

# Contemporary Indian English Poets

Appraisal of Selected 16 Poets



Contemporary Indian English Poets  
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S.L. Peeran  
&  
Mashrique Jahan



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(Appraisal of Selected 16 Poets)**

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Dedicated to  
Poets and Poetry lovers of the world



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## Preface

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This book is a modest attempt to explore the works of some recent Indian English Poets Syed Ameeruddin, Krishna Srinivas, T.V. Reddy, Dwarhanath H Kabadi, I.H. Rizvi, R.K. Singh, C.L. Khatri, Manas Bakshi, S.Radhamani, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. Srinivasa Rangaswami, Pronab Kumar Majumdar, D.C. Chambial, Biplab Majumdar and Vijay Vishal. I am a non-academic poet myself, I have been encouraged by several poets to pen my appraisal on these Poets.

Ms. Mashique Jahan did her dissertation as partial requirement for the degree of M.Phil in English from ISM university Dhanbad on the *Spiritual Consciousness in the Poetry of S.L. Peeran* and also did her doctorate on the poetry of Sri Aurobindo and S.L. Peeran from Bihar University.

In this book her dissertation has been included including the introductions, forewords and reviews on my poetry.

I hope my effort, aimed at promoting meaningful poetry in general and recent Indian English poetry in particular will not go in vain and inspire members of the academia in the country to take note of good poetry even if by little known voices.

I am equally thankful to other contributors for writing articles, Introduction, fore-words and reviews on my poetry. My thanks to several poetry journals for publishing reviews and articles on my poetry.

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I am highly obliged to Sri Sudarshan Kcherry of Authorspress, New Delhi for agreeing to publish this volume nicely and thus support my creative and critical urges.

**S.L. Peeran**



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Part I  
Appraisal of Selected 16 Poets  
by  
S.L. Peeran



## Contemporary Indian English Poetry

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After the advent of English rule in our country and introduction of English language and its study, many Indians started writing in English both prose and poetry. In-depth study has already taken place about the earlier Indian poets commencing from Henry Derozio, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Toru Dutt, Sri Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore then moving on to the second stage of poets like Kamala Das, Nissim Ekeziel, A.K. Ramanujam, R. Parthasarathy, Jayanta Mahapatra, Arun Kolatkar, O.P. Bhatnagar, G.S Sharat Chandra, Shiv. K. Kumar, P. Lal, Keki Daruwalla, Dom Moraes, A.K. Mehrotra, Prithish Nandy, Eunice De Souza, Imtiaz Dharkar, Vikram Seth, Agha Shahid Ali, Syed Ameeruddin and Krishna Srinivas.

Bruce King dealt with modern Indian poetry in English (Oxford revised Edition 2001) and referred to all those early poets and some younger poets who had risen like meteorites like Ranjit Hoskote, Vijay Nambisan and Jeet Thayil.

Prof. K.R. Srinivas Iyengar assiduously collected for his Indian writing in English information about authors and books spanning a century and a half.

M.K. Naik and Shyamala A. Narayana dealt with Indian English Literature 1980-2000, (Pencraft International AD 2001) while Satish Kumar had done *A Survey of Indian English Poetry* (Prakash Book Depot, Bareilly, 2001).

C.L. Khatri has brought out two works Indian Literature in English – *Critical Discourses* (Book Enclave Jaipur 2003) and *Indian*

*Writing in English: Voices from the Oblivion* (Jaipur; Book Enclave-2004)

I, K. Sharma dealt exclusively on the poetry of R.K. Singh, in his work: *New Indian English Poetry: An Alternative Voice*, Book Enclave, Shanhi Wagar Jaipur 2004.

R.A. Singh has also dealt extensively on contemporary poets in his work *Continuity: Five Indian English Poets* (Jaipur Book Enclave 2003). The exhaustive, authoritative work is of R.K. Singh *Voices of the Present: Critical Essays on Some Indian English Poets* (Book Enclave Jaipur 2006). R.K. Singh in his preface says:

“I would like to view the present volume as complementary to *New Indian English Poetry; An Alternative Voice*: R.K. Singh (ed. I.K. Sharma 2004) *Indian Writing in English: Voices from Oblivion* (ed. Chkote Lal Khatri, 2004), *Current Indian Creativity in English* (R.S. Tiwary, 2003) and *Continuity: Five Indian English Poets* (ed. R.A. Singh 2003) that Book Enclave published writing. I would feel rewarded if it could motivate scholars and researchers to explore some new poets in depth for post graduate and doctoral studies”. This work is a scholarly work and has done in depth study of new talent who deserves recognition and more prominence. Among the poets who have received chapters are (1) Krishna Srinivas: Quest for Reality (2) I.K. Sharma: A Social Realist (3) O.P. Bhatnagar: Obsession with Death (4) Laxmi Narayan Mahapatra: A Thinker Poet (5) Niranjan Mohanty: A Poet of the ‘Bhakthi Cult’ (6) Sex Imagery in Shiv Kumar’s Poetry (7) Kamala Das and some other recent Indian English Women poets; (8) Gopal Honnalgere: Personal and Powerful (9) D.S. Maini: Beyond the Bounds of Thought (10) I.H. Rizvi: A Social Romanticist (11) Dwarkanath H. Kabadi: A Poet of ‘Flickers’ (12) D.C. Chambial (13) P.C.K. Prem: Voyage into Barren Consciousness (14) P.K. Roy: A poet of Christian Sensibility (15) A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (16) S.L. Peeran: A Poet of Inner Vibrancy (17) R.S. Tiwary: A Sage literature. The book has a chapter on women poets; poets of 1980’s, 1990’s and ends up with a chapter of New Indian English Writing: Post Colonialism or politics of rejection.



M. Fakruddin, Editor *Poet International* and H. Tulsi, Editor *Metverse Muse* have done tremendous contributions to the Indian English poetry. M. Fakruddin is a master of Sonnets and Haikus and has published several works on Indian English poetry. In his book 'Contemporary Poets' (P1.1998) has interviewed large number of poets and has elicited their views on contemporary poetry. The definition given by Ram Narayan Tiwari, Rita Malhotra, Simanchal Patnaik, C.S. Srinivas, Srinivasa Rangaswamy, K.M. Mathew, Vimala Seshadri and others are worthy of note.

I.H Rizvi and N.F Rizvi have dealt on *Origin Development and History of Indian English Poetry*. (Prakash book depot, Bareilly 2008).

T V Reddy in his monumental work has traced the origin of Indian English Poetry from its origin to the present contemporary times including the works of even unknown poets in his work "*A Critical Survey of Indo-English Poetry* (2016) Authorspress, New Delhi.

There are authors like S.L. Peeran (Indian English Poetry Searching New Ground 2013 Yking Books Jaipur); PCK Prem. Raghupathi, P. Raja, Domonique and others have contributed by their research work in respect of large number of poets who have established themselves in the Indian English Poetry scene.

To conclude I would like to refer to the article of Srinivasa Rangaswamy (April 2001) "Poetry to my mind has come to acquire urgent relevance a compelling role for it today, as the redeemer of the race", "Poetry is a 'State of being'. It is a way of life, of living, long ago, Milton perhaps meant the same thing when he said: He who would be laudable things in verse, himself ought to be a great poet." Again he writes ".....a piece of poetry presents a pointed perception of reality from an angle that is unique-unique to the poet. A poem is like a jewel you can hold in your hand, admire and be lost in its captivating luminosity. Its message hangs like an incandescent lamp suspended in the sky for all time. Poetry, by illuminating the interstices of human experience, opens up new horizons of vision, fresh vistas of thinking and deepens the awareness, refined perception of the world around, it is an

unveiling, a revelation, it enlarges man's capacity to identify himself with the joys and sorrows and the sufferings around him, makes him more humane and compassionate, it makes him a better human being.”

Indian poets writing in English who have achieved the above objectives deserve recognition and their works have to be taken up for study and for introduction in the curriculum of schools and colleges.

## Syed Ameeruddin as a Poet

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Syed Ameeruddin has attained name and fame for more than three decades in the Indian English poetry scene. He has been mentioned in all the books written by critics of the Indian English poetry. In the first category of poets, names which are commonly associated are that of Nissim Ezekiel, Eunice D'Souza, Dom Moraes, Shiv K Kumar, P Lal, Keki Daruwalla, A K Mehrotra, and Pritish Nandy. Vikram Seth, Agha Shahid Ali and Kamala Das are their contemporaries.

Prior and after independence the works of Sri Aurobindo, Smt. Sarojini Naidu, Sri Rabindranath Tagore, Krishna Srinivas, Syed Ameeruddin, R K Singh, I H Rizvi, Jaya Mahapatra rose to the dizzy heights. Now on the contemporary scene there are several poets of eminence who have achieved prominence like D C Chambial, M Fakruddin, P K Majumdar, Manas Bakshi, C L Khatri, Dwarkanath Kabadi, Manas Bakshi, S L Peeran and large number of them. There are ever increasing poets in India writing in English both in prose and achieving distinction both in India and Abroad.

It is a matter of gratification to note that Syed Ameeruddin finds his place in the works written by critics of Indian Literature in English. Syed Ameeruddin retired as a Professor of English and attained distinction in English poetry.

I.H Rizvi and N.F Rizvi in their "Origen development and history of Indian English Poetry" at page 139 writes:

Syed Ameeruddin is an outstanding Indian English poet who brought out his first collection of poems in 1972. He is a serious sensitive and original poet. However he takes inspiration from English poets like Shelley Arnold and T.S Elliot. His poetry is filled with metaphysical element like Arnold; Ameeruddin also feels that poetry is a criticism of life. His poetry is honey combed with multidimensional images.

Kalaivendhan S.S. Nathan publisher for Kalaivendhan Publications in the first edition 1972 of the first work of Syed Ameeruddin *What Himalaya Said and Other Poems* in the publisher's note wrote:

The name Syed Ameeruddin may spell the name of age old philosopher to many but the fact remains that the author of this book is a young man of the present day world. This book offers a unique insight into the poetic maturity of a man whose impact would undoubtedly be felt in the Indo-Anglian Poetry for generations to come. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the poems of Mr Ameeruddin is that he has centred his themes on nature itself and its habits. This candidly betrays the fact that the author does not believe in unfortunate and Maya. The theme in every one of his poem is very much linked with the goodness of nature and at the same time rebukes the false beliefs of our generation. Writing poetry may mean too many as writing a love story or a fact but it is not an easy task as that. Metre, rhyme and imagery form the basis of any poem, but to give or put life into it is the work of true artist, which Mr Syed Ameeruddin has achieved at such a young age. What made Omar Khayyam great as a poet was that every one of his poem was full of life, but of course his main subject was love or romance. Whereas the subjects chosen by Mr Ameeruddin are of varied nature and he has successfully injected hot blood into every one of them.

In time to come the works of Mr Syed Ameeruddin may become a guide to the future young poets. The poetic genius in this young man is certainly one not by tradition, therefore this poetic geniuses discovered in Mr Ameeruddin could be considered a gift of Allah, the Almighty. As such, our readers could legitimately expect greater works from the pen of this young poet.

The above quote from the pen of the publisher was prophetic. The poet Syed Ameeruddin gained many distinctions and brought out the following works during the course of time.

1. The dreadful doom to come 1974 published by poet press India Madras 17
2. A lover and wanderer 1980; published by poet press India Madras 17
3. *Petallic Love Time* published by Poets Press India, Madras.
4. *Visioned Summits*, published by International Poets Academy, Chennai, 1995.
5. *Visions of Deliverance*, published by International Poets Academy, Chennai, 2006.

On the poet's work, K R Srinivasa Iyengar in his Foreword to the poets' first collection wrote:

Mr Syed Ameeruddin has been a student of English literature and now teaches English in a college in Madras. His exercises in English verse are thus understandably an occupational addiction. Unlike most young men, Mr Ameeruddin does not essay romantic love or explore the perversions of lust. He is not interested in politics either not yet in probing complicated states of mind. Mr Ameeruddin's flair is for philosophising. He does not like urban civilisation. He is ill at ease with modern youth. The timeless, the ineffable, the stupendous Himalaya, these seems to attract Mr Ameeruddin. There is usually a directness and force in his writing which is commendable. Sometimes he is loud and mere rhetorical and the virtues of reticence, understatement and suggestiveness go by default. There is however a general wholesomeness about the book which, I hope, will appeal to its readers.

M Mujeeb then Vice Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi opined in the first work.

Mr Ameeruddin seems to be in full agreement with view that poetry is criticism of life and that poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world". So throughout his poems he has

‘preached’ – not as a moralist or preacher but as an artist, those moral and spiritual values which make life meaningful and are essential for cultured and civilised life. Like all thoughtful persons today he seems to feel that “the world is too much with us” and we have no time “to stand and stare”. Hence we suffer from the “wariness, the fever, the fret” of life and our minds and souls are starve. What strikes the reader of these poems most is that Mr Ameeruddin is a sincere and real lover of India – its culture, its arts, its science, its people, mountains, rivers, animals and birds – and has paid in his poems glowing tributes to them.

Mr Ameeruddin’s diction is simple and lucid and his style sincere and effective. “I have no doubt all his poems will be widely read and appreciated.”

C.R Sarma Secretary, Regional Office, Sahitya Academy, Madras, in his opinion to the first work has this say:

I have read with pleasure and profit “What the Himalaya said and other poems”. The author Sri Syed Ameeruddin, though a student of English literature, has given philosophical tinge to his poems and therefore his thoughts are at once inspiring and illuminating.

A V Krishna Rao in his lengthy introduction to the first work wrote after due analysis of the work:

Syed Ameeruddin as the readers may soon discover for themselves, has certainly got makings and markings of a major Indo-Anglian poet, firmly rooted in the Indian tradition as evidenced by these poems. The contemporary relevance of his meta-physical, mystical themes is surprisingly striking. His facile and felicitous expression is impressive. The imagery and the symbols so expertly employed by the poet need further critical explication in so far as they are characteristic of the Indian ethos.

In my opinion, Mr Ameeruddin’s book of poems – his maiden effort – not only contains a good deal of promise but also offers a fair measure of fulfilment. May this be the harbinger of many more significant and satisfying contribution of poetry from Mr Ameeruddin, our young and upcoming Indo-Anglian poet?

Krishna Srinivas, Editor of *Poet* opines on this maiden venture.

Up rootedness, frenzy and restlessness of the modern world have pushed many poets to a point of no return. To solve the turbulence of everydayness they burn themselves in despair.

And Syed Ameeruddin is caught up in this upheaval. He is deeply rooted in tradition and his philosophical insight is admirable. His poems are profoundly meaningful. Especially his “Himalaya” is mighty fine.

The second collection *The Dreadful Doom to Come and Other Poems* has mentioned opinions of several renowned world poets like Dr Mabella A Lygon (*Phoenix Arizona* U.S.A.), Jacob Sloan (literary critic and poet USA), Dr Pereival R Roberts (Bloomsberry State College, Bloomsberry), Prof David Kherr Malavi, Dr Ernest Kay (editor *International Who's Who in Poetry*, Cambridge), Dr Hugh Mckinley (literary editor, *Athens Post*, Greece, Hon Amado M Yuzon (President, United Poets Laureate International Quezon city, Phillipines), Prof Tsutomu Fukuda (Kobe, Japan), Prof Dr Jonas Ngalha (University of Sao Paulo, Brazil).

Helen Shaw, New Zealand in the presence to the second collection states:

As the title suggests Syed Ameeruddin's poems in *A Dreadful Doom to Come...* are didactic and theological. They preach a message, and are of the utmost sincerity in their tone.

Syed Ameeruddin sees the world of today engaged in a complex struggle with evil. Haunted by the pollution of life everywhere today, he glimpses the possibility of peace and harmony, of future generation. The poet believes salvation lies in the Eternal. His poems are in the nature of incantation”.

