit—
better known as 'Chat'.

Calls he out in a clarion voice,
shrill and shrieky—
typical Delhi style—
to lure the passers-by.
In a bowl of leaves,
joined together with spikes,
he cuts a rind of banana,
a cube or two of apple and guava,
a piece of this and a piece of that,
and dresses them with 'masala'.
A half-cut lime, squeezed thereon,
to give it a sour flavour
and mixes them with fervour.

The finished product,
thus produced,
is a luscious, tasty treat—
waters your mouth, the very sight
and none can resist the feat!

The advance of science—
an' technology too—
could hardly hit his trade—
a champion of the ancient lore,
curator of Delhi's last;
despise him not, O, friend of mine,
for he's our glorious past.



Newspaper Boy

Near starvation made him leave his home
at a soft and tender age.
Hardly was he ten
with unkempt hair
and flowing nose,
dressed in shabby pyjama and a torn shirt,
bespeaking misery,
unmistakably writ large
on his forehead, broad and shining.
With down-cast eyes,
aquiline nose and quivering lips,
showing his confidence firm
and determination unwavering
to earn for himself a living.

After strenuous efforts,
fell he on the profession
of 'evening-news' hawking,
standing near a congested bus stand
or a crossing,
jostling with unruly crowd,
unseemly scrambling,
climbing up and down the bus,
already filled to capacity,
making the vehicle an inferno real—

with multitudinous crowd of men
 frantically striving to get back home,
 caring not for bruises sharp
 or headlong stumbling.

The spot posed a threat real to passers-by,
 in the midst of vehicles,
 big and small,
 halting with a jerk
 and again speeding.

Shouted the little agile lad 'Evening-News',
 'Aaj ki taza khabar,'
 day in and day out;
 everybody was so keen
 to get back home
 after the day's drab drudgery.
 This was his daily lot,
 from which
 there was no fleeing,
 since there was nothing else
 he could do
 to earn his living.
 Faced he valiantly
 the challenge great everyday,
 no change appearing ; for barring this
 there was perhaps nothing,
 which fate had evidently
 in store for him.

Smiling,
 he bore the un-ending traffic hazard,
 stooping and bending,
 only to get around 'rupee' three a day,
 for undergoing all the risk and pains.
 The pavement at night
 was his only bedding,
 the vagaries of nature
 blasting wind,
 shrivelling cold
 and furious rains,
 notwithstanding.

Came he to practise the uneasy job,
 not without torment
 and anguish slashing.
 There was none to offer him
 an alternative better or consoling.

to raise his living
to a level
to meet his needs bare.
Got he inured to shrieking incessantly
to carry on his tiring trade,
moving and frisking
and reconciled to this Call
that gave him only
husk and straws.
Bare-foot, the poor boy still is,
who bothers for him,
who thinks of bettering his lot
or adding a pittance
to the little he earns,
with labour, sweat and risk;
persistently he yokes himself
to this plight
that has become
his daily lot
and companion in misery.

• •

Three Musketeers

The three Musketeers,
thickly associated with each other,
moving fast in the heart of Delhi,
out of various classes and types,
hand in hand,
amidst fraternity,
affection and dedication,
in fact, amazing.

A race,
in fact,
a friendly competition
starts among them to reach the rendezvous,
prompted by an impulse at out-stripping one another,
though with rancour none
and animus non-existing—
one of them known as 'Bambole',
the other, 'Hardambole'
and the third 'Kabhi-na-bole'.