V.K Gokak in his introduction to the second collection poems writes.

“Shri Syed Ameeruddin is already known to readers of Indo-Anglian poetry through his first collection of poems. This is a second collection – *The Dreadful Doom to Come...* It contains six

poems which are fairly long and which would probably have been called Odes by poets of another generation.

Shri Syed Ameeruddin has a sensitive, poetic heart. He has tasted the waters of disenchantment. The life that he sees around him, with all its faith and evil, makes him resentful. The masculinity of modern woman he strongly disapproves even at the risk of being called a conservative. Technology, with all its attendant ugliness and permissiveness has but multiplied our material desires and turned the lies of yesterday into virtues of today..

“...The sensitivity of Shri Syed Ameeruddin is geared to real and metaphysical quest and he has emerged from it with repose, if not the joy, of faith. The expression of this quest, anguish and repose moves us and touches our hearts.

A sensitive poet Shri Syed Ameeruddin is experimenting with the diction which will communicate his vision. He comes out with sharp and scintillating lines, with a facile and felicitous expression, which is quite impressive. His poetic craftsmanship will surely come into its own in good time.”

Syed Ameeruddin's third collection of verse is '*A Love and a Wanderer*'. Krishna Srinivas has prefaced the work with a title 'Syed Ameeruddin's Poetry'. He writes,

The whole of Ameeruddin's poems is ascension towards love. The poet attains through love the fullness of reality. Love yields him its greatest treasure. The act of love surges and resurges. He traces the passionate multi-access of love and presents in very evocative way the process and evolution of love from the ideal and platonic to the pragmatic and surrealistic trends of our time.....

Ameeruddin is a realist of the senses. The two realities, the earth and the soul, are firm in his own. The winding galleries of his mind unfurl strange tunes. There is verbal magic in his verses. Green echoes haunt him like a passion. He feels poetry like fire in his hands. He replaces meanings by suggestions; unsuspected impulses and unfathomable fears throb and explodes.



Nature to him is merciless genetic forces which transmit to its creatures its own frenzied fury. Man-nature's favourite offering – mirrors its riotous cruelty. Love is stripped of its sentimental wrappings and reduced to the starkness of its violent rapture.

Like Lorca, Ameeruddin hungers for static inward illumination.

Ameeruddin is restless of the waltzing civilisation. He lays bare the agony in the inner recesses of his soul. His poetry is lyrical and subjective; has the stamp of his unique personality – a slenderness, a nervous subtlety which makes him the finest and the most sensitive of our contemporary poets.

The blurb of the fourth collection *Petallic Love Times* published by poets press India, Chennai 1988 speaks of Syed Ameeruddin in these terms.

Syed Ameeruddin has emerged as one of the distinguished and most popular poets writing in English today. Young, very sensitive widely acclaimed in India and abroad, translated into many languages and strikingly different, he is a perfect modernist and he strikes to bridge the gulf between the rich Indian classical values and the exuberant new Indian consciousness. He speaks in terms of provocative and forceful metaphors and relates his work to the relevance of contemporary experience, the realistic, the nonrealistic and surrealist trends in behaviour and relationship between man and woman of our time and their existentialistic attribute towards life.

His poetry traces the origin of feelings and consciousness, forcing one to think backwards, inwards into many awakenings. Further it springs from a full participation in life and even where it seems purely sensuous, it has vigour and freshness.

He belongs to a special and rare breed who use words with a fury of obsessed people. He is complex evocative and sometimes explosively immediate. His language is powerful, incisive, well knit. He is daring and innovative and has powerful imaginary with substantial vigour.

The most exciting poet to emerge on the Indian literary scene, he represents the old and the new and fascinatingly original in our poetry today.

Again Krishna Srinivas in his preface to the fourth work wrote about 'Syed Ameeruddin's poetry as follows:

As Beatrice haunted Dante like a passion, Ameeruddin is obsessed with the thoughts of his beloved. His is a repository of scuttled truths and a museum of irrefutable facts-refuted not by empirical discoveries, but by mysterious decisions to experience differently from time to time. It worked in the totems and taboos of ancients, the pyramids of Egypt, the cosmology of Dante and the theory of expanding universe. Echoes from abyss abound....

Ameeruddin dives into the darkness of thoughts, in unbidden suggestions, in multitudinous waves and currents all once flashing and rushing in dreams. He glimpses great tides in the clairvoyance of passion and in the mighty rising of the somnambulist. He communes with dark powers – as Poe, Kierkegaard, Rimbaud and von Gogh raging beneath tranquil everydayness. Such visitations come only to masters of verses.

The poet has inexhaustible flow of raging vitality. It is difficult to decipher his goal. Words fall with the impact of a blow with utmost precision. His phrases are weighty. Thoughts shafts burn.

Syed has established his originality, sensitiveness, multidimensional imagery, keenness of perception and vision in his poetry.

Niranjan Mohanty stresses that Syed's poetry must be examined as a poet of love for whom love emerges not merely as a meaningful subject but a visible metaphor for transcending reality.

P N Shukla observes that, Syed is a seeker, a wanderer and a lover too. He would not rest until he realises the end of his journey. Juxtaposition of the images of mere physicality and blissful eternity makes these verses wear a great immensity and diversity.

A N Dwivedi remarks that Syed Ameeruddin's poetry is largely amorous in content but metaphysical in tone. There is sheen imagistic delicacy in his verses.

Richard Eberhart a noted American poet comments that the whole of Ameeruddin's verses is lyrical and subjective. Silhouetting an inexhaustible flow of poets raging vitality. The meditative awareness of the diversity hidden in love is unique in Ameeruddin's creative imagination.

Panos D. Bardis, yet another American poet asserts that, Ameeruddin is a realist of senses. The two realities the earth and the soul, are firm in his own. There is verbal magic in his verses. He feels poetry like fire in his hands. His strong sense of suggestively gift for sharp imagery, and zest for full participation in life, even where it seems purely sensuous makes him strikingly different in the contemporary arena of world poetry.

Ameeruddin's subjective poetry grows symbolic and musical as we find in Baudelaire, Mallarme and Valery.

Nature to him is a merciless genetic force which transmits to its creatures its own frenzied fury. Love is stripped of its sentimental wrappings and reduced to the starkness of its violent rupture. Ameeruddin hungers for the static inward illumination as Lorca did in Lluvia.

Syed's poetry is the confrontation of his whole being with reality – a basic struggle of the soul, mind and body to comprehend life, to loving order to chaos, and by will and insight creates communicable verbal forms for the delight of mankind.

As Juan Lopex-Morillas says of lyrical primitivism, the world stretches before Ameeruddin as an undifferentiated mass taking place of understanding and impression is a substitute for analysis. Life is a supreme spectacle and the world of forms, dances and peaks to feverish contortions. He dramatises the conflict between primitivism and modernity.

Ameeruddin is restless of the waltzing civilisation. His poetry is lyrical; his feeling flame as images and has the stamp of unique

personality. This makes him the finest and most sensitive of contemporary poets.

Krishna Srinivas has again prefaced the fifth collection of poems *Visioned Summits* (1995 published by International Poet's Academy, Madras). The preface is titled 'Syed Ameeruddin's poetry' and states:

Syed Ameeruddin combines the flash of Swinburnean and rhetoric with cabalistic devices of syntax and imagery. He is dogmatic with the pantheistic vitalism of D H Lawrence. In Ameeruddin's poetry creativity is perpetuated by ecstatic bliss. He feels the magnificent here and now of life in the flesh of ours and ours alone and ours only for a time. We are part of the incarnate cosmos, part of the earth. Blood is part of the sea. There is nothing in us above.

Ameeruddin feels that mind is the glitter of sun on the surface of existence. Earth is the bed in which the slow copulation of decay is consummated.

Syed's conception of poetry is at one time inner splendour; another time a passion for encountering and experimenting with the outer realities of life around him. A poet is a tower of words and Syed plays poetic billiards with words.

Ameeruddin is a realist of the senses. The two realities, the earth and the soul are firm in his own. The winding galleries of his mind unfurl strange tunes. There is verbal magic in his verses. Green tunes haunt him like a passion. He feels poetry like fire in his hands. He replaces meanings by suggestions unsuspected impulses and unfathomable fears throb and explode.

Syed plunges with his own interior depths, a going beyond himself and emptying of himself – an entry into the naked ground beyond all the visible masks of existence. And the result is, he combines a single moment with centuries, naturalism with propensity, prose, rhythms with poetic excellences. As such, he rebels against injustice, the parliament of everydayness, the wicked voyages in virtue seas the dictatorship of wild regimes, the sway wild flesh and bone, the sweat of bloody atrocities.

He feels man is in process of becoming his own providence, his own catalycism, his own saviour, his own invading horde of Martians.

In Syed Ameeruddin's poetry vignettes of everydayness, sparkle deliriumed excellences. Dark unfathomed secrecies blaze as discoveries. Common dissents are revered as revelations. Feelings flame as images. Millions of years of heritage and culture flower into magic and profundity. On the whole there is mingling of time past and time future.

In the contemporary Parnassus world, Syed Ameeruddin has emerged as an unique phenomenon for his poetic mission, spiritual vision, vibrating dynamism, symphonic symbolism, complete imagery and above all for his humanitarian and metaphysical concerns. Syed feels that poets are conscience keepers of their times and have a role to play in the maintenance of peace and harmony in the society. Further Syed also feels—" a poet exists from moment to moment and he justifies every moment he lives". Syed's is an erratic wisdom. His contradictions are his poetic excellence. Syed's poetry is the confrontation of his whole being with reality, a basic struggle of the soul, mind and body to comprehend life, to loving order to chaos, and by will and insights create communicable verbal forms for the delight of mankind.

At times Syed's poetry is highly subjective and lyrical. He celebrates love in the convention of Kalidasa and sometimes in the vibrant vicissitudes of Khaleel Gibran.

Syed's talent as a master poet are vividly revealed in his long poem "Eloquent Serenade.

Going beyond Rimbaud, Syed creates poem – illumination, a synthetic explosion of colour, emotion and perpetual movement. Like Blake, he merges spiritual vision and poetry, feeling the joy of being, the joy supreme. His prospective words must be felt – they are the living views of universe, holding keys to eerie secrecies.

*Visioned Summits*– is his master piece poem. Syed has proved that he is bard of the far beyond, with his mesmerising mission and munificent message. He is Aroubindonian in his thought process

and Tagorian in his mystic vicissitudes and Yeats like in his transparent symbolism and exploding imagery. This poem establishes the “Oneness of reality” – compromising the essential base and flowering of consciousness culminating in Ananda – supreme bliss.

Syed is a poet with a difference. He is unique in his poetic craftsmanship. There is splendour and lyrical grandeur in his verses. Creative energy, freshness of style metaphysical force, characterise his poetic master pieces. The collapse of ideals, fleeting frontiers between known and unknown make him restless and verses strike lightening from his eternal mind. Expanded moments are opened and Syed descends into these moments. Eruptions happen loosening poetry from its moorings and taking new directions. Hence, poetry to Syed is a revelation, exploration, discovery and illumination – its values extended to eternity.

Ameeruddin is primarily a poet of social, metaphysical, spiritual and humanitarian concerns and philosophical encounters to unravel the seeming realities of life. He uses his imagery and symbolism with zest and dexterity. His style is simple, direct, lucid and lilting. His expression is exquisite, forceful and facile. However, Syed emerges as a poet of many excellences with his magical and vibrant verses. A serious observer of his poetry will find in him a happy confluence of thought profundity, verbal ecstasy, visual beauty and imagistic delicacy.

Ameeruddin’s poetry explores the broad range of human thought and experience that provoke, inform, illuminate and entertain. He achieves an apocalyptic union of subject and object, earth, the inner psyche and heaven. In this dark night of metaphysical quest, he establishes a self-co-existence with the universe. As such, his poetry sparkles with delight ring with wonder and shimmer deepest awe. In this account, he is a rare phenomenon in the contemporary field of world poetry today.

Krishna Srinivas has again penned lengthy introduction to the sixth work of Syed Ameeruddin. “Visions of deliverance” (2006 published by international poets academy Chennai), Krishna

Srinivas has reiterated about Syed Ameeruddin's poetry as he had explained in fifth collection *Vision summits*.

He concludes the lengthy introduction by this note:

Syed is a poet with a difference. He is unique in his poetic craftsmanship. There is splendour and lyrical grandeur in his verses. Creative energy, freshness of style metaphysical force, characterise his poetic master pieces. The collapse of ideals, fleeting frontiers between known and unknown make him restless and verses strike lightening from his eternal mind. Expanded moments are opened and Syed descends into these moments. Eruptions happen loosening poetry from its moorings and taking new directions. Hence, poetry to Syed is a revelation, exploration, discovery and illumination – its values extended to eternity.

### **The Poetry of Syed Ameeruddin**

Mohammed Yaseen writing for *Contemporary Indo English Verse* in his article "Syed Ameeruddin's Poetry: A Critical Appraisal" writes:

Syed Ameeruddin has emerged as one of the most popular Indian poets writing in English today. He has all the unique qualities of a serious sensitive and original poet and occupies a distinct place among the modern Indo-Anglian poets. His poetry traces the origin of feelings and consciousness, forcing one to think backwards, inwards into many awakenings. It springs from a full participation in life and even where it seems purely sensuous it has vigour and freshness. As Krishna Srinivas rightly comments (Poet, March 1980): "His poetry is lyrical and subjective; has the stamp of his unique personality – a slenderness, a nervous subtlety which makes him the finest and most sensitive of our contemporary poets". Syed Ameeruddin seems to stand as a bridge between pre-independence traditional poets and the present day romantics, realists and surrealists. In him, we have the harmonious blending of the living past with the blazing present. His poetry is rooted in the ancient Indian ethos but he has also sought inspiration from English poets, particularly Shelley, Arnold and Eliot. His uniqueness among his contemporaries' lies in his attempt to bridge the gulf between the

rich Indian classical values and the exuberant new Indian consciousness. His keen perception and acute vision of half-hidden realities and unrealised pathos of life mark him as a chronicler of modern sensibility.

After due analysis of the work of Syed Ameeruddin, M. Yaseen writes:

A perusal of Syed Ameeruddin's poems clearly indicates the poet's love of poetry which he enchantingly and sensuously breathes. Transcending the ephemeral and ignoring the topical his eyes rests invariably on the 'eternal' and the 'universal'. This is not to suggest that Syed is an escapist. Far from it. One has only to study poems like "clustered clouds of poverty" to judge the poet's humanistic ardour. He is not so much a poet of the blissful ecstasies of life as of its agonies, stresses and strains. Recurrent images in his representative poems suggest his endeavour to catch such twilight moods as escape the ken of lesser poets. It would almost be a truism to say that while his imagination captures shades and shadows his mind is seen holding dialogue with the world within and without. He even makes poetic monuments of fleeting moments. On closure examination Syed Ameeruddin appears to be a poet of both moods and memories. He sings of sensations sweet and bitter, 'felt in the blood and felt along the heart.

Though somewhat complex and even obsessed with personal visions, Ameeruddin's social awareness and his firm commitment to society is commendable. He is a realistic of the humanist tradition and his keen sensibility almost always endears him to his readers. Krishna Srinivas in the preface to Ameeruddin's poetry (*Poet* March 80) call him a realist of the senses. The two realities, the earth and the soul, are firm in his own.....he feels poetry like fire in his hand..... This only to suggest the refreshing quality of Syed's poetry and his coinage of new images to express his extremely delicate perceptions and visions.

Essentially, Ameeruddin is a poet of love. As Krishna Srinivas rightly observes (Preface, *Poet*, March 1980). "The whole of Ameeruddin's poems is ascension towards love. The poet attains through love the fullness of reality. The act of love surges and



resurges. He traces the passionate multi-access of love and presents in very evocative way the process and evolution of love from the ideal and platonic, the pragmatic and surrealistic trends of our time.”

Syed seems to have tasted and experienced love indifferent moods and situations and has successfully envisioned his sensuous impressions in some of his best known pieces. Usually his treatment of love reverberates with echoes of romantics’ passions, but something beyond mere sensuous gratification also haunts him. Theme – plain streaks of sceptical reactions in Syed’s poetry. “Love String”, “Cosmic Symphony” and “Blissful Dawn” etc. are poems saturated with traditional ideas. But “Dome of Gold”, “Dolls of Clay”, “Where All This Leads To” and “Shattered Dreams” undoubtedly add new dimensions to Indo-Anglian poetry. In his rich and suggestive use of “Spectroscopic eyes”, “Blissful Spectrum”, “Kaleidoscopic Corridors”, “Velvety Longings”, “Sensuous Slumbers”, “Rippling Smiles” etc. etc. there is what one might call a positive surplus age of meaning.

While the sympathetic reader is generally carried away by the magic suggestiveness of Syed Ameeruddin’s fine phrases, an honest critic often feels baffled with the overflowing currents of powerful feelings in his poetry. At times he appears as a poet delighting in sheer verbiage and also creates an impression that he lacks restraint in the choice and use of words. Be that as it may, in spite of certain minor limitations, Syed has established his originality sensitiveness, multidimensional imagery, keenness of perception and vision and there is no denying the fact that Syed Ameeruddin has emerged as a major Indo-Anglian poet of our time. The monthly POET has given him the honour of placing him by the side of the Nightingale of India. Sarojini Naidu (a special member of POET exclusively devoted to the poetry of Sarojini and Syed – March’ 80). It is precisely because of this distinction that he has won laurels in India as well as in foreign countries.

A N Dwivedi in his article “The metaphysical quest in the poetry of Syed Ameeruddin” has analysed the poetry of Syed Ameeruddin and has this to say:

Syed Ameeruddin’s poetry may sound rhetorical and repetitive at times, but it is quiet sincere and honest in its expressions of its truth eternal. The poet looks around and discovers that modern man is sans mercy, san love, san faith, san meaning and that he is entirely engulfed in the morass of filth, flesh and fiction. The discovery renders him disillusion and leads him to chide humanity at large for its inclination towards corruption and pollution, filth and dirt, mess and mire, buzz and bewilderment, Crux and chaos, and for its utter inattentive towards the inextinguishable sparks of spirituality and metaphysics within us and eternal principles of dharma bequeathed to us by our countless sages and seers down the ages.

Quoting relevant poems, Shri A.N Dwivedi comments “such utterances of the poet leaves us in no doubt he has his moments of vision and philosophic perception and that his poetry is not merely the poetry of statement but of intuition.

He further writes:

All the three volumes of Ameeruddin’s contain gems of his intense brooding and concentrated introspection. The forces of evil haunting, the present day human world-passion, emotion, intoxication, sex and sensuousness-render the poet restless and uneasy and he prepares himself to grapple with them, with his pen in an effective manner. Ameeruddin points out divinity and morality as the remedies for the modern man to emerge out of the marsh of evil. He maintains that with a divine jolt that man’s earthly life enters into the supreme stage of reality. The knowledge of reality cuts through the threads of ever tempting and ever illusive Maya, throwing away the thick pall of gloom and ignorance. ‘*Tama so ma jyotirgamaya* (ie. From darkness lead to light) has been the old Upanishadik adage. In his own characteristic fashion Ameeruddin articulates vociferously in his poetry. Prof. V.K. Gokak has rightly remarked – “The sensitivity of Shri Syed Ameeruddin is geared to a real and metaphysical quest and he has emerged from it with the repose, if not of the

joy, of faith". What Ameeruddin does is somewhat unique in Indo-English verse despite the 'Censure motion' passed by the writers worship coterie against Sri Aurobindo and his circle. For this he may be called a romantic or an idealist or a propagandist or a poet preacher but he moves with sure and steady steps towards the avowed objective of elevating his readers to a higher flame of living and thinking. Syed's message may be misread in the present day world, but its tone of sincerity can hardly be questioned. The message irrefutably stems from a firm faith in the betterment of humanity and the noted new Zealander, Helen Shaw correctly states that Ameeruddin glimpses the possibility of peace and harmony of future regeneration", and that he "believes salvation lies in the eternal.

A N Dwivedi concludes the article after detail discussion of Syed Ameeruddin's poetry as follows:

The poet feels the mystic presence of Almighty in all the objects of nature in the blossoms, thunders, streams, waves, the purple moon, the breezy dawn and the dwindling dusks. This attitude of his many reasonably dubbed as words worthier as highly moralistic and spiritualistic. It may also be mentioned here in hurry that the poet has hinted at the real character of 'self' in the poem of the volume – in "Renovation".

To conclude, Ameeruddin is a poet who discards the physical plane of existence in favour of the metaphysical one who is totally ill tease with the world of lust and corruption and who chooses to lay bare "the agony in the inner recesses of his soul". His mentality is such that it easily injures up moral, spiritual and metaphysical visions. Though he has not been able to formulate any consistent system of thought, he has decidedly flair for 'philosophing' as Prof. K R Srinivas Iyengar observes. The eternal ineffable, the intangible seam to attract him irresistibility, and he sings songs of glory for him who has created all of us almost in Hopkins fashion, administering us a heavy dose of sermon at times. Throughout his poetry, the metaphysical quest remains a constant metaphor and serves as a cementing force without which it will fall asunder and break in to pieces".

P Raja in his article, Syed Ameeruddin: “The Philosopher, Lover and Poet” which appeared in *Creative Forum* vol 4 (Jan-Dec 1991) writes:

Syed Ameeruddin has carved himself a permanent niche in the hall of Indo-Anglian poetry with his four collections of well received poems-‘What the Himalayas said’ and other poems; The dreadful Doom to Come, A lover and a Wanderer and *Pettalic Love Times*. The three renowned anthologies’ edited by him representing the best poems from various parts of the globe show him as a connoisseur of fine poetry. Recipient of the much coveted title Laurel Man of letters (1985) from USA and Micheal Madhusudan Award for Literature (1988) from Micheal Madhusudan Academy, Calcutta he is the Director General of International Poets Academy, a cap that beautifully suit him.

Well-known in the literary circle as a poet and anthologist, Syed Ameeruddin’s work are admired only by the increasing number of young readers of Indo-Anglian verse and by equals, but by at least one who is his superior, the German poet Werma Manhein, who did not hesitate to say of his poems that they should be an inspiration for those who seek the meaning of their existence in this world of social and cultural upheavals (Werner Manheim, letter to Syed Ameeruddin, 8 March 1989). Literary Historians like K R Srinivasa Iyengar and M K Naik have already included his works in their tones. Several eminent critics have done full-length studies of his poetry. No anthologist of modern Indo-Anglian verse be he Krishna Srinivas, or I H Rizvi, can ever think of excluding of his poems. And above all his poems continue to get translated in to many languages of the world.

P Raja continues to say:

Most poets begin their literary career by writing about love and as they grow old their works become philosophical. Donne and Hopkins are the best examples. Perhaps youth very rarely bothers about the world; its main concern being the desire of the flesh. Poet Syed Ameeruddin is a class apart. His very first collection ‘What the Himalaya.....said’ and other poems (1988) the gap between the two volumes is 16 years – as the title suggests it is about sensual pleasure.

Syed Ameeruddin's tendency to philosophise can be seen in whatever themes he undertakes for telling in verse. Considerably influenced by philosopher-poets like Shelley, Keats, Ezra Pound, Eliot, Yeats, Auden, Kalidasa, Tagore and Iqbal in his formative lays (IIWE 121) his poetry is bound to be philosophical".

P Raja analyses one of his poems writes:

Syed Ameeruddin gives a philosophical tinge to his poems and therefore his thoughts are at once inspiring and illuminating. When an attentive reader of his poetry reaches the end he should be, if only fractionally, more of a philosopher than when he began.

***What the Himalayas.....Said and Other Poems (1972)***

The maiden collection of the young poet an academician with a good grinding in English literature, blessed with an eminent and noble heritage, and the collection has the foreword of very eminent personalities. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar vice president Sahitya Academy New Delhi and an introduction by A V Krishna Rao with a publisher Kalaivendhan S S Nathan's note and M Mujeeb vice chancellor Jamia Millia Islamias opinion.

There are eight poems in the collection:

1. "What the Himalaya Said"
2. "Value of Timelessness"
3. "Dome of Gold"
4. "Ignorance"
5. "Peace in the Age of Space"
6. "Blessings"
7. "Dolls of Clay"
8. "Youth of Our Time"

As M Mujeeb in his opinion has said the diction in the poems is simple and lucid and the style sincere and effective.

Kalaivendhan S S Nathan in the publisher's note points out the name of Syed Ameeruddin may spell the name of an age old philosopher to many but the fact remains that the author of this book is a young man of the present day. The note further points out that this book offers unique insight in to the poetic maturity of a man whose impact would undoubtedly be felt on the Indo-Anglian poetry for generations to come. It note further states that the theme in every one of the poem is very much linked with the goodness of the nature and at the same time rebukes the false beliefs of our generation. The note adds that the subject chosen by Ameeruddin are of varied nature and he has successfully injected hot blood in to every one of them.

On the title poem A V Krishna Rao in his introduction to the books says:

In "What the Himalaya Said," the title poem, we get a Himalayan censure and expostulation regarding our "Cursed Gifts": drought, sterility, fragility – lack of fertility, discomfort, and discontentment-dissatisfaction. "The poet's eyes roll up in fire frenzy and catch a glimpse of the Himalayas". The eternal titanic pillars, which connect the Heaven and the Earth. They are cold and merciless but hortatory. Faith, hope, truth and love have been relegated to a back seat in our modern materialistic civilisation. The Himalayas thunder there condemnation and roar their reverberating message.

Follow the two principles – The self-discipline and the self-Realisation!

Then go back to your own ancient heritage. Bhakti Yoga (the path of devotion); Jnana Yoga (the path of knowledge) and Karma Yoga (the path of action) are the final message of the Himalayas to the erring mankind.

Niranjan Mohanta in his article "A Study of the Poetry of Syed Ameeruddin", writes.

In Ameeruddin's maiden volume *What the Himalaya Said*, the title poem brilliantly exposes his disgust into the world and the means of evading the disgust. There is a juxtaposition of the

images of flux and permanence and former represented through the bewildering, fatal floods, panic, fury and the latter through the titanic pillars 'which connect the heaven and the earth.' The poet's vision of salvation on the Himalaya is unique "something like a ray of light/passed in me from toe to head/stupor I felt, my nerves paralysed...../and everything in me.....at a standstill my eyes fluttered/all of a sudden, my lips started/quivering..... in awe and fright.

Towards the close of the poem the vision gets epitomised in the form of a thunder bolt that sounded amid mountainous craggy ways, the means of salvation, and the principles of transcending reality:

It roared.....roared.....roared thrice  
Each uproar: conveying a supreme sense....,  
Thrice it sounded.....with significant meaning  
BH-K-TI YO-GA  
GYA-NA YO-GA  
KA-R-MA YO-GA

A N Dwivedi in his article "The Metaphysical Quest in the Poetry of Syed Ameeruddin (ibid) writes on this poem as follows:

The title piece "What the Himalayas Said" seems to echo T S Eliot's 'the waste land' (1922) especially its last section 'what the thunder said'. Like Eliot exhorting the malady stricken modern man to practice the triple virtues contained in love, sympathise and control. If he wishes to come out of the self-created prison of greed and lust and indiscipline. Ameeruddin unequivocally suggests through the symbol of the Himalayas that the 'way of salvation for man lies in the strict observance of the age old principles of faith, hope, truth and love, which he has presently thorn to the winds. Again like Eliot's Dutta Dayadhvan and Damyata, Ameeruddin's message is delivered through the thundering Himalayas in Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga. The message undoubtedly draws heavily upon the Bhagavad-Gita and is enveloped inescapable in an air of didacticism and directness an inexcusably artistic fault, indeed. Moreover there are too many dots and dashes, surpassing even

browning in this matter, which baffle the reader unnecessarily.  
But the honesty of purpose is felt throughout.

The next poem speaks about “Value of Timelessness”. The phenomenon of man clinging to life and life clinging to time and time to universe and the universe rests in timelessness is propounded in this poem. For a young poet to pen on this philosophical and metaphysical subject is remarkable. Hence the critics immediately smelled the future greatness of the poet. The seed of eminence in poetry has been sunned in this poem. The poet suggests a solution to human misery and endless agonies which rests in the realisation of the time, that exists and is yet not visible, that heels and is yet not mutable. The poet suggests:

The Mutable man  
Must come out from the folly of time  
And recognise  
The eternal nature of time-less-ness from his time.

The poet considers timelessness as the ultimate reality that man should realise. The cycle of human civilisation is embedded in timelessness; so also the great opposites: Harmony and Havoc, Peace and Anarchy, day and Night. The philosophic truth about time is summed up.

And the universe rests in timelessness (Mohammed Yaseen)

The Third poem is “Dome of Gold” A symbolic poem – on life and the world.

The poet speaks about the glitz and glamour of the world and how it is appealing, tempting, alluring and inviting. How men are crazy and mad, passionate, eager and anxious, spirited, deadly and devilish, to become the custodians of gold. This only brings in “adulteration and corruption/pollution and prostitution/day dreaming and deception/all for this bewitching deity-gold”

But the chronicle tone of the poet remains unmistakably throughout. Instead of justifying the ways of God to man, he denounces them surreptitiously and observes that the captivating, colourful dome of gold marks “The Striking Nell of Dome” (A N



Dwivedi *ibid*). The poet in this poem brings out the greed of the age for love of gold by virtue of which “life is in filth and frenzy, amidst devilish, sound and fury”. The evil of love of gold making the

Life is.....in its lifelessness.....  
Wisdom is.....in its ignorance  
Awareness is.....in its unawareness  
Religion is.....in it's in religiousness  
.....becomes, the world is a dome of gold, man and gold....and  
man's relation are of gold”.

The entire poem speaks about the materialistic age and how man has lost faith and wisdom due to this love for gold. The poet's mind is filled with anguish, pain and suffering at the mad rush of mankind for acquisition of yellow metal gold and laments in the end:

“Humanity clings to this hollow home,  
Which is a captivating colourful dome  
...this fascinating dreamy dome  
Marks the striking Nell of doom”.

On this poem Niranjan Mohanty (*ibid*) writes “the transience of the colourful dome, the ignoring of this mechanical civilisation, the hypnotic ways moulding the character and destiny of young, innocent corruption in the blood – all this contribute to the mounting restlessness of the poet who tries to find a universe purer than he lives in. The question of cleansing the dirt and filth from the body and mind of the individual and the universe remains central to the aesthetic quest of Ameeruddin's art. This desire to cleanse and purify the self, this unstinted devotion. To drive out darkness from the minds of human beings with the light of knowledge, gradually becomes a passion with Ameeruddin. And in this sense his vision is universal. Establishing peace, dharma and sanity in a spiritually bankrupt and decadent world becomes the poet's mission”.

The fourth poem is titled “ignorance”. “The poet speaks the knowledge hither to gained by mankind”, yet the man is unknown/unaware of everything and anything/the chain of knowledge/in itself is ignorance”. The poet points out to the

stupendous undiscovered aspect of the universe and the hidden truths and what mankind has gained is insignificant and man still lives in ignorance.

The fifth poem is “Peace in the Age of Space”. This poem begins with the desire of man craving for peace of various kinds – subjective, objective, peace of heart and mind, solace for the spirit and peace of all kinds. The poet wants that the man’s striving and striving is futile and his alluring attempt is juvenile as man has lost faith in himself and the spark from man’s spirit is extinguished. The poet laments that lack of peace is the gift of our age/confusion and chaos is the blessing of our age/clamour, hue and cry is our attainment/shriek, sound and fury is our achievement”. The poet then finds a solution for gaining peace.