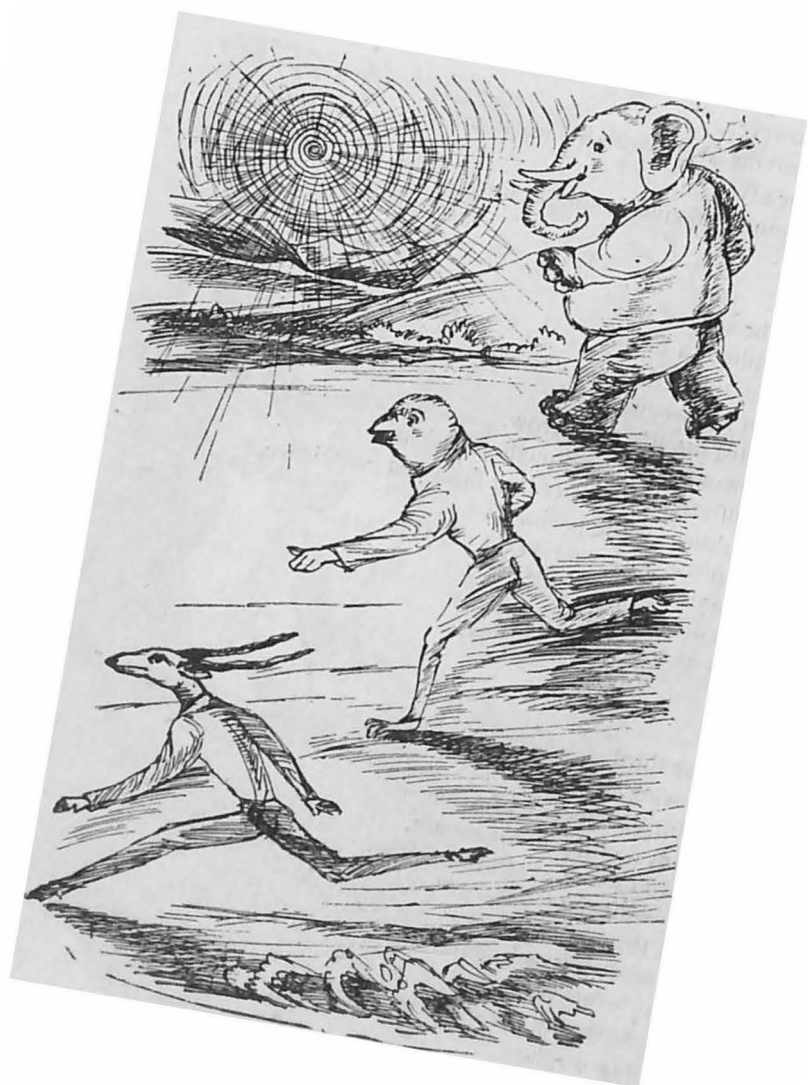
The first was seen
trudging along, slow,
yet steady,
with the grandeur of an elephant,
mighty and majestic,
quick witted,



frank and honest at heart,
 holding in his trunk a piece of sugar-cane,
 adoringly held,
 not yet munching,
 however,
 moving ahead with his usual gait,
 steady,
 though lagging behind in misery.

The second was
 without a bridle,
 devoid of the least check
 on his tongue,
 chirping like a sparrow,
 uncontrollable—though practical,
 self-reliant and meriting faith and confidence,
 holding, while pacing fast,
 a piece of carrot—sweet in his mouth—
 tightened purposely,
 as does a pony—
 so as to avoid its losing.

The third
 moving ahead—
 with the alacrity of a stag—
 with nothing in his mouth,
 yet nibbling at straws of grass,
 growing here and there,
 on the carriage-way—
 dependable and nimble,—
 was however,
 frisking with the qualities,
 a stag displays.
 The men
 paying him rapt attention
 for his restraint over tongue
 and self-confidence within.



Lo ! the journey ends.
 'Kabhi-na-bole'
 with his mouth still sealed-up,
 out-stripping the two friends,
 left far behind;
 'Hardambole,'
 standing second in this friendly race,
 out-speeding 'Bambole',
 who, though third in the race,
 retains his majestic grace—
 trust-worthy and honest
 in purpose and attitude fairly-bright.

The friendly race ends after all
 and the three shaking hands,
 gripping each other—
 with a clasp tight, yet relaxing,
 gazing into each other's eyes—
 with affection and
 mutual inter-dependence,
 'a sight for men to see
 and angels to admire'.

• •

The Unbeaten Charisma

Standing, I descried
on the high mountain-side,
sloping gently down
the scintillating verdant carpet,
spreading with a charm irresistible,
clouds
cotton candy looking,
swimming across the sky,
a cataract with emerald water,
sparkling like shining waves
on a high ocean,
gushing down the mountain,
steep and stately,
which,
I, with lifted hands,
admire and thank God for.

Wealth can bring me not
the sun shining with crimson rays,
developing into white resplendent, which I love
to gloat on during summer days;

followed by shrivelling winter,
 with its fury, felling haggard leaves,
 floating in the air,
 across the shining frost
 and the bedevilling fog—
 man can only admire
 and thank the Almighty for;
 the spring,
 after all,
 cometh with flowers fragrant
 and breeze gently touching the forehead,
 with its lulling melodies.

Lovely seasons come and go,
 wealth cannot purchase,
 nor Man's efforts bring in.
 The Almighty enacts this charisma
 of beauteous things with a halo,
 which none can produce,
 barring the great Creator
 whom I beseech to fill my cup
 with honey-dews and manna drops,
 which none can make nor invent,
 except the great Being,
 who is above Man and Science.
 The cycle of nature
 none can beat
 but feel thankful to Him for
 and providing with deftness
 the changing panorama of light and music
 in nature everyday.



The Enfolding Grace of Nature

There are so many beautiful things
for us to see each day:
the dawn with crimson rays of the sun
shimmering through the dark
scarlet racing clouds
across the sky dimly shining—
penetrating the thick green groves
of mango trees,
slightly bending down
to kiss the ground,
holy and sacred.

The beautiful panorama is joined
by the sweet little birds,
chirping with full-throated ease
to welcome the grand gala of the sunrise
with spontaneous glee;
the scarlet sun
changing into sparkling white
to enable the harvest of wheat and mustard ripen,
with the splendour of colours alternating,
candy-looking and dazzling yellow,
a sight unique,
and bewildering.



Lo ! comes the glorious and spectacular dusk
 with the giant sun
 swimming into horizons,
 mysterious and unknown,
 calling to a jerking halt,
 the hectic activity of Man and beast;
 the birds flying back to their nests,
 cosy and soft,
 with a lullaby and lore,
 sweet and coaxing,
 a signal red for human buzz and struggle;
 sports-men with guns
 loosely hanging around their waists
 and their wrappers
 filled with the day's 'shikar',
 stained with the innocent blood of their victims;
 the darkness encircling the firmament great
 sending the good and the bad—
 the killer and the giver—
 to respite compulsory.

The wonderful bespeckled charisma
 of Nature's hub
 continues revolving,
 sometimes relaxing,
 sometimes tightening.





Change of Colour in Nature

The dry branches are putting on colours,
soft and green,
and new leaves and buds are coming out.

The eagle is pouring forth a refrain,
sad and tragic, knowing
that the nest built by it with
toil hard and mighty,
would disappear
in the on-coming flood of the spring
with its message of fresh and new-born love.

The prickly thorns are worried,
as the signs of their marks
would also be wiped out
by the flood of colour
and luscious greenery
coming up with the spring.

The owl feels bothered
by the advent of the new bright morn,
replacing the encircling gloom.

The requiem of the enemy
is that the haggard regime of
winter, with its shrivelling fury,
is giving way to a set up,
warm, bright and fascinating.



The Spring of Colour

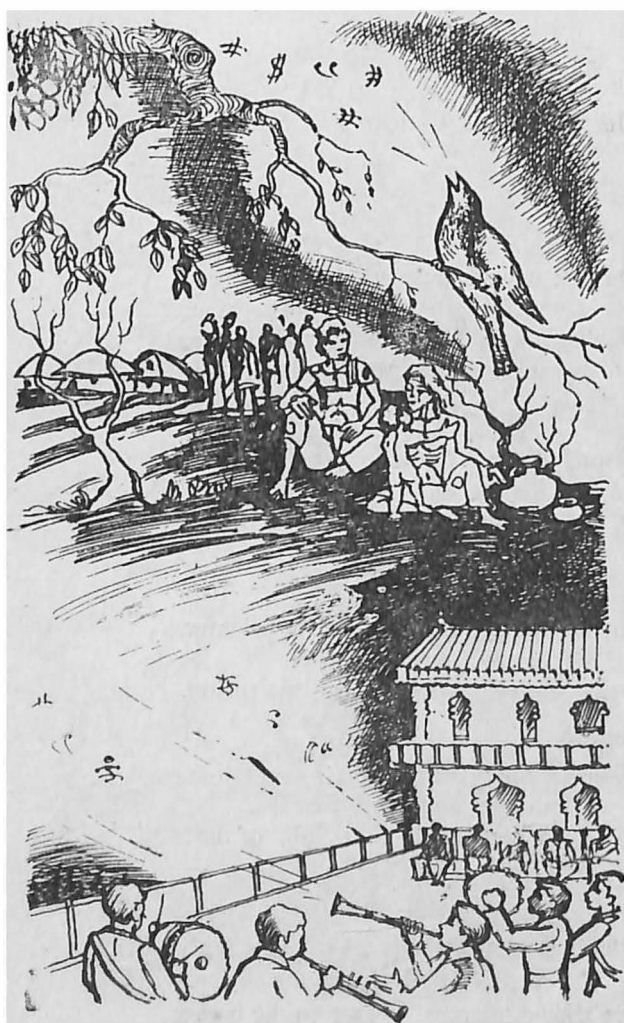
Whether flowers are plentiful or sparse,
spring is nevertheless the spring.
Whether the buds are quiet or blooming,
spring is nevertheless the spring.

Persons denigrating
the spring are devoid
of understanding clear
and discernment real.

Whether the sky is overcast with brightness
or enveloped by gloom,
spring is nevertheless the spring.

The small birds twitter—their sweet note
soothes and captivates
the heart; the 'koo' 'koo' of the 'koil'
reverberates in the spring.

If the owl hoots and the crow 'caw-caws',
spring is nevertheless the spring.
Even though there is a sweep in the breeze,
it does not affect the spring.
If the leaves are scattered,
spring is nevertheless spring !