Peace will embrace men....  
When man recognises man,  
When an ideal recognises an ideal,  
When humanity regards humanity,  
When religion regards religion,  
When realisation dawns in the individual.

This shows that the poet is a ‘citizen of the world’ without any barrier of race, cast or class. He preaches universal love and brotherhood through self realisation and by effacing, ego and hatred.

The sixth poem is titled “Blessings”. The poet invokes the blessings of the Himalayas, the Ganges, the birds and the breeds. The Himalayas being the mighty of the mightiest symbol of serenity, glory and grandeur should discard for a moment its age old penance and behold at the mundane gay of union. The poet then pleads the mountain to shower the blessings – of eternity. Ganges, the mother of boundless love, symbol of purity, affection and compassion should stop for a minute from its restless travelling and should look at the ephemerid ceremony of mirth, the poet then pleads, that the Ganges should sprinkle the waters – of purity and everlasting love. The poet then turns to birds to echo the mystic note, and to play the flute – of eternal joy. The poet pleads with

breeze; to spread the fragrance – laden breeze and to – adorn with incense sweet. The poet then speaks of his abundance of mirth to invite natural beings of this creation –

“To share my bubbling mad joy  
To play and dance with my heart of gay  
To invoke with me the blessings  
Of eternity for a long happy wedded life”.

This romantic poem reminds readers of the odes of Wordsworth, Shelly and Keats. The poet is deeply influenced and impressed with nature and pleads with it for blessings of his wedded life. The poet’s mood here is one of bubbling mad joy and complete contentment.

The seventh poem is “Dolls of Clay” – A symbolic poem which depicts the insignificance of man and his vain glorious achievements, and lay bare the transient ephemeral and illusory character of man. The idiom from dust we come and unto dust we returned is echoed in the last Para of the poem.

‘Here everything is transient subject to decay  
Even the ‘dome of gold’ will burst and break  
This glitter and glory; of this vain life will vanish  
Because we are ‘dolls of clay’ and this is a city of clay’.

The last poem of the collection “Youth of our time”, A symbolic poem – on the youth of our time their life of farey – and frustration – and the remedy to come out of that.

The poet compares the restless youth of today to a bird of fascinating feathers/soaring up high into the skies with its still and desperate looks flying with flaming, rebellious wings uncontrollable and untenable.

The poet then brings out the weaknesses and evils gripping the mind of the youth of the time and laments.

Our youth’s love for freedom is baseless  
His sense of independence is senseless  
His modern philosophy is reasonless  
His norm of life is lifeless  
His desire for peace and harmony is rootless.

The poet then lists the reasons for his above observation. He advises the youth to shun ignominious, impiety and infidelity. The poem closes with salutary advice...

And can dream of serene new horizons  
Of pure joy...scared pleasure....and divine peace....  
And can carve and mark out a bright future  
When decency downs in them  
When righteousness.....becomes their rite  
When love fills.....their hollow hearts then real wisdom  
occupies.....their minds  
When golden mean, enters....their lives  
When faith in the eternal oneness.....embraces  
When their souls stir....with noble feelings  
When bhakti....jnana....and karma harassed in them”.

The poet in this poem shows his conservatism to hold fast to the age old traditions and live a life of piety, submission and follow the path of truth and ahimsa.

### ***The Dreadful Doom to Come (1974)***

This is a short collection of six poems with a preface by Helen Shah of New Zealand and introduction by V K Gokak former vice chancellor of Bangalore University. The poems are:

1. “The dreadful doom to come”
2. “Where all this leads to.... ”
3. “Despair of our age”
4. “Life is a mysterious.....mystery”
5. “A craze for supreme beauty”
6. “Life is a journey”

The first poem “the dreadful doom to come” is a vision which has dawned on the poet. Shri V K Gokak refers to fairly long poems “would probably have been called ‘odes’ by poets of another generation”. He further refers to the poet as “sensitive” one “with poetic heart”. He says that “the life that he sees around him, with

all its filth and evil makes him resentful. The masculinity of modern women he strongly disapproves even at the risk of being called a conservative. Technology, with all its attendant, ugliness and permissiveness, has but multiplied our desires and turned the vices of yesterday into virtues of today”.

A N Dwivedi (ibid) writes “even the title piece”, “the dreadful doom to come” is chilling to the bone and horrible in vision. It bewails the lack of proper atmosphere in the world around us and the prevalence of corruption, greed and passion. The remedy lies in the practice of austerities and mortifications enjoined upon us by vice rishis and gurus – of the triple eternal principles of bhakti, karma and jnana, as the poet puts it. Nayak, David, Jacob, Ismail, Moses, Abraham, Buddha, Christ, Krishna and lastly Mohammed have all given this message and the poet repeats it in the interests of searching humanity.

P Raja in his article (ibid) writes on the title poem as follows:

In this long poem ‘the dreadful doom to come’ the poet visualises a disastrous destruction that awaits man, for the man of today has ignored all that is eternal, all that is divine. In the name of science and technology, in the name of progress and prosperity man has only harmed humanity. Man is so much engrossed in the construction of the dome of gold, that he has completely forgotten the divine messages and heavenly communications who had come with a divine will and a heavenly sanction”. P Raju further says that “the poet’s message to the man of today is that he must wake up from his sensuous slumber and derive a lesson from his past by going back to “the prophet’s, mystics avatars, sages and saints”. Who came in different “yugas and ages.....races and languages” to save mankind from this fame stricken world”.

Mohammed Yaseen in his article ‘Syed Ameeruddin’s poetry’: a critical appraisal has this to say on the second work: *The Dreadful Doom to Come and Other Poems*, the second collection of Ameeruddin’s poems, appeared in 1974. In the preface to the collection, Helen Shah superficially dubbed the poems as dialectic and theological. But the truth is that this volume projects the poet as

disciple of Mathew Arnold and a believer in poetry as ‘criticism of life’. As Prof. V K Gokak rightly observes while writing these poems the poet has tasted the “waters of this enchantment”. The life that he sees around with all its faith and squalor makes him unhappy. He even muses on life, its meaning and its purpose. This brooding inevitably leads him to his moments of vision and mystical perceptions.”

“The dreadful doom to come” is the title poem which gives us a glimpse in the hallow existence of modern men with ‘dull minds’ and..... spiritless souls” and reminds us that the great prophets-divine messengers had come to stir in us the eternal principles of bhakti, karma and Jnana. Moses, Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed all came to same humanity from chaos and degeneration with hope in mind, the poet exhorts us to follow the precepts of the messengers of god.

“Where all this Leads To.....” is a poem depicting the sorrowful state of modern women. The poet is baffled to notice the metamorphosis (stormy change) in women. They have ceased to be devoted daughters, faithful wives and dependable life-partners. All this is because of:

A turbulent new tide and a new wave  
Of feminism and women-ill moments  
Of progressiveness and permissiveness.

As a result of their adherence to ‘new cults’ and new ‘isms’, women have cease to be a source joy, comfort and sustenance. The doom to come may be averted only if women realise their vital contribution to social progress and family life.

“Despair of Our Age” is a mooring poem, toughing the chords of modern life. Today’s man is an enigma, a bundle of odd complexes, a self-styled, diabolic being. Today’s life is a life of beastly desires of flesh and blood of fits and feasts, of trauma and tribulations”. The poet thinks that our panacea lies in seeing things “light of eternity”.

Syed Ameeruddin has always felt the fascination of musing over the problems of life and death. He naturally delights in probing 'the mysterious mysteries' of life and often keen analysis finds it a "Big Interrogation". The poem "What a Mysterious Mystery the life is" gives an account of what constitutes the joy and agonies of life. The fact is that the poet is no less baffled by the mysteries of life than the reader:

Life is a never ending topsy-turvy song. "A craze for supreme beauty" shows the poet as a lover of beauty. The 'sounding cataract', 'the tender birds', 'Snowcapped mountains', 'fascinating valleys' all represent the beauty and grandeur of nature. The poet loves beauty and longs for beauty; but beauty is not for him. "A joy forever". Not only this. His vision sees something beyond and he aims to perceive through this beauty-

The unperceived ultimate beauty the last "Life is a journey reminds us of Shakespeare's Seven Stages of man" in 'As you like it' or Keat's 'human seasons'. Syed Ameeruddin highlights the three important phases of human life – boyhood, youth and old age, and gives graphic description of the joys and sorrows of these periods. When life's journey comes to a dead halt, with a divine jolt, it:

"Enters the threshold  
Of the supreme stage of reality".

The poet Syed Ameeruddin brings out the state of present times in "The dreadful doom to come" in a graphic manner blow by blow.

This is the state of life  
Of modern man.....  
Sans mercy, sans love  
Sans faith, sans meaning.

The poet refers to corruption and pollution, filth and dirt, mess and mire, buzz and bewilderment, fuss and fantastic, crux and chaos and about the 'a great delirium' of his time. The poet is ironical that the so called knowledge gained is nothing but 'his supreme ignorance'. 'It is magnificent, mortification and a mesmerising Maya'. For the poet the advance in science and

technology and modern benefits of it has brought has only added to 'corruption and pollution'. Benefiting man of faith, mercy, love and meaning. The materialistic crazy and desire to acquire greater comforts only adds to misery, self aggrandisement, covetousness, greed, jealousy, hatred, severe competition thus making the 'man of today' making him lose his divine nature, grace, love and peace. 'Man of today' has ignored/all that is eternal/all that are divine/he has shattered the mansion of virtue/of the mystic path/between creation and the creator.

The poet refers to the divine will in sending divine personalities, heavenly ambassadors/moulders of spirit and soul/builders of harmony and peace/integrators of beastly and angelic/awakeners of slumbering sinner/reckoners of virtue and vice/breakers of Maya and illusion/redeemers of sense and sensuality/harbingers of light and knowledge/guides of g---y and immortality. They have all come to shatter the shining sins/to clear the filth and dirt/from the human brain/to curb the deeds of flesh and blood/to make an end to self and passion/to eradicate evil and vice/to open the sealed chambers/of mind and heart/to let the divine light pass/into the dark slumbering souls". The poet goes on to high the changes and benefits these heavenly souls would bring and has brought forth whenever humanity is in disarray, a chaos, confusion and dismay.

The poet lists about various Prophets, divine beings appearing at various intervals to drive away the darkness of the ages and to illumine the dark and decaying souls and to lift the humanity from abyss, hunger, poverty, mirth and pleasure, hatred and malice, lust and lawlessness.

“Chain of prophets and seers  
Has followed.....one after the other....  
With the same mission....  
And with the same divine vision.....  
To warn of utter destruction and the doom to come  
To glorify the divine austerity  
To inculcate the principles of eternity  
And to establish peace and dharma...



The poet advises the man of today must wake up from his sensuous slumber and derive a lesson from his past....and immediately revive his entire activities of filth, flesh and fiction and must go back to these divine messengers with awe and reverence to their commandments. The poet concludes that 'this is the only solution/to the present confusion/this is the only avenue/to experience again/that long forgotten....love....peace and faith.

The poet wants that otherwise 'a disastrous – destruction is sure to come.

The poet in this poem is preaching the mankind to exposing the time's evils and how the man has been misled into sensual pleasure and tries to find the only solution according to him to practice faith, love and peace. The poet has proved to be a man of faith, hope and goodness. He is in the end optimistic that if it is not well with the world, it will be well soon:

"Where all this leads to....." is a satire on the modernity and fashions adopted by modern progressive feministic women. He bemoans chastity, modesty and grace/has become out dated now/with the modern women of new wave/with their new cults and new-isms. The poet laments in the changed behaviour in the present the day women and about 'the age old gap and discrimination between man and women is no more. Then the poet goes on to list the weaknesses of women and however those weaknesses have overcome and over powered the modern women. The poet again as a seer and prophet advises the modern women to see sanity with divine check and inspiration, otherwise the poet wants that the very basis of human decency and the very simple code of living and the very fundamental fibre of the very conception of family and co-existence will disintegrate and disappear....if not! Where all this "new wave – leads to...."

The poems 'despair of our age' and 'what a mysterious mystery the life is.....' is continuation of the same theme and same message as the poet has brought out in the heather to poems. The poet's mooring is:

Life is a never ending topsy-turvy song

A continuous, tilting tale of yours and ours  
A hypnotising, sweet, sad and sweet saga  
To mesmerise the innocent and ignorant mankind

In this poem “A Craze for Supreme Beauty” the poet like John Keats worships Beauty. ‘I am crazy for beauty/and all that is lovely/in this fascinating nature/And in this alluring life.

Like Wordsworth, Shelly and Keats, the poet’s inspiration is to praise the supreme beauty of nature and express his love, admiration and craze for beauty.

Life’s vicissitudes are many and it offers puzzling questions and man gets perplexed with the problem life throws up to man. Life is a mystery and every prophet, Sage and poets try to find answer to the mysteries of life. Poet Syed Ameeruddin has also penned a poem ‘Life is a journey’. It reminds Shakespeare poem ‘seven stages of man’ from the play ‘As you like it’. The poet muses:

‘Life is a journey  
With its different stages  
Alluring and fascinating  
Shocking and horrifying.  
The poet has graphically depicted this journey  
.....From one dark chamber to another  
With a cry from the womb  
And with a tear at the tomb’.

The myriad stages of man and his journey is brought out in good imaginary and fine expressions.

### ***A Lover and a Wanderer (1980)***

The first two collections of poems attracted the attention of poets, critics and academicians and the poet Syed Ameeruddin was acclaimed as the rising star on the horizon of the Indian English Poetry. The collection is prefaced with an introduction by the editor of POET Krishna Srinivas. The collection has eighteen poems and the significant poem is the title poem in three parts a longish one.

Poet Syed Ameeruddin introduced himself to the world of poetry with first two collections of serious metaphysical and

philosophical poems. However in this collection the poet has made dramatic change in his themes to that of Romanticism and love poetry. As Sri Krishna Srinivas has pointed out in his introduction the poetry of seventies acts as a bridge between traditions and dream worlds of surrealism. The poets hear dark voices silent to others. Their lyrics sweep into the sun. Passion and vehemana leap in the waves of rhetoric, twisting of the phrases, paradoxes and ingenuities. They are the poems of reality – not realism; of sentiment – not sentimentality. The poets restraint of emotions is often judged as cold, abstract, Intellectual – often very different and these poets speak in images. Sri Krishna Srinivas points out that there are frequent dialogues between the poet and the world. The poet is caught up in something that infinitely surpasses him. He further points out that there is an awareness of the presence of things in space and the present moment in time. Past and future are ideas: only the present is real.

P Raja in his article (ibid) points out that:

We see Syed Ameeruddin as a lover rather than as a philosopher when we move to his third and fourth collection of poems. Usually it is love that turns a man in to a philosopher. But with Syed Ameeruddin, it is the other way about.

Niranjan Mohanty in his article (ibid) writes:

Ameeruddin's third volume *A Lover and Wanderer* (1980) is a departure from the first two. It might apparently look like a transition because of the change in theme and tone, but in fact, it is not so. The thematic centre is now love, its lost and yet-to-be retrieved dimensions. The tone has become more intense, more personal, the language more clear and the metaphor's change – from down to-earth reality to the elemental fecundity of world's bounties. And poetry, in general, is drawn towards the centre of self and not towards the peripheral vagueness and superficiality of a self universalised in the earlier volumes. And thus the voice we hear, the utterances we encounter – even when they are – sour, desperate and pessimistic – are the products of the wander's authentic experiences.