Eternal Lesson

The 'koil' sings with a note of woe,
perched informally on a tender branch
of the mango tree,
singularly marking out the rich velvety carpets
on which the wealthy are seen
ensconsed against the dry
and soft branch,
hanging down the bowery tree.

The songs
emanating from the palaces of the wealthy
are formal and artificial;
the word 'koo-hoo', which the koil sings
repeatedly, tells of tales of grief,
real and veritable.

The sound of the orchestra,
on which the rich play
is the sound of 'wah',
of mirth and luxury—
whereas the 'koo' of the 'koil',
that has seen real tragedy of the universe,
overtaking and slashing the poor souls,
exhibits the sufferings of the impoverished.

The little bird knows
 much more of 'Nature and Man',
 of moral evil and of good'
 than
 all the philosophers
 and mentors of thought,
 moralising
 on the theme of Soul and Man.

The bird, singing incessantly
 and warbling grief-stricken notes,
 has derived the lesson of discipline and morality
 from the impulses of 'vernal wood',
 much more than the so-called guides
 and mentors stalking the universe.

Why does the individual
 moving about in flesh and blood
 not try to learn
 a bit of man and nature
 from the little informal bird?

Why does he heed the hollow and bleak lessons
 flowing from the utterances
 of the faltering individuals
 and lying tongues ?

Nature's Hymn

Many a time we have seen
the little birds in the rain,
twittering and chirping with glee,
hymns celestial,
filled with gratitude
to Him for His enfolding grace and beauty,
their beaks open
and feathers furrowed up,
glistening partly in shine
and partly in rain.

The rabbits
with their snowy cotton-wooled thick furs,
are seen shimmering in the rain.
They sometimes frisk about
and sometimes flee across
the green luscious fields.

The fruit-laden trees
bending down to kiss the sacred grounds,
thanking the Almighty—
much like the little birds
and the innocuous rabbits—
whose sweet melodies

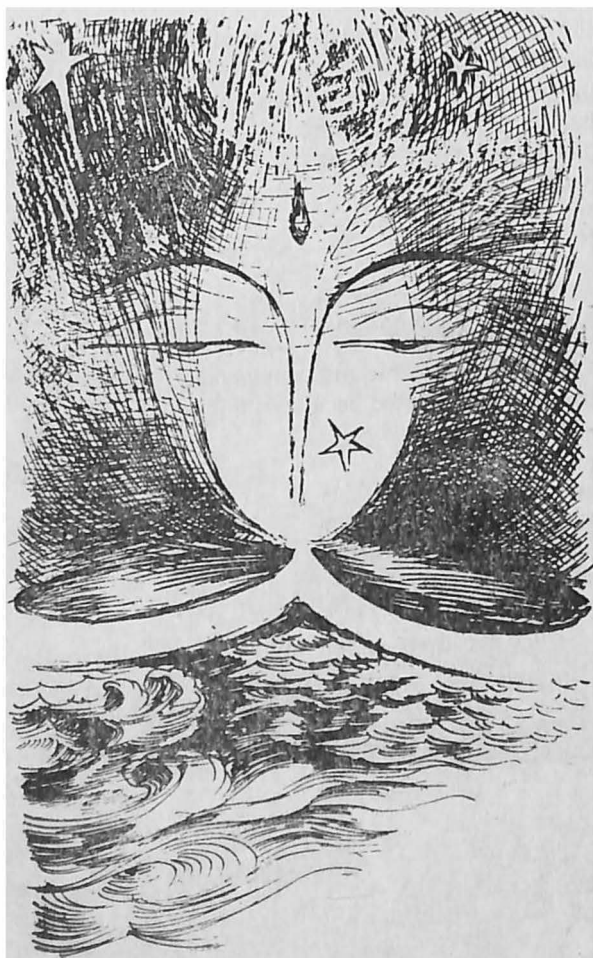


and brisk gambols display
 their profound thankfulness
 to Him in motion,
 as it were.

To this we have to add
 the butterfly's gold wings
 flapping profusely .
 in movements, brisk and flights sweet,
 balanced deftly in the rain,
 like dotted starrel flames,
 scintillating upwards
 and at times
 downwards too.

All this exhibits,
 in terms unmistakable and convincing,
 how the little devoted beauteous things
 in Nature,
 one and all,
 hymning His praise,
 have a moral lesson to tell
 to faltering men and beasts
 that they,
 likewise,
 owe some duty to the Almighty.

• •



Flame Divine

I shall miss thee—as does a dedicated lover—my love,
faced with the shock of losing;
the moon with its soothing glow will be eclipsed
and the starrel shine suppressed.

Nonetheless the pangs of love shall burn within
and the spark divine with its reminiscences sweet
shall keep me moving and hoping against hope
that thou shalt come and meet me at the tryst.

At every knock my heart jumps high;
hark! hark!—thou hast, after all, come back
to give me love—delight; for thou art eternal
and thou shalt perish not, heavy rains and furious
floods, despite.

• •



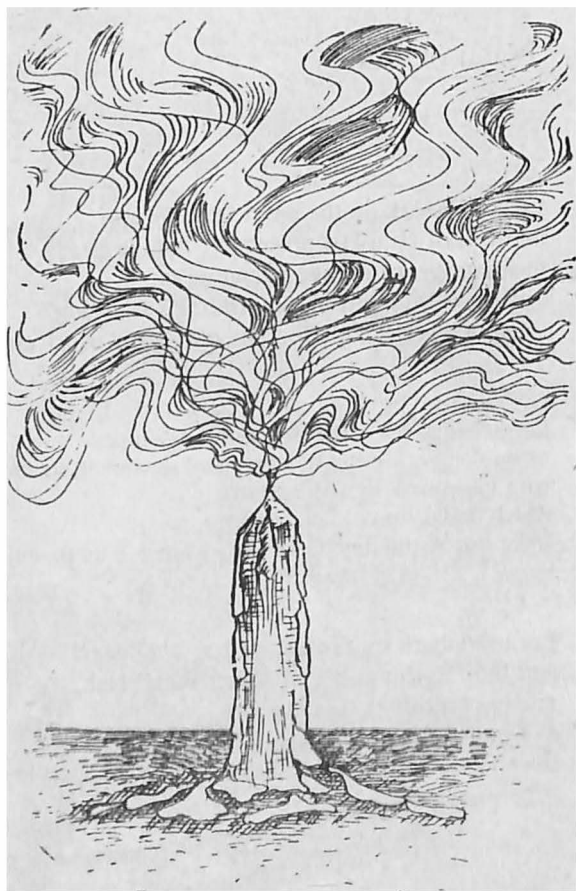
Psalm of Life

Let us embark on the day with a 'prayer'
and beg of Him His protection benign,
in whatever we engage ourselves in,
and must keep our cheer sustained all along,
since this is the day God has meant for us to enjoy.

Let us embark on the day with an 'object'
of implementing the schemes and desires in us enshrined,
with happiness in us inspired,
which we at no cost must forgo,
since this is the day God has meant for us to enjoy.

Let us embark on the day with a 'challenge'
and look to things bright rather than bleak,
musing on things that gladden,
as we must traverse ahead,
since this is the day God has made for us to enjoy.





The Reality

**One who knows how to die also knows how
to live;**

**Life is life, but death can also lead
to life;**

**A love-lorn being, now smiles, now
weeps.**

**When the flame is extinguished, its smell
spreads around.**

• •



Life—an Illusion

The goal is a deception and so is the journey
towards it.
The entire scenario is a hoax and so is my
sight.
Oh ! what kind of a balance there is between
urges and sentiments.
Love and the effect of love are both a
deception.

The instinct of a man is designed to unravel
the mystery.
The bigger the problem, the greater the effort
to overcome this.
From life to death the struggle continues
unabated.
Self-exhibition is the name of progress, which
is a deception.

The wish of the harvest of roses leads to the
end of the autumn.
The garden during spring is a deception of
colour and fragrance.
All the struggles are endeavours leading to
deception.
The depth in the sight is the result of effort,
which is an illusion.
If all this is an illusion, let us end up this
sport.
It is difficult indeed to befriend the reality.
Let us die during the period of deception caused
by the rose and its fragrance.



The Deceptive Smile

**This smile is neither permanent nor sustained and
is so not the real smile.**

**The laughter carried over for long tires the
individual.**

**The smile produces a pang deep and prickly to the
individual aggrieved.**

**The joy and happiness of the world ache the heart
of the man engulfed in gloom and misery.**

**The slumbering wounds of the heart are stirred
by artificial joy and mirth.**

**When somebody sings, in the early morn, tears start
surging up in the sodden eyes
and trickle down the cheeks of others.**

**The effect of joy and merry-making gives a blow hard
and harassment deep to the
man in misery.**



Confusion and Tension

Why do we point
our fingers at
others' faults?
There may be
more holes in
our shirts than the ones the others wear.

Let us look within
in a wary
and sensible manner.
Let us be
objective and purposeful
to be able to succeed
in life full of
challenges formidable.

When night comes
and human activity stops,
let us make sure
to look back o'ver the hours,
assess our day's performance
with a discerning look
and also judge
introspectively
the work done
and results achieved.