Niranjan Mohanty goes on to point out that in this collection the quest for beauty gets a peculiar twist and is transformed in to the quest for love. The poet's diversion towards love is justifiable by way of cataloguing the disasters he encountered on the life's journey. Being disillusioned, dejected and wounded by the merciless movements of the world, being denied the ideal he had been seeking the poet comes face to face with love, with the hope that it might redeem his agonies, cure the career of his grief's and install for him the ideal he had been after. Not through death, not through the path of Jesus, Mohammed and Buddha, but through the secret estuaries of love. The glaring eye of the lady-love becomes the symbol of solace and bliss.

Mohammed Yaseen (ibid) writes about the third collection as follows:

The third collection of Ameeruddin's poems appeared recently in the monthly *Poet* (March 1980). Then later appeared as a separate collection of poems –A lover and a Wanderer in December 1980. These poems show his majority as a poet and his devotion to the high serious vocation of policy. As Prof K R Srinivas Iyengar rightly pointing in one of his letters to the poet. "This volume registers on advance from your first book, *What the Himalaya Said*, published almost a decade ago. Youth is being suppressed by early manhood and maturity, with their mingling of romance and reason, exultations and regrets. The diction too reveals a selective and surer touch. Vivid imagery and forceful metaphor are aptly used to relate your work to the relevance of contemporary experience. The long title – piece in 3 parts (*A Lover and a Wanderer*) successfully articulates a particular point of view caused by the intrusion of intellect and calculating, and the resulting failure and frustration, and perhaps also the residual aspiration and hope. The other pieces with their variations in theme and mood give fuller amplitude to the volume. While romance and sentiment have their say, social criticisms and larger issues also figure in some of the poems, bespeaking your widening interest.

Elsewhere Mohammed Yaseen further analysis Syed Ameeruddin's poetry and writes:

Essentially Ameeruddin is a poet of love. As Krishna Srinivas rightly observes (preface Poet march 1980): “the whole of Ameeruddin’s poems ascension towards love. The poet attains through love the fullness of reality. The act of love surges and resurges. He traces the passionate multi-facets of love and presents in very evocative way the process and evolution of love from the ideal and platonic to the pragmatic trends of our time.

Yaseen further says that, Syed seems to have tasted and experience love in different moods and situations and has successfully envisioned his sensuous impressions in some of his best known pieces. Usually his treatment of love reverberates with echoes of romantic passions but something beyond mere sensuous gratification also haunts him. There’s a plain streak of sceptical reaction in Syed’s poetry.....”

He further concludes: “While the sympathetic reader is generally carried away by the magic suggestiveness of Syed Ameeruddin’s five phrases, an honest critic often feels baffled with the over flowing currents of powerful feelings in his poetry. At times he appears as a poet delighting in sheer verbiage and also creates an impression that he lacks restraint in the choice and use of words. Be that as it may, in spite of certain minor limitations. Syed has established his originality, sensitiveness, multidimensional, imagery, keenness of perception and vision, and there is no denying the fact that Syed Ameeruddin has emerged as a major-Indo-Anglian poet of our time...”

P Raja in his article (ibid) continuing on Syed Ameeruddin’s work in particular to this collection writes:

But what appeals to us more is the way Syed Ameeruddin handles language. He favours plain language; his rhythms are firm and unfussy though they have all the feel of improvisation. In none of his poems, is the reader forced to scratch his head for or rock his brain over the proper understanding of a word or a line. And his poems remain as the best example of the adage: “Simplicity of style is the natural result of profound thought.

The opening poem 'Bells of reminiscences' the meeting and mingling of the lovers on the shore of love is described with simple diction. The poem ends on a nostalgic note:

The wheel moves on  
He and she glued  
To shade of shore-  
Mirroring each to each-  
Flames vortexing agonies  
And reliving reminiscences  
In kaleidoscopic corridors  
Of each other's mind.

In "Love Strings", loves fructifies and grip the lover:

Yet another night  
I gazed and gazed  
Your rippling smiles  
And diving through  
Your spectroscopic eyes  
Saw the hidden spectrum  
Of soul's solace  
In the dewy dusk in you  
And you with an irresistible longing  
Looked fool moony  
And dissolved yourself  
In the crucible of foamy hills-  
Churning sensual from spiritual-  
And visualised  
The blissful spectrum of eternity.

The poems 'Come Beloved', 'Dream girl' and 'one evening' reverberates the same feeling of mingling and submission in love.

"Shattered Dreams" is about the separation and pangs of love. The lover laments on the separation and recalls the sweetness and pleasures of love in sorrow and dejection.

"The nearness and togetherness  
Which was once our delightful domain.  
The single entity of you and me  
Of single thought and single passion,  
Which was once our scintillating symphony  
Innocent seeds of sweet promises

Sour in our mirage  
Garden of delight  
Once you and me  
To steal the perennial pleasures  
From the radiating, ravishing rainbow.....  
The desertion of love is unbearable to the lover.  
Now I am left alone:  
Distances grow  
Gallop in between.....  
The edifice of our dreams  
Collapse and chaos sets in  
Who should be blamed?  
All that you wanted  
Was a tempting toy to play.....  
Your feverish heart  
Sweating filth”.

The lover speaks about the expressions of lust and feelings expressed in gay and mirth which now is forlorn and shattered. The desertion is written in grief and the lover is shocked that he believed was not the ‘Parvati, Radha or Shakuntala’ but the beloved turned out to be ‘Urvashi’, Rambha, Menaka, who only entered the life of the lover only to ruin his mental poise and spiritual integrity. The poet ends in poignancy and in utterance of brief on separation from love, which has left the lover:

Standing like a lonely  
Stalk, bare tree, amidst  
The thick foliage,  
With a stony heart,  
And a benumbed mind,  
With tears in my minds  
And a seeming smile on my face.....

The poem “Simmering Loneliness” is again about the love of the love and the lover recalling those moments of meeting and joys amidst those that chattering on tree tops/and chiming birds,/in the hushed silence of dawn.

Then comes the title poem, a longing one in three – parts “A Lover and a Wanderer”. Part one recalls the sensual meetings and promises of love.

That midnight,  
We perched in a twilight bower  
To experience a purple paradise

Then follows the graphic description of love making and mingling in a sensual way, quite unexpected for the reader, who was fed with all along with serious thoughts and serious poetry by the poet. Part I after so nicely speaking of death of love, surprisingly ends on a note of separation of love as love shared was not genuine love but was only passion.

Therefore dear, let us part  
As lovers and strangers,  
Love is what we felt and shared  
In that timeless moment of passion,  
Let us part.....  
I listen to the stealthy footsteps  
Of the chasing sun at dawn  
I must rush. Journey is long.....

This portion of the poem depicts the lover as not a true and passionate one but one who did not have in his heart a deep and long desire for matrimony and for deep sharing of thought forever mingling and for eternal journey together.

Part II again speaks of reconciling their differences, but as strangers, with encased thoughts and renewed desires but the meeting was only to fulfil the baser element of lust. The lover suddenly realises his 'loneness' which in sex play and the darkness in writing his silence. Yet the graphic image of sex play is described graphically. This poem is quite unexpected of the poet, which in his earlier to volumes pour forth metaphysical and mystical lines, of sermons and preaching's.

It is quite strange that the passionate lover in his deep mingling and sexual embrace should all the while bear the feeling of separation as strangers. The poem appears to me to be a juxtaposition of love making expressed in deep sensual feelings, yet the lover all the while entertaining the thoughts of 'separation', 'shattered dreams', isolation, dejection, rejection and of hypocrisy of the beloved. The second portion of part II speaks about the love



shattered condition of the love and his wanderings in the lonely wood recalling the sweet moments of his sensual pleasures advising the beloved

Let us part, i must wander  
Do not follow me. Let the love in your  
Eyes blossom into secret constellation.

Yet the lover nurtures love of revival and resurrection of love, 'our purple paradise'. The love holds a deep desire to be on a long journey as a wanderer.

Part III the lover recalls the fore lone love and renews it with fresh passion and lust. The poem goes on describe about the lovers wanderings and journeys yet hoping after hope for the love to blossom again:

Only the mocking fugitive moon must tell you my plight.....  
I am a wander. I have a goal. A purple purpose,  
Dear i need you! Dear i need!  
Dark are the woods. Long is the journey  
But dear, you be my beacon light.....

"Laila and Majnu", could not meet at all and it was one sided love of Majnu, who wandered in deep anguish, pain and suffering of love. "Heer Ranjha", "Sheeren Farhad", "Shakuntala" are all examples of love, lost and fore lone but here the poet indulges in love play not as a fantasy but in reality and breaks of the relation to go on a journey as wanderer, nurturing the sensual thought then the divine love for the eternal Beloved.

In the poem "Destitute", the poet has poignantly brings out the sexual exploitation of destitutes and fallen woman by 'sensuous vultures in dark', such a exploited women's cry of "why...why?" Renting the air. The poem closes with this anguish cry suggestive of fate being cruel to whose"

Face charred and feet torn  
Limbs waltzing in air,  
Her leaping bust  
Nesting twin birds,  
She sinks into a shade

Of a Sylvain glade-  
Panting for food and merciful looks.

“Destitute” is a socially conscious poem full of pity and compassion for the exploited fallen women who crave for mercy and compassion from an unconcerned and careless world.

The next poem “Clustered Clouds of Poverty” also shows the concern of the poverty for the down trodden, exploited and weather beaten humanity. This poem shows the humanistic concern of the poet. It is highly imaginative poem into good imagery and frenzied expression:

These skinny bony frames-  
Sun burnt tremulous old ones-  
Unwed mother mothers, half-naked, tread  
With their thin tiny ones  
Clinging to their dried balloon breast,  
Boys and girls of different ages  
Belonging to these cursed tribe  
Wander like dogs  
With deformed rickety bodies  
In search of leafy left ants  
In front of hotels and houses  
To quench the hungry flames  
In their ever burning belly.

Indian bride is a highly descriptive poem who is decorated on the wedding day but behind this facade of gilt and glamour is hidden misery and pain, for an ‘Indian bride’ is a product with a price label/for the committed parents/to find a suitable groom/to the maximum tune. The poet laments on the condition of the ‘brides’ in Indian ethos:

Volcanoes burst  
In her velvety heart  
Her pious dreams shatter  
Like the scattered  
Empty clouds in the sky.  
Yet, helpless.....

The seamier and darker aspect of exploited women in the marriage market is brought out with deft, imagery and social concern.

“The Dulhan” with her  
Burnished embers – symbolises.....  
All that is bewitching red  
All that is sparkling and pleasant  
Like that of the  
Enchanting flamy twilight  
Of the pulsating magnificent dusk.....

Another poignant and sad poem is “obsession” bringing the grief of a woman:

Tears roll  
From her tormenting eyes  
She engulfs  
In an ocean of stirring sorrow  
With a quaky heart  
And with a volcano in her mind.

“A Warning” is a short poem but pregnant with a deep meaning on the decay of civilisation and a warning to the unerring man of “dreadful doom to come.

“This Day..... This Clay” which reminds the readers the ‘This city of Glitter and Glory/is crazy, fazy melody – a maddened mirage,/a fractured cancered obscurity,’ ultimately is all to burst and as break and that is what life is about.

Life is clay, is earth,  
A play in clay? This day,  
What dooms of gold will burst and break,  
What cemeteries grow, what aches?

“Cosmic Symphony” marvels on the beautiful creature of god, this pantheistic in content and expression is wonderful and praise worthy. It deserves to be quoted in full

I see your glittering glory  
In every fretful fury.....  
I sense your subtle presence  
In every crisp crescent.....

I taste your flooded gloom  
In every captivating full moon....  
I see your bounteous favours  
In every golden fruit and gay flower.....  
I feel your stealthy stir  
In every waving womb....  
I visualise your tumultuous tomb....  
Thus,  
I am overwhelmed and enthralled  
By sweet sense and sprightly sight.  
Of hearing your breezy whispers  
And astounding stormy shrieks.....  
What a magnificent mystery?  
What an exhilarating harmony.....  
My heart experiences liting leaps  
To watch the symphonic whirls  
Of this cryptic..... cosmic splendour.....  
All my senses and sensations  
Are bloomed in this blissful blur,  
In an enigmatic mystified mirth,  
To persevere omnipresence,  
And to experience your cosmic symphony”

Likewise the poet depicts the picture of dawn in “Blissful Dawn” and praise for spiritual awakening in her:

My dingy soul echoes:  
When will that blissful dawn  
Twitter and chime.  
In my sterile life of sensuous slumber  
And when will that sprightly and twilight  
Dawn of my spiritual awakening  
Struggle out  
From the whirly womb  
Of my dismal life,  
And send my spirit  
Into the dizzy height of spiritual bliss.....

The poem “Irkome Everydayness” speaks about the anguished self-caught in the whirlpool of everydayness and the pain and suffering the soul undergoes on the umpteen ‘unnerving everydayness’. The poet seeks for liberation and to experience the bliss of union with the unknown spirit of heaven.

“That.....Who” is a lyrical piece, musical and content wondering on the unseen hand and voice behind all the ‘slivery streams’, ‘restless waves’, ‘who peeps/passionately from the purple moon/who minks/in the east, amidst the breezy dawns..../who beckons/in the west amidst the dwindling dusk. He is striving to reach him. He is in search with unquenched thirst,

To know and realise  
That all pervading ‘WHO’  
That cryptic.....cosmic present.

The collection of poems ends with a poem ‘Renovation’ with a fond hope of reaching “sat....chit.....ananda”

The third collection rightly attracting the attention of critics and reviewers bringing a standing among the contemporary poets. The collection has a variety and a range of sensuous, metaphysical, social and romantic themes worthy of note.

### ***Petallic Love Times (1988)***

After a gap of eight years, Syed Ameeruddin brought out his fourth collection of poems *Petallic Love Times*. Like the previous third collection has poems on love, sensuality and on romantic themes. The collection has nine long poems. The title poem ‘Petallic Love Times’ is divided in three parts. The poems are more developed, thoughts matured, imagery exquisite expression wonderful, themes concrete and poems glittering.

Part I of the poem “Petallic Love Times” begins with the description of a lonesome beauty distraught with pain and anguish. The poet goes on to describe the love bitten beloved in search of her lost love. The lover on meeting her finds:

A new zeal, a new rage, a new passion  
Thus, sudden enlightening sets fire in your tresses,  
And rain enters my heart through your  
Open eyes, I am washed, bleached  
Like water blanched shore by the restive waves.  
The poet sings songs of love to bewitch the beloved:  
I am the moon blanched ocean

You are the moon since I loved you  
The cool breeze brings orchestral melodies  
At my heart's window  
As I visualise the petallic pleasures  
Of a strange destiny.  
This path of seven colours where we stand  
Leads to infinity of golden summer  
We have dreamt long before.

The lover's heart is blossomed with feelings and sensuality and poems speaks in sensual and romantic tone the volcanic eruption of frenzied lustful feelings to mingle and be together all times.

The part II speaks of the wanderer returning to his love and waiting beloved raining kisses. The wanderer recalls how he had fallen in love on meeting on that love street and about exchange of bewitching love talk. The wanderer sees the beloved as his "hidden dreams". The beloved is:

My poetic search, My creative zeal:  
My unwritten poem. My souls eden.  
A wandering halt. A meeting of night and day.  
And a rapturous reach of the blue horizon.

The lover seeks:

Give me life. Give me love.  
You are my dream. Fill my soul with your desire.  
Now, I live, move and breath  
In every thought of you.  
You are my world.  
The epitome of all my joy, all my gladness  
The mysteries of life begin and end in you.

The poet wishes to convey that divine search ends in finding a fulfilling love which is true, and endless. It is in the depth of love, spirituality and lasting fulfilment can be found.

Now echoes from dismal abyss abound –  
At last I realised. Bells of reality reverberated  
At heart all love is memory  
And mute celebrations of souls.  
Love is a delectable discovery  
A cosy colourisation of inwardness.

The esoteric ethos we have known and shared  
What simmering souls can share in kaleidoscopic ecstasy?  
A lover we met  
As lovers we remain forever  
Celebrating the scintillating  
Melody of Eden's glory  
Marching forever and forever  
To touch the cosmic crescendo  
Among the golden glades of eternity  
Unmindful of the volcanic eruptions  
Of time's titillating cruelty.

The poem ends with the message that love is celebration and love fortified or love fractured is a many splendored dream.

The second poem is 'Love Song'. As the title suggest it is a melodious lyrical ballad. It can be best enjoyed on reading and reading. Its beauty comes in playful, beautiful words. It is not a just 'Love Song' but the poem is also deeply engrained with metaphysical thoughts of lasting nature.

Life alive and attuned to the 'NOW' in a paradise  
My below fill the cup of my heart  
With the fragrance of your soul  
That clears all cloistered pretentious of today  
And of past regrets and future fears.

The above lines reminds of Omar Khayyam's famous subiyats and reverberates with their famous line "Unborn tomorrow dead yesterday/Why fret about them when today be sweet" likewise the poem "My Enchantress", celebrates the love and beauty of the beloved. It is romantic lyrical, pleasing and memorable.

My Enchantress  
Will you receive a heart?  
That loves, but never yields?  
A heart that endures  
And burns, but never melts  
Will you feel comfortable?  
With a soul that shivers  
Before the storm,  
But never surrenders to it?  
Dear, will you own me

But not possess me  
By receiving my body  
And ignoring my heart.

The poet seeks for 'churning ragas of pure love and attune souls.' "A New Love" and "My Beloved" are another two pieces of romantic love. The poet seeking for true love which is lasting and formidable and not which withers and fades. The poet is in search of:

Our souls to the tunes of pure passion and "I am Alive Again", "Broken Whispers", "Rainbow Melodies", sleeping memories and unsung songs are all love songs celebrating physical love which yearns for long lasting spiritual union.

Krishna Srinivas in his introduction has made a scintillating analysis of these poems in his lyrical language and comparing the poetry of Syed Ameeruddin to that of Dante, Poe, Kierkegaard, Rimbaud and Von Gogh. Krishna Srinivas opines that Ameeruddin surpasses Lorca in imagistic delicacy. He profusely quotes lines from poems after poems to justify his conclusions. He justifiably concludes:

As Juan Lopez Maxillas says of lyrical primitivism the world stretches before Ameeruddin as an undifferentiated mass taking the place of understanding and impression is a substitute for analysis. Life is a supreme spectacle and the world of forms dances and peaks to feverish contortions. He dramatises the conflict between primitivism and modernity.

Ameeruddin is restless of the waltzing civilisation. His poetry is lyrical, his feelings flame as images and have the stamp of unique personality. This makes him the finest and most sensitive of contemporary poets.

### ***Visioned Summits (1995)***

After a gap of seven years, Syed Ameeruddin published his classical collection *Visioned Summits* which has been acclaimed critically world over. Krishna Srinivas has prefaced with a lengthy



introduction with a sensitive analysis of each poem and bringing on to the fore of the gems of poetic lines. Krishna Srinivas opines:

Syed Ameeruddin combines the flash of swinburnean rhetoric with cabalistic devices of syntax and imagery. He is dogmatic with the pantheistic vitalism of D.H. Lawrence. In Ameeruddin's poetry creativity is perpetuated by ecstatic bliss. He feels the magnificent love and new of life in the flesh of ours and ours alone and ours only for a time. We are part of the incarnate isomers, part of the earth. Beloved is part the sea. There is nothing in us alone.

Again Krishna Srinivas writes:

Going beyond Rimbaud, Syed creates poem – illumination, a synthetic explosion of colour, emotion and perpetual movement. Like Blake, he merges spiritual vision and poetry, feeling the joy of being, the joy supreme. His prophetic words must be felt – they are the living views of universe, holding keys to eerie secrecies.

“Visioned Summits” – is his masterpiece poem. Syed has proved that, he is the Bard of the Far Beyond, with his mesmerising mission and munificent message. He is Aurobindonian in his thought process and Tagorian in his transparent symbolism and exploding imagery.

This poem establishes the “oneness of reality” compromising the existential base and flowering of consciousness culminating in Ananda – supreme bliss.

This collection has twenty one poems. Each of the learned critic and reviewer has brought in their own learned style the appraisal of this collection. It is the unanimous opinion of all the reviewers and critics that this collection stands out for its own beauty and for its remarkat ability being unique one, a beautiful and rare collection by a very sensitive poet, who tries to be a perfect modernist and the poet strives to bridge the gulf between the rich Indian classical values and the exuberant new Indian consciousness. The poet speaks in terms of provocative and forceful metaphors and relates his work to the relevance of contemporary experience, the

realistic, the nonrealistic and seer realistic trends in behaviour and relationship between man and woman of our times and their existentialistic attitude towards life.

The critics and reviews are of the view that Ameeruddin's poetry traces the origin of feeling and consciousness, forcing one to think backwardness, inwards into many awakenings.

Further the poetry springs from a full participation in life and even where it seems purely sensuous, it has vigour and a freshness.

The critics say that the poet belongs to a special and rare breed who use words with the fury of obsessed people. The poet is complex, evocative and sometimes explosively immediate. The language is powerful incisive well knit. The poet is daring, innovative and has powerful imagery with substantial vigour.

The thought content in the opening longish poem "Eloquent Serenade" is that of poems in the third and fourth title poems, *A Lover and a Wanderer* and *Petalic Love Times*.

The poet begins with the parting company with the beloved. He laments about fifty summers he has crossed in the hurricane of ravens, through empty day breaks and crumbling sunsets of course, as a wanderer, in search of, "sat, chit, ananda". The poet speaks about the manner in which he parted with the beloved "like sea gulls part in the dark sea". The poet speaks about his being "alone amidst the multitude/A non where man with the love song satchel". Here a poet wants the readers to believe that he is not a man of the world. He is like a lotus in marshy waters spreading his fragrance and not emerging in the dirty and polluted waters. The protagonist has gained vast knowledge and experienced as a wanderer.

He has not been afflicted by 'chants of decay and riding the savage highways'. Nor with what is happening in the 'Scream of solitude under the delirious sun', nor with the 'daggers of dark on the moonless night'. With the trailing of blood down the dale of shadows'. Nor with the 'bleeding cry/that shroud the brooding hills. He has experience the 'Buddha's bodhi'/'Guru Nanak's compassion/about them bewildering and crumbling. About

Gandhi's ahimsa gurgling. About the masses raising a hue and cry for building a temple or mosque for 'Ram and Rahim'/oblivious of the fact that 'the one and only Reality' – is "Ishwar Allah – Tere Naam". The protagonist in the poem is an attained soul. He wishes to pass on a message of peace to the erring mankind, who are merged in the 'whirlwind of darkness': "droning in the culture of human bomb and AK47's": by so doing the life of human being is threatened and "terminating many a shining stars to Suni Thereen." The poet laments on the 'Bombay blast – Ayodhya denstation,/Somalian shrieks, Bosnian berearements," about the hypocrisy of 'god men' about superstitious gossip of 'Ganesh idol drinking milk,' milk miracles; about the politicians taking out Rathyatras, padayatras and the result is:

All this blaze of sensation  
Has rallied round the skies of sanity  
With radiating raiment's  
Of rivalry and ruthlessness.

The pacifist peace loving poets condemns senseless and mad frenzy of mankind in the name of Gurunanak and Gurudwaras causing "floods of human blood/with mystic eyes and unbridled minds"/Dreaming for a place of their own,/sans love, sans humanity/sans sanity and sanctity."

The poet is a mystic, a Sufi and a Humanitarian. He wishes people and humanity to live in peace, happiness, solace, bliss and universal brotherhood. He is against "anarchy let loose/disintegration of totalitarianism/mushrooming of mini-macro states/of racism and religion bigotry."

The poet watches mutely the destruction the materialist has brought and brought up. The scientific advancement – an indefinite tune has only added to the "degeneration of values/environment holocaust/religious fundamentalism/ethnic and racial vandalism/political hegemony/national pride/economic disparity/social discrepancy/abnormality/obscenity/shallowess,shamelessness/sensnality /amorality/paranoid passim, 'devilish dareness'. "all this only to bring"/"deluge of humanity'.

The spiritual, and mystic poets goes on and on in this longish poem to speak about the secret of the self, about the self-discovery and shares his thoughts, wisdom and experience so that man can live in peace and happiness, with oneness and humanitarian feeling of brotherhood and concern for each other. The poet speaks of himself thus:

I am wanderer. I am nowhere man  
Gypsy River runs through my bones  
I walk with the thunder  
And share its magnificent pride

The poet is a wanderer. 'To experience and explore/the lybrintine webs of humanity'. The poet after due realisation from his varied experience speaks about 'laughter and smile everywhere', about creation of the "new language of love/new alphabets of equality/new syllables of solace/so that, fire flies may weave the manuscript/of man's rainbow dreams'.

The poet speaks about his worship to God 'to console/the guilt of my wavering mind'. He states that 'I served mankind to pamper my sleeping self' likewise 'i worked and boozed to the dizzy heights/to let loose the flooded veins/of dormant obsession. The poet speaks about 'practised all isms and inebriating cults/sealed all minds an d weighed all souls/love, unloved and love/through 'petallic love times'. Thus the poet goes on and on to share his varied experiences, about his 'politicking, gossiping, measuring/scandal mongering everywhere. He wishes to bring out from this 'caravan of despair' about the prevalence of 'darkness and deception'. The poet wishes to continue his voyage march 'to discover the secrets of myself'.

The second poem is "Vicissitucles of life". The poet utters:

"My life is a splintered mirror  
The sun quickly explodes  
My memory is blown to pieces  
I closed my eyes  
To watch the controversy of hurts".

The poet speaks about his faults and virtues. About his iconoclast mission, his surrealistic vision, his petallic love times, his detached attachment, his loves and wanderings, his existential encounters, his rainbow dreams and his dusky disappointments.

The world calls him mad, but he wishes “to live and let live”/in this decomposed jungle/of pulsating darkness and ending light.

The poet speaks of his reality is in his loneliness and in quest of his self/and:

The apathy and the ecstasy  
The agony and the frenz  
Circles in circles  
Within the circles of my being.

The poet is then speaks about his human concern lurking in his heart and about ‘A new sun explode into my bones’.

The poem ‘My India’ laments about the loss of last glory, about the vanishing of values. The poet keeps asking ‘India, where all your grandeur gone!’ and speaks about the various virtues held in its bosom of Maryadapurshottam Rama’ pragmatism, dynamism, *niskama karma* enunciated by Krishna the avatar. Songs of Vaishnavites, Shivities, Seers, who proclaimed ecstatic love and humanism. Chants of Sufis, Durvish, Fakirs – bellowing love man, love nature, love universe. The poet seeks to ask as to where has the unity God, of Kabirdas gone. The poet has likewise kept questioning as to where all the past virtues placated and practiced by saints, seers, peers, yogis have gone. The poet asks how would this deaf delinquents here their mother’s call. This poem lays bare the loss of grandeur once held by India. The poet does not show hope and sees the ‘silver lining in the darkness’. If all is not well, it will be well soon is not the theme of the poet in this poem.

‘Whispers of beyond’ is a rhetorical rhythmic logic, speaking about the poet being alone like an alabaster soaring into nothingness, telescoping the purple moments the poet has spent with his lover which is recorded ‘on the sand dunes of memory’.

The poet is preserving in the memory like time an enchanting incantations reverberating its way transcending into the marshlands of frozen fossils; “to be distilled in the dark crucibles of past”. The poet nostalgically recalls his past and gets drowned in mirage rhapsodies.

In the poem “Ambiguity”, the poet records his stray thoughts on life, which according to the poet is “a criss-cross crises/amidst dwindling destines/delirious dreams/and diabolic disillusion”.

For the poet the world is “a frenzied humdrum existence/of banality and triviality/of nauseating human experience/of cerebral jigsaw puzzle/of bated breath and/spiritual destitution.

Likewise the poet gives his own definition and understanding of “reality” “deliverance and answers the question posed by him “what is nirvana”? And answers “reflecting on the smoky layers/of gloom and solace/and seeing-/meaning in ambiguity.

In the poem ‘wounded dawn’ the poet speaks about the pain experienced by him and ends up the poem with epigrammatic words, “The wounded dawn chokes the unsung song”.

The poem “pilgrimage” speaks about the inspiration drawn from stories of puranas and yogis of yore on bhakti and divinity,/Vedic sages on the life of serenity and impressed by great prophets and gods taking to solitude and meditation; the poet speaks about mistaking pilgrimage in all his seriousness. He speaks about the march with all courage and determination “with” eyes set on my gurgling goal/unmindful of hardships to face. After much confusion and chaos and questioning, the poet realised “what the Tander meant”;/look into the citadel of your own self/light wash the fissured walls of your heart./with the milk of joys shared and woes felt./be alive to now, here and around/not to run for hereafter away and beyond-/to discover sweetness in life/and the rig morale of your existence. The poet then speaks of the illumination and enlighten received by him on this realisation.

The poem “back again” ends with a solitary advice “lets march together hand in hand/weaving a garment of love and

forever/towards a purple shadow/across and unknown sky./thus we watched the shadows/grow into silent guilt's/and the morning sea mirrored our joy”.

In the poem “The pomp’s of gold” the poet prays into god to give me a moment of love for a handful of gold/and give me an eye/that can see others heart in barter of gold/oh lord! Remove the tattered robes of/narrowness and greed from my body/and bless me with the raicinent of/nature’s beauty and bounty.

“Rainbow acrobats” is a poem detailing the ills of the times. While the poem “Jigsaw puzzle life” raise several question on birth and death and then the poet advices the reader to enjoy the tilting present and to share love, share sorrow, share life of love man, love nature, love universe” while “forgetting the forlorn hopes/of jigsaw puzzle life.

‘Carrier Carnage speaks about the horrors of war ethnic conflicts. The poet is shocked about “the diabolic ethnic forces” spreading carnage, rape, and killing in Somalia, Bosnia and horror of war on the fall of Soviet Union and on the rise of parochial spirit. The poet shows his pacifist tendency and a cry for peace and ends the poem by questioning. Then, where is God’s benevolence?/But the question is, whose God??” The poet’s faith in hope, humanism and peace is shaken while recounting the racial discrimination, the apartheid and the new Nazi Cults.

In the poem ‘New Dawn’ the poet desires to “bring to the universe/a vibrating tide less song/which will replace/the parched serenade”. The poet is hopeful that “One day my dreams/will touch Olympus/culminating into a/spectroscopic thunder/heralding a-/Resplendent new dawn”.

In the poem “Musing”, the poet muses that “Life is a Conglomeration/of farewells and reunions,/Hope and fulfilments/peace and despair, tears and laughter”. The ‘Life’s Enigma’ reflects on various aspect of life and ends up with a profound thought:

But the ultimate:  
This is a world of fossilation,  
Decay and delusion.

“Transient Time” also reflects on life which according to the poet is “a tight rope walk/on the string of a moment/The ever pervasive now/which sparkles and disappears/from the screen of transient time”.

The poem “Hope” is a very positive poem in the entire collection, which defines what hope is. The poets list the positive aspect of ‘hope’ in the poem.

In the poem “Beckoning Arm”, the poets pleads “Stir up, friends/and lights the lamps/before night falls”.

The poem “This is false: Ours is not this” opens up with a statement “We come unasked;/we are caught in the sleep of the world/awake or asleep!”. The poet delineates what is false and the poet ends up “O let us fly/To tranquil peaks/and scale the heights/of dim distance/and leap in to leaps nectarine/where sapphire seers/Roams in Godly Glee!”

“His foot fall Rings” is a lyrical song reverberating after every four lines in rhythmic tone, his foot fall rings! His foot fall rings!”