Have we given
the simplest task
our best - the very best?
Have we done
a good turn,
justified yet,
to whomsoever
we might have met,
given, at least,
a smile,
disarming and soothing,
to all
who might have come
for help?

The load we carry,
one and all,
is heavy,
and conditions
restrictive and hamstrung.
We have all
to discharge nevertheless
the load of duties,
to us entrusted,
and traverse ahead
unloading and depositing
items, one by one,
of the heavy burden
of obligations
on us imposed,
in a way,
unoffending, judicious and balanced;
and dispense justice
not only real,
but also seeming as such,
since this is our
sacred task.

This, I feel,
would help us
solve our problems,
even the most
subtle and abstruse,
and clear the
existing haze and tension
typifying the adage,
'suddenly,
as when
the mist dissolves
from a mountain top,
the landscape
would be visible
and the way
would be clear'.

• •

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God's Will

Poor ?

Yes, in money,
but not at heart;
since I enjoy
the blessings rich,
of the Creator.

Fatigued ?

Yes, rather over-fatigued,
but I feel this not;
since the Almighty
has taught me
not to heed
this at all. •

Lonely ?

Oh, full-well
I know its irk,
but mind this not;
since I know
this is a usual
phenomenon of human life.

Drive?
yes,
I have enough,
but know not
what to say;
since it is
for society
to judge and assess this.

Challenges ?
Yes, I have numerous,
but they bother me not;
since I believe in
His enabling mercy
to make me
overcome them.

Hence,
I am rich,
and self-satisfied too
with what I am;
since God has taught me
to remain contented
with what
he makes of me.



The Light of Reason

Bharat—adored and celestial—has,
since times immemorial,
been known as the land,
where milk and honey
have been flowing
in abundance.

The ancient culture
and traditions hoary
of this great country,
in fact, a continent by itself,
have been flourishing and blooming
with fragrance,
sweet and mild,
in the lap of
the soft and wary
wisp of wind,
with its waves
gently rising and falling,
evenly spreading
the message of
love, mercy, pity and peace,
over the four corners of
this habitable universe,
interesting in its
enormity and expanse,
and delectable and fascinating in its,
challenging wide seas,



and flummoxing terrains,
 gently sloping high mounts,
 and the lush meadows,
 converging on rich plains,
 adorned with
 candy looking wheat corns
 and yellow mustard blossoms.

Lo! with abruptness,
 stunning and shocking,
 we have lately been
 overtaken
 by a whirl-wind of
 folly and violence,
 breaking out on a pattern
 bespeaking
 systematised prompting and
 a scheme of things,
 preconceived and pre-planned,
 and directed by the
 misled, the selfish and the unscrupulous;
 sporadic, though all this was
 and deftly restrained by
 the discerning and the balanced,
 the perceptive and
 the far-seeing few,
 who really matter.
 The imperative need of the day
 is to dispel
 the insensate folly,
 and drive away
 the threatening thunder-bolts
 of violence,
 posing
 a threat grave
 to human life,
 the historic monuments



and the rich culture
of this
sacred and resplendent land.

Religions are only tracts varying
and modes of worship differing,
symbolised by the
temples of the Hindus, the mosques of Muslims,
the churches of Christians and the gurudwaras of Sikhs;
the aim unmistakably is
similar and identical—
the quest of
reason and truth
and the uniform and self-satisfying
access to the
Divine halo.

Lo ! untiring efforts going apace,
and the triumphal march to the tryst
have after all
borne fruit;
the cautious and beatific
tread of the Creator
is within hearing,
and the shining and stunning
Divine circle of light and reason
well within sight.

Friends ! Awake and march ahead—
 clasping hands,
 balancing foot-steps,
 and dispelling mutual differences;
 protect the human form, wheresoever it be;
 safe-guard the treasures
 of the land,
 enshrined
 in creeds and faiths,
 religions and culture
 of one and all,
 for the future of mankind
 hinges sensitively
 on how you
 preserve the light
 and traverse ahead—
 in complete unison,
 tentacles notwithstanding!

The success of
 the holy mission
 of peace and harmony
 shall be a certainty,
 provided
 you keep the doors of
 your hearts and minds
 open,
 'to let the imprisoned demons
 escape
 and the beauty of the world
 take possession'.

The Rare Individual

The rare individual
represents
the great person
coming of a scarce species
born in a country
after ages.

He imparts
fresh lush and life
to each plant adorning
and bud blooming
in the garden of life.

He crushes ruthlessly
each and every foe
of what we term
the human form,
stalking the world
in flesh and blood.