The title poem “Visioned Summits” comes in the end of the collection of 21 poems. The poet commences the poem with a statement “I am yet to explore/The frontiers of longest pilgrimage/of life’s vast vicissitudes/The unsolved dazzling enigmas/the mysterious spiriting paths/of passion and peace”.

The poet speaks of his “Vain adventures” “of mundane exploration” and submits that “At last, my search/has become a quest beyond/a resounding voyage/in to the realm of light/to unfathomed the eerie secrecies/and revered revelation/. The poet then speaks about “My Mahaprasthan” passes through/the valley of sorrow,/mountain of joy/and verdant woods/of metaphysical maze,/in to the abyss of peace/to reach the endless ocean of light/love and beauty/realising the radiating syndromes/which brought me in to life/and life in to me”. The poem ends up with a



profound message “Only those return to eternity, who on earth seek out eternity”.

This collection of poems has established Syed Ameeruddin as a major poet in the galaxy of Indian English poets.

### ***Visions of Deliverance (2006)***

The metaphysical, romantic and mystic major Indo-Anglican poet Syed Ameeruddin brought out this sixth collection after a gap of twelve years. This collection has twenty seven poems and title poem ‘vision of deliverance’ appearing in the end of the collection. The book carries gist of critical reviews, appraisals and world opinions besides an introduction by Krishna Srinivas.

The opening poem is “A Prayer for My Grandson”; the grandfather is delighted and exults on the birth of the grandson. He finds in the smile of the child divine sparkles and his forehead reflects ‘twilight dawn’ and the ‘Slumber in the cradle/symphonies serenity/your looks tantalise/eternal embers of veracity.

The poet delights on birth of the ‘Little Angel his little rose’. “Oh you are my purple paradise/your presence is so resplendent/that showers/innocence and beauty/that clashes – /sweetness and light/oh! You are my little marvel!/What a virtuosity!/what an amity/what a delicacy”. The poet is a descendent of holy prophet and is a “Syed”. He expects the grandson to grow up in the heritage of Syed’s/and seers of rustic simplicity/with oriental smiles/and blowing souls/scissoring layers of space scapes/with hearts of gold/and minds of moulds/with ineffable intoxication/took crisscross/the enthralling path/of blue flames/and splendored domes”. The poet is immensely happy that his legacy and that of his four bearers would be carried by “the little angle”. The poet laments on the loss of “values of Mosses, Jesus, Mohammed and Ram”. Thus ushering in a ‘Dreadful fiasco’ and boomeranging on man/to create fishers of fury/and his enchantment/to inflict/A deluge of/rambling rubbles of debris/and decomposed/dragon pieces of human flesh”. The poet speaks of the loss of humanity and their icons have “miserably failed man/in

recognising/mass as man – the humanism/the poet laments on the hollowness of the time and destruction that has been brought about by the advancement of science and technology. The poet hopes that his ‘little angel’ would carry on/the mystic mantle of our heritage/into the inscapes and out scapes/of times reality/unforgetful of our glorious land/of Vedic love and epical grandeur/and to routed in our/pluralistic culture that vibrates/“Satyam! Shivam! Sundaram!//and the infinite cosmic confluence of//“Inhal Haq! Awam Brahman! Nirvana!//”/and be attained to the echoes/of humanism from time immemorial:/“*Sarva Jana-Hitaya!*”/“*Sarva Jana-Sukhaya!*”/“*Sarva api sukhinaha santu!*”/“*Ma Kaschitdu dukha bhak bhavat!*” The poet with a message for the new born ‘Share joy’/‘Share sorrow’/‘Share nature’/to bring radiating brilliance/into the shrunken ghostly faces-/of withering mankind”.

This is an excellent poem with hope for the newborns to follow the path of truth and beauty and be humanistic, virtuous practising everlasting goodness and not be carried away with the tides of time. The reading of the poem clearly shows that the poet wants the younger generation to imbibe high spiritual values instead of being mere religious bigots. The poem encompasses all the spiritual values of all the religions. The poet has shown that he holds very high values and he is a humanist par excellence.

There are several love poems like, ‘A New Love’, ‘Moon lit Meanderings’, ‘My Beloved’, ‘Love Song’, ‘Love Time’, ‘your eyes’ you are a beautiful, poem ‘Come Dancing Thine way to nine arms’ ‘Hungering Glance’, ‘Jubilee’. There is a birth song for my son’. A poem on ‘New Year’. A poem on ‘Turkey’, A poem on ‘Mystery of the Divine’. Another on ‘Glaucoma – A highway Roberer. Poem on “Broken Whispers”, “Realm of Nothingness”, ‘Golden Streaks’, ‘Dreamy Hours’, ‘If i were you! Drumbeats of Dampatya’. The collection closes with the title poem vicious of deliverance a long poem. This title poem is a classic poem and in the poem, the poet has attempted to put forth his higher spiritual thoughts and emotions which touch the zenith. The poet hopes to reach the zenith of spirituality:

“Fana! Fana! Fana!  
Into the eternal-Here After’  
The eternal realm of resplendent.

The poem can be enjoyed by those yearning to reach the higher echelons of spirituality and hope to merge into the lord and those who wish to see “light upon light” and wish to shed this mortal coil and finally merge in the “bright magnificent vent”.

D C Chambial concludes his article (ibid) by remarking “Thus, the discussion can be wound up with the remark that the poet, Syed Ameeruddin, like any other contemplative individual on this earth, also thinks about his self and tries to know what lies beyond the borders of ephemeral existence and how this existence, even after the termination of bodily life, can be made to exist eternally. He begins as a being attached to his love, but is shocked when she departs leaving him agonised. He decides to find TRUTH and begins his journey, visits so many places and persons to realise his goal but is disillusioned everywhere and ad finem seeks to face sun and shade of this life in “equipoise’s” and realises that “human” life is the most important life where one can make or mar one’s future life of attaining immortality. His mission is yet on and he admits that the end is far off, but before that the end comes; he has to search the limits of “longest journey” of life in order to know and quench his thirst of his quest for self. His poetry is out and out philosophical and mystical which endeavours to unravel the mysteries of present and future in the form of manifest, non-manifest and beyond manifest – life”.

O P Mathur concludes his article (ibid) by noting as follows:

“Thus after his vision summits, Syed Ameeruddin in this book casts a backward glance at the worldly phenomena which is often tremulous with limitations of the spiritual. The last section of the book he has a vision of the individual soul, reaping its punishment or reward in what is beyond life, finally reaches its deliverance. What is indeed remarkable about Syed Ameeruddin’s book is not only the powerful theme and expression but the essential unity of the message of all important religions of the world. The words may differ but their essentials are almost the same. Another poet P

B Shelley has expressed practically the same idea in his immortal lines:

The one remains, the many change and pass;  
Heavens light forever shines, earth's shadows fly.....

Syed Ameeruddin seem to have envisioned the path of deliverance leading from 'earth's shadows' to 'heaven', call it by whatever name you like."

Shujaat Hussain in his article (ibid) concludes 'vision of deliverance' a just like an ever green tree, a shelter for the tired travellers, an umbrella to protect from rain, laden with juicy, pulpy and tasty fruit, each and every fruit spreading its fragrance and contains taste of honey, quench thirst, heavenly food for the hungry, sick becomes agile and full of energy, atheist take the course of believers and the sinners souls seem silvery and blood rushes in veins to perform virtuous deeds to make the earth heaven to live in almighty watch from heaven and feels satisfaction on his art and skill being their creator.

Many of his lines and stanzas will become adage. They will pass to posterity like epigrams of bacon or the sayings of Solomon, for example: 'every rose that blossoms must fade', 'the sun rises that is bound to set', 'everything we see here is a shame', 'to realise the certainty that life a fleeting flux', 'make haste live life', 'when love arrives, all needs and flaws are gone', and 'man's life on earth a visioned spark etc'.

### **Ameeruddin's Poetics and Summing Up**

Syed Ameeruddin has given many interviews to various editors of journals, newspapers and others. He has aired many views on himself, his poetry and his times. In his interview to Atma Ram he has detailed about various facets of his work, life and about his times.

Syed Ameeruddin is of the view that to him poetry is a spontaneous creation of his feelings. Creativity in him is simple and sudden. All of a sudden in a particular moment the mood comes

and restlessness sets in. The result is a poem. If that moment is lost and the mood is disturbed, he can't recreate the same poem.

In his opinion a good poem in the first place must have complexity of thought, It must evoke a kind of curiosity, an element of wonder, a kind of thrill and a sense of novelty and freshness in the minds of the readers. It must have a certain element of vagueness and must be suggestive through well-conceived visual images-and empty words and direct narration.

He has stated that once he gets in the mood, thought with great ease flow in his mind, and in such a creative situation he will complete a poem of 40 or 50 lines, within three hours. When it is over he simple stops thinking about it. He will take up the same after sometime-and go through it several times to put in the punctuations properly, with a slight change of a word here and there.

Speaking on the influence on him, he says that he is deeply influenced by modern sensibility. Times have changed; man's attitude and his thinking are also considerably changed according to the times. He states that we live in a world which believes in distorted truth which involves non-clarity, vagueness and complexity in everything. The age old virtues of clarity, directness and simplicity have lost their meaning. Religion, tradition and other aged old values have troubled the modern mind. He wants a total change; whether it is for good or for bad, i.e., altogether a different question. According to Syed Ameeruddin, modern man wants to encounter life on the basis of his own experience. He wants to give vent to his spirit to derive his own pleasure. He wants to evaluate life on the basis of his personal experience to find new meanings, new expressions and freshness. Sometimes modern sensivity according to Syed is considerably influenced by the existentialities, realists, non-realists and surrealists. He clarified this point by citing his poem "Lover and a Wanderer", wherein he has incorporated the existentialist's mental crisis and view of life, which is entirely against the Sham and seeming reality of life, which we are forced to believe. He stated that his poems advocate the individual to evaluate

on the basis of his personal experience and to encounter the 'real' situation of life.

On his poetry he stated that generally if any one analyses his poems he is sure to find three main aspects in his poetry: (i) spiritual and personal, (ii) social themes, (ii) and the most important, the multi-facets of love. He stated that his poetry is deeply rooted in the Ancient ethos. Yet he is a happy modernist and he strives to bridge the gulf between the rich Indian Classical values and the exuberant new Indian consciousness. He stated that he is typical Indian poet rooted in Indian sensibility. He speaks in terms of provocative and forceful metaphors and relates his work to the relevance of contemporary experience, the realistic, the non-realistic and surrealist trends in the behaviour and relationship between man and woman of our times and their existentialistic attitude towards life. He stated that on this aspect he has vividly reflected in his poems: "A Lover and the Wanderer" and "Bells of Reminiscences". Besides his social awareness and commitment to his society is another quality of his poetry. He cited his poems "Indian Bride", "clustered Clouds of Poetry", "Beggar Maid".

Syed further believes that poetry must be pure and must aim at aesthetic values rather than specific social purpose. Its primary aim must be to delight and if it incidentally instills it is welcome.

According to the poet Syed Ameeruddin, the most distinctive feature of modern English poetry is its composite culture. Most of the Indian English poets, according to Syed, are influenced excessively by western thoughts and modern English poetry.

According to him, they are profoundly influenced by the English Romantics and particularly by modern English poets like T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, Audens and others. Our writers make use of the influence of Western culture and literature in interpreting our ancient Indian sensibility and way of life to the English – knowing world, says the poet Syed. He further says that they give expression to Indian life in the light of the latest trends and techniques evolved by their counterparts in the west. He further says – that their visual frontiers are deep vast and their perception of things multi-

dimensional. This according to the poet Syed is the most distinctive feature of modern Indo-Anglian poetry.

To Syed Ameeruddin his favourite writers are: Shelly, Keats, Ezra Pound, Eliot, Yeats, Auden, Kalidasa, Tagore and Iqbal.

Niranjan Mohanty in his paper 'A study of the poetry of Syed Ameeruddin (C F vol 1 No 4 Dec 1988) quotes Syed Ameeruddin as follows:

"Basically, I have a craving". Writes Syed Ameeruddin one of India's most sensitive poets writing in English today. Let me say an urge to create, to express myself, my own being, my predicaments and reactions about my surroundings and my experiences and encounters with different human and psychic and spiritual situations and further my struggle to comprehend the reality, non-reality and the seeming reality which I'm forced to believe. The basic questions – God, life, death, humanity, love, joy and misery – fascinate my sensitive mind. Moreover, I often in isolation react to these fundamental questions, and with the intensity of feelings I attempt to penetrate deep in to their root".

Niranjan Mohanty quoting the above statement of the poet Syed Ameeruddin writes:

"And obviously, this 'craving for' and 'urge to create' something out of the living and authentic experiences of life, remain the proof of Ameeruddin's poetic utterances love inordinately occupies a central position in the fabric of the poet's experience, so much so that it builds for him a citadel which neither breaks down nor disillusion nor dissipates. It emerges as a visible metaphor for transcending reality".

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## A Colossus in the World Parnassus: Krishna Srinivas

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Krishna Srinivas remained as an illustrious figure in the world Parnassus. A 'guru' for all the younger poets, a most loved and respected personality, possessed with a magnetic and genial temperament. He was the President of the World Poetry Society and Chief Editor of *Poet*, a poetic journal published by him for 48 years. He had to his credit a long list of achievements – a world famous person in the field of poetry. For his achievement he was awarded Padma Bhushan.

Krishna Srinivas's *Five Elements* is a monumental epic, which has attracted worldwide attention. Several scholars have worked for their doctoral studies on his works. Much has been written and debated for over two decades by critics and academicians. 'Five Elements' is a modern epic, whose language and idiom is fresh, every green, and new; avoiding rhetoric, verbosity, monotony, thunder and lightning. It is sublime, subtle and presented in silken words from the depths of the heart. There is an anguished need to define the self, out of the fathomless flow of time. A purified mind and an illumed soul's outpouring is spontaneous like a perennial fresh spring. In a trancelike state, the poet's utterances are communicated in a crystallised form with honey and butter words, experience and maturity and mind's awareness of greater higher consciousness articulated divinely. The poetic vision is prophetic sans obscurity and he exhibits supreme craftsmanship; intellectualised observations of life, moral realism, and integration

of personality. There is purity in the imagery, the tone and theme has a rich tradition and the poet has broken fresh grounds to communicate the higher felt feelings and experience which is too often felt by a large majority but fail to versify it in poetry. The poet has felt the reality and the truth. The effulgence of beauty is dawned on the higher mind and on the consciousness of the poet and the utterances are lyrical and at once profound and magical, wise with insight, sparkling bright. There is precision, economy in language defined images and in depth understanding of the 'five elements' inspiration drawn from the inner consciousness and reaching reality. In my humble opinion, the poet has succeeded in creating poetry, which is of higher plane and indeed a great one. It will remain as a light house to guide umpteen sailing ships to reach the shores. Krishan Srinivas has silenced the academicians and critics, who wag their tail and protrude their tongue and will not fall short in criticising that the Indians cannot write poetry in English. I had the misfortune to attend a few seminars, wherein the big wigs kept deprecating Indians' writing in English, being totally oblivious of tremendous contribution done by the Indians in the field of Indo-Anglican literature, opening up flood gates for all the other nationalities to follow suit. Indians have never lagged behind in holding on to the traditional wisdom and expounding the same not only in Indian languages but also in English.

*Five Elements* represent the cosmic elements, which go to the making of the universe and in the creation of man and matter. In his illuminating 'introduction' to *Five Elements* the poet has penned the inspiring moments that gave birth to the thought and feeling to utter his epic on the five elements – Water, Wind, Fire, Earth, Void. The poet was born on the banks of River Kaveri and whose musical depths, he reveled. He records that when evening blazed red in the west, he remembered his stitching full on the river bed and the waters slowly, gaily flow over him and whispering into his ears all the music of the ages. The poet witnessed with horror, the wind in his nature state, causing untold agonies and horror, the winds in comradeship with floods would sweep over his sate, sowing death and despair. The poet states that this periodic destruction roused his

verse to fret and fume. He was silent spectator to a typhoon lashing Philippines and the wind lashed its fury “but in their chastened quietude is life./And this yielded wind”.

The poet records that fire was never his dread but he recalls the moment when a big fire enveloped a big mansion, when he was five years old and his mother fought the flames to keep him ‘off their licking’. The poet states that after “sixty four years, I wrote Ageless Fires-recreating my past tremors”.

The poet writes that “with void – this epic of *Five Elements* comes a full circle”.

The poet submits that “the language we use today is absolutely insufficient to carry on full fidelity our fountaining thoughts”. How true? language is indeed a poor media to communicate a poetic vision. The poet concludes his introduction by saying:

“A poet of Reality feels the agony of expressing himself, like a musician who goes to the very source of tune he is singing enlarging nuances. Methods may be different but what matters is the grandeur of the final project. To me poetry is search after the ultimate real – a magic incantation, a celebration, an exploration”.

In the first element “Water” the poet opens up with a vision.

“A river is born/in the birth pangs of elemental furies/thunder screaming ecstasies/lightings/sweatings stream of blaze/clouds caressing creation’s Os,/delirium seeding dark dark/irrevocable dark inane”

Again the vision reoccurs:

“Light chiseling eyes of words/sound carving noses in nebulae/touch bubbling rinds in skies/taste pleasing mouths in earth”

The poet dreams with the River – cry’s, grow, frolics, ages and regenerates with the River.

He remembers his pilgrimage, down the corridors of fractured stars, promenading algebraic heavens, scaling skies, shearing seas and scuttling air – serpentine, animalic, humanic”.

The poet recalls having lied with, Rama, Krishna, having spermed flames, wombed whirlpools and having lived lies multitudinous. He cried and wept with Cleopatra, Cordelia, Leila-Majnu, Romeo-Julient, Desdemona; shed streams of tears, rivers of tears, ocean of tears, over extinctions of mute millions.

The poet speaks of “The furnace in space/feeding fuel for suns and moons/writes alphabets inchoate/splashes cubic vignettes/on canvassed heavens – its kinetics always in hysterics/its dark radiance etching dawns/its ebony shades erasing dusks-mixes present with past/and morrow’s morrow/with tomorrow and tomorrow”

Here are lines penned as a child, a born mystic and a saint, in search of truth and reality.

“The floor is neat  
The lamp is clean  
The oil is up to brim  
Master where is light?

The poet recalls his passions:

“In passion I am born/in passion I live/in passion I perish/so too, my Kaveri.

The elevated soul of the poet yearns for Nirvana.

But the center is not still...../it hungers turbulence/giddy gyrations/mirage morrows/citadels of anguish/and to reach is Nirvana...../Nirvana alone”

The poet expresses his love to “Krishna my body/River my Blood/Father and Mother the sacred banks/I sail waters deep/in quest of isle to rest awhile/homing stars and suns within/caverned fires niched a kith and kin”.

The poet surrenders in the deep love to his master and “Lord of seven Hills, you stand naked/stripped of emerald lure/and gemmed blare-/your face shorn of furied sheen”.

Here is the poet coming out with an epigram

“Passion never dies/if passion dies/there is no poetry/no rhapsody/no hysterics/of kinetics...”

The Poet addresses to ‘River Mother/Doth great Economy of Creations/keep perfect equipoise/with grades/in grand extravagance/of Destructions?’

And to Mother Universe/“when contours of earth/are torn and twisted/and buried deep/as debris fossil.../they burgeon/as mobile continents”

The poet speaks of his self-realisation:

“It is the chosen – few/many a visiting god/from our watchful Lord/who twirl and swirl/the twist and sojourns/of all the centuries/as river coursing earth/rages races/and is stilled/with cosmic oceans filled... I dream with the river.

The poet speaks on behalf of wind:

“I am wind/flaming, river firmaments-/my enraged alphabets of thrills/wombing billion, trillion worlds/in fractured universe/and seeding lights/in dark, dark ebony spheres – /intellect-boned”

The epic on “Wind” is exhaustive, bringing forth myriads of hue and colours, with exuberance and splendour. The poet philosophizes “Each souls is an enchantment – A Mantra”. The poet speaks about Krishna, Vyasa and Valmiki, Jesus and Mohammed, Moses etc. about birth of hope and about all passions quelled about dawn of philosophy; about good thoughts/deeds/everything/heaven and human. Above ‘God pervades all we see’ He our hope/He our guide/He our soul refuge”.

The wind again speaks about itself about gathering all breaths, extinguishing all flames and various other deeds. The poet again

philosophizes. "From darkness to light/follow the beckoning trail/whose flesh and flash/or beaming layers/will burn and char/all languor/the light to illumine/the darkened wastes'.

The poet closes the chapter on wind, thus:

"Let this mass of human matter/be burnt to ash.../O God/Beaming as Om/Abode of Ageless Fire/Remember, Remember/Remember me/and All I did/Remember me/and All did/no fear shall gall/its saintly serenity/seeded in divinity"  
Again poet speaks about "The Divine in us burgeoned/will crush demonic dire/all dusts wipe off/sense subdued life battle won"

For the poet "God is high as sun and moon/He is perfume of the earth/He is womb of Universe/stars and spheres well from Him/He is Maya, Yoga, endless space".

The poet says that "Man is frontier/of Him the Almighty power/homed in hum of void; Man is unique creation/in million expressions/of mortal existence/but Human alone/can break away from bonds of earth".

The poet speaks about the reality; "but reality/souled in Mystery/a million billion illusions flame/but reaching truth in panoply/is yet a sweated quest".

For the poet 'Man/is yet to Man/the Main in him". The poet ends philosophizing. "The world within/our lotus heart/along can gain/heavens on earth/a Kingdom won".

The last chapter "Void" is illuminating, fascinating and erudite. It reverberates with passion. The emotions are well chiseled and the experiences are deeply felt. An amateur poet can take light from the entire epic and it flashes as divine light' "guided missiles/directed panspermia/primordial giant molecules/from cosmic cradle/a full moon nectar-white/filled my bed with ivory showers/froze my flesh and numbed my nerves"

The poet visualizes that:

“I come from the realm of reality/everlasting pyramidal creations/In beginningless beginning/The one opened in All lay serene; macrocosm microed/seven world’s seven centred....”

The poet says that “all worlds and spheres/gulped and pulped/in numbered fire. In His Being”.

The poet states that the “Earth, a phantom of past, eerie urges/From this phoenix realities will sudden bloom a new Eden – /a Race a stalwart men/and flower women/with eyes to see/histories in make and ears to hear/luring music from far off spheres”.

For the poet “Akash is Om; All is Om, and “Akash is Brahman” and Brahman eternal in front, behind, right to left, above, a below, everywhere and Brahman Universe”.

The poet states that “The story of universe/is four dimensional space/all world/lines moves as racing atoms/racing beats/racing stars/three in space and one in time/Akasa is seen within; as seen outside is sans reality’.

The poet has reached infinity by his self-analysis, meditation and to the pinnacle of great heights.

“The unseen/incommunicable, unseizable/unthinkable/undesignable/That is the self/that which has to be known/The spirit which is in the Sun. The one spirit – no other”

The entire chapter VOID is a merger with: “Five Elements/Shrunk to macro maze/the Delivered one/is Onned with Mightly One/who creations weave/and tirelessly unweave/urge and surge on merge of lone mirage.....” “Lila Kaivalyam”

## Reference

Krishna Srinivas, *Five Elements*, The Christian Literature Society, Madras, 1981.

## **T.V. Reddy's Poetry: A Critical Evaluation**

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T. V. Reddy, a retired Professor of English and Principal of Government College in A.P., is a poet, novelist, critic and a short story writer. He is a major poet in Indian English poetry having won laurels at home and abroad with several critics acclaiming him as a major poet with a commitment to perfection. His poems have a natural flow and rhythm, essentially lyrical and reflective of his socio-economic consciousness. Nissim Ezekiel, the distinguished senior poet, opines that "T.V. Reddy is always a realist and like a gifted sculptor he chisels his poems with the deftness of a master craftsman". His first poetical collection *When Grief Rains* appeared from Samakaleen Prakashan, N. Delhi in 1982 and from then on the poems have been flowing from his pen spontaneously; his latest collections happen to be *Golden Veil* with 75 poems and *Thousand haiku Pearls* consisting of 1008 haiku poems and both the books are recently brought out by The Authors Press, N. Delhi in 2016. This haiku volume, a rare poetic achievement, is his tenth and latest poetry book. T.V. Reddy has also written a greatly useful and perceptive critical work *A Critical Survey of Indo-English Poetry* (2016) which is an exhaustive study from the beginnings to the contemporary poets and it has now been released from the Authors Press. Thus he has achieved eminence both in poetry and criticism, well-eulogized for its sheer quality and merit, thus finding a permanent place in the annals of Indian English poetry as a well-established poet and critic.



Poetry is an incantation of the soul and it is an outpouring of one's emotions in rightly chosen words in a format which has come down from the dawn of written poetry. Although modern poetry has emerged without any form, yet the poem is an inter-play of one's feelings and responses to the experience of life. The poet responds to the happenings around him and his confrontation with the reality, with the luminous truths of life as its seamier manifestations. Poems are born from inner joys and sorrows, inner turmoil and questionings, inner frustrations and ecstasies. Any poet in a given time slowly and steadily evolves in his expression and gains maturity and establishes himself through his spontaneous expressions. It is like a growing tree, slowly and gaining strength.

A poet faces multitudes of situations and watches the myriad-faced mankind and the negative and positive nature of man, about the growth and decline of morality, about the various stages of man. The poet's mind is a mirror which reflects the process of awakening of the society and its gradual loss. Man has recognised the divinity in him, the sublime qualities of love, mercy, compassion, generosity, sincerity, humility, sacrifice as against the animalistic nature of causing harm to his fellow beings and destroying the Nature. Man's evil tendencies of greed, lust, anger, jealousy, covetousness, selfishness have always brought grief and pain to himself and to the mankind. A poet's mind watches the interplay of these human emotions and feelings and situations and its effect on and its consequences to the society. A poet gives vent to his feelings gives expression in words either to delight the reader or to impress on the reader with his profound wisdom and sayings. Thus a poet becomes a social legislator. Poetry thus brings awareness on the human plight and conditions. Lyrical poetry is set to music and is sung melodiously to the tunes of melody moving a listener and touching the inner consciousness and soul. Man is intrinsically creative by nature, he keeps evolving and so does the society. The interplay between various communities and societies brings either progress or conflicts and destruction. Poets record in their poems the contemporary happenings and a poem sounds warning to the society of what is to come in future if safeguards are

broken to smithereens. Thus poetry has served mankind in every age to delight and give joy and to awaken the soul to greater grandeur. A poet creates poetic effect with correct emphasis on meaning and content. The subject matter is treated poetically with correct choice of words in the correct place with the use of striking imagery and various figures of speech for a pre-thought and much considered underlying poetic effect and message. Great poems are expressions of imagination and a poet is an author of his poetic language. As Shelley says poets are the institutors of laws and founders of civil society and inventors of the arts of life and teachers who draw into propinquity with the beautiful and the true that partial propensity and apprehension of the agencies of the invisible world which is called religion. He further says that “A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth” and that “poetry thus makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world..... Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man.”

On a fair and just assessment of the poetry of T.V. Reddy based on his works it can be gainsaid that T.V. Reddy has achieved the purpose and aim of poetry. His poetry is a celebration of the abiding varied interests of the wide varieties of our human existence. It mirrors a perception of the world quite characteristic of him. His poetical collections afford us a glimpse of the poet's mind and his unique colourful presence. The poet had a humble beginning in life in a remote village near the Temple town of Tirupati in the south of Andhra Pradesh. Having faced the vicissitudes of life and its struggles the poet with his hard work and scholarship mastered the English language and has given expression to his powerful spontaneous feelings. He has all the unique qualities of a serious, sensitive and original poet. His poetry awakens our soul and stirs the inner consciousness. His sensitiveness is unique and rich vocabulary and expressions capable of yielding subtle layers of meanings are at his command. There is realism in his poetry and a harmonious blending of the glorious past with the blazing present. His poetry is rooted in ancient Indian ethos and each poem reflects the actual happenings in the society. The poet

censures the society of its evils, of corruption, of our deceptive politicians of their misrule causing untold hardship to the poor populace. His poetry is a faithful record of the social changes that have come after the birth of free India, the decline in social values in the younger generation, the hypocrisy in modern life, the deceptive cover of make-belief of religious preachers and of religion as a mask for evil deeds and nefarious acts.

T.V. Reddy is a serious poet writing serious poetry to serious readers. He has taken his career as a teacher seriously minding his noble work, not wasting a moment and not meddling in other's affairs. He speaks about his personal compulsions, gains and losses in his poems, about his disgust on the gradual decline of moral values and his angst on the decadence in the society. In his poetry there is divinity and one feels nearer to the Almighty and spirituality. One feels nearer to goodness and all those values that purify the inner self and that which takes the reader nearer to God. T.V. Reddy can be said to be a visionary poet like Sri Aurobindo, Tagore, Kabirdas and metaphysical poets in the nature of Blake, Tennyson, Matthew Arnold and Browning. His poetry is of hope, enthusiasm and celebration of life and his expression is lucid with striking imagery, profound and spontaneous. His lines are epigrammatic and often they bear the image of adages and in this aspect he bears close resemblance to Alexander Pope.

Reddy's recent poetry book *Echoes*, his eighth collection of poems published in 2012, consists of 70 poems on various human aspects and emotions and responses to what is seen, heard and spoken. The poet unhesitatingly weaves without any inhibition his thoughts with his emotions and feelings. The language is smooth and subtle with figures of speech and the expression is powerful and thought-provoking. One is wonder-struck with the range of topics and easy flow of thought and expression and nowhere does he struggle for the right word as his expression is spontaneous with natural flow. In a subtle and polite way he calls spade a spade and he doesn't hesitate in calling the speeches of naïve politicians as that of 'owl's hoots'. He calls terrorists as 'Satans rolling in dark devilish masks'. He compares his thoughts to 'seeds' which grow wings, fly

and spread to untrodden fields and alien lands. He compares his life's journey to a journey in the train 'without any reservation' and 'without any motivation'. He refers to the writings of 'Revolutionary writers' emerging from 'carbonated lungs' which create a ring of 'riotous cloud' (p.33). The Swamijis and *Sants* indulging in evil acts in their 'saffron robe in his shining mask/to realise his cherished tainted task' become the subject of the poem 'Ashram' (p.35) which expresses how religion becomes an easy prey and the poem is a brilliant example of the flow and fluency of expression and the poet's perfect mastery of the language. He also caricatures 'pseudo' and shadow poets who 'meet with quills pruning their feathers to and read atop'. This poem 'Poets Meet' does not spare his own ilk; the poet's pen is sharp and satirises the 'sycophant poets' without fear or favour. Poems of this kind and caliber show the frankness in laying bare the truth and the sincerity of the poet in his verbal expression. The poet presents his persona experiences in his professional life and how he found persons of his profession whiling away their time and being insincere to their duties. In 'Beauty Parlour' the poet is at his satirical best like Alexander Pope:

Beauty is as thin as skin, we all know  
we run after the vanishing glow.  
Eve enters Paradise fresh and pure,  
with forbidden taste she leaves unsure.(p.53)

The poet is pessimistic and not hopeful in the future of our present institutions as depicted in the poem 'This System': in fact the West looks to the East/as a guide for spiritual light/while the East rolls in gory greed/chanting the mantra of the past/and hugs the corrupt