He raises a clarion call,
valiant and irrepressible,
to save and protect
mankind—



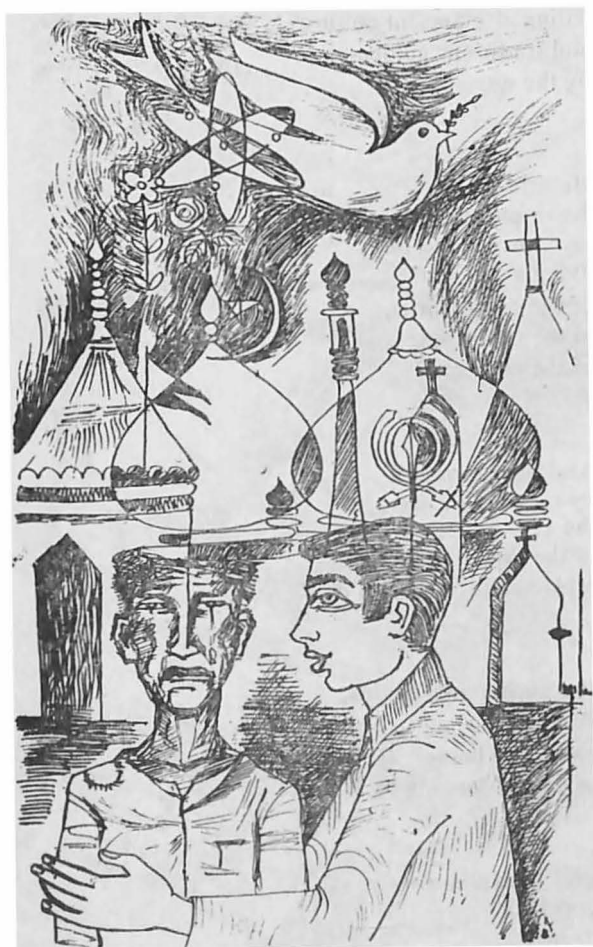
from a bedlam
 of selfish and misdirected
 endeavours at self-annihilation—
 felling also ancient culture
 and traditions golden—
 by the way-side.

He lifts aloft
 the resplendent banner of
 love, mercy and pity,
 dying at the hands
 of the desperadoes,
 in the mad house
 of the universe.

And he transmutes
 by magic, as it were,
 the very pattern
 of the liquor 'bazzm',
 replacing it by manna dew.

Has such a one, as this,
 veritably
 come into being
 in the age passing by ?

Feel I, spontaneously
 impelled
 to say,
 'Yes'.



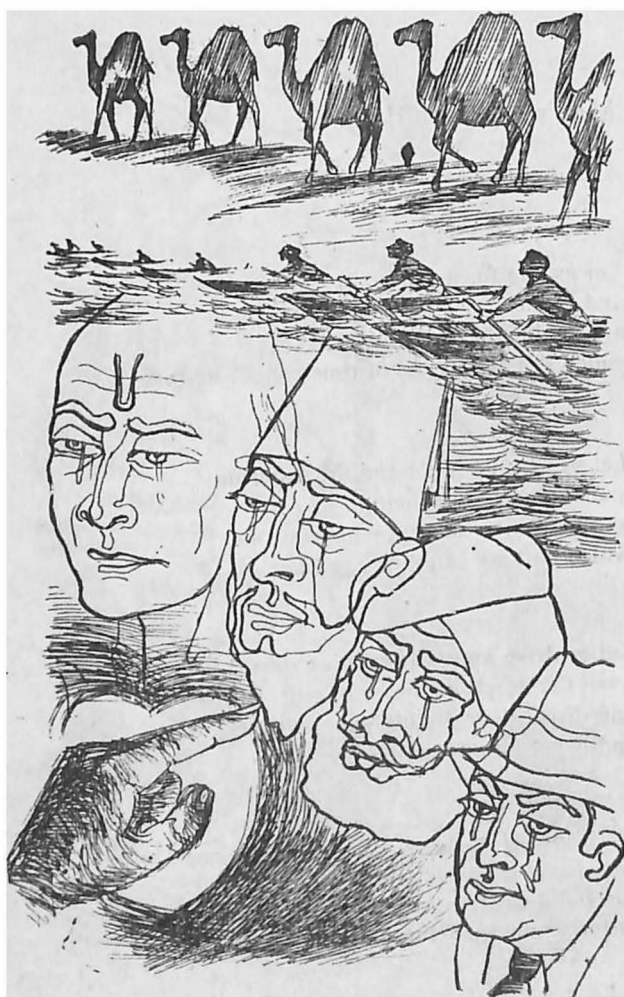
Man's Eternal Glory

Let us live for a cause
and do the optimum good to others;
and build edifices of virtue,
which the onslaughts of time cannot destroy.

Let us love the poor and the suffering
and lift and nurse them;
and leave behind happy impressions,
which nothing can fade nor blur.

Let us drive away the existing mist
from the minds of the befogged;
and dispel their doubts, superstitions
and depression for ever.

Let us divert the horrid engine of science
into useful channels of human endeavour;
and build castles of shining splendour,
reflecting the sparkling light of man's glory.



The Real Man

The heart of each one of us is lost in an ocean of grief;
may I know whose boat, if at all, has landed at the shore ?

It is all right for you to point your critical finger at others; but may I also know, have you ever tried to look into your
 yourself?

Which caravan could I in the circumstances, lead?—
the time has probably been left much behind my pace.



It is correct that I am nearing the goal of my ambition;
there is, however, a furious storm yet brewing in this
direction.

The great man, who could bring round the time itself to a
central point,
would, without doubt, rule over the age as its sovereign.

I am so made that I can't bow down before the fate;
the world well knows the attitude I hold towards life.

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APPENDICES

Holy Dip in Sangam

- Prayag* : the ancient seat of learning, now known as Allahabad, in Uttar Pradesh
- Sangam* : the confluence of the three sacred rivers —the Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati
- Chai Garam* : hot tea
- Babu* : a way of addressing an individual, being talked to
- Puri garm garm* : *puri* stands for an Indian bread which is fried; and *garm garm* implies very hot indeed
- Puri garam* : hot Indian bread, as already stated
- Kullhar* : earthen cup
- Tonga* : a vehicle driven by a horse, a *tongawala* being its driver
- Rickshawala* : a person driving a three-wheeled cycle. However a *rickshaw* driven by a puller is a two wheeled cycle on the road, generally with two passengers

- Katra Neel and Chandni Chowk* : two important residential and marketing places, respectively, in Old Delhi
- Khaiye Kali Jaman* : please eat black *Jaman*, a kind of black cherry-like Indian fruit
- Taravat̤* : refreshing or soothing
- Dimag* : mind
- Aur Dil* : and heart—Hence *taravat̤ dimag aur dil* means soothing or refreshing for the mind and heart
- Shahtoot* : mulberry (flourishes well enough in India also)
- Thande* : cold, here cooling/refreshing
- Shahtoot Thande* : here cooling/soothing mulberry
- Delhi* : The Capital of India
- Patashewala* : vendor of fried small *pooris* (round doos) filled with saltish, sour water

Delhi Composite Culture

- Bharat* : India
- Mata* : mother

A New Year Message

- Bazm* : a meeting place for merry-making or for fun-fare

Shoe-Shine Boy

Chor : thief

Chatwala

Chatwala : a hawker or seller of *Chat*—an assortment of spiced fruit of many types mixed with *masala*—a mixture of spices and salt, carefully pounded and mixed up

Newspaper Boy

Aaj ki taza khabar : to-day's latest news

Three Musketeers

Bam Bole : one of the divine names of Lord Shiva and used here for a person by way of an innuendo—

Har Dam Bole : always talking or extremely talkative

Kabhi Na Bole : never talking or absolutely reticent

The Spring of Colour

Koil : an Indian singing bird

Koo koo : sound emanating from the *koil* just referred to

Eternal Lesson

Koo hoo : singing note typical of a *koil*, a singing Indian bird, also clarified right above

Wah : sound signifying merry-making

The Rare Individual

Liquor Bazm : a place for gathering—a meet where wine is served freely—reminiscent of the typical Moghul style

Call of Harmony

Panchsheel : well known principle of peace enunciated by the late Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, based on the five ingredients, like, total abstention from and non intermeddling with matters relating to other countries. This later on led to the creation of the third world of which late Pandit Nehru was the main spokesman

Nanak : the great saint of the sikh community, called as their prophet

J. N. Singh

Bright academic career. Was lecturer in English in a Degree/Post Graduate College of repute. Was also Principal of a college.

Administrator : Held important assignments in Government and in Municipal Corporation of Delhi from July 1, 1965; was Director of Inquiries/Asstt. Commissioner (Estt.), Deputy Municipal Commissioner, General Manager of the Delhi Electric Supply Undertaking and Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Delhi.

Journalist : Correspondent to the Amrit Bazar Patrika, Sub-Editor 'Rohilkhand Akhbar' (English and Urdu) and 'Arsh'; has been contributing to leading national dailies and magazines.

Author (i) Problems of All India Backward classes Federation
(ii) Primary Education and National Building

Educationist : Member, governing body of Rao Tularam College. Was member Advisory Committee (National Service Scheme) of the University of Delhi. Was instrumental in setting up the present Shivaji College in Delhi and was also Vice-president of its Governing body and also a net-work of many educational institutions/centres/hostels in Delhi, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Amravati etc.

Reformer : Secretary/General Secretary and Vice-President of the All India Backward classes Federation, recognised and aided by the Government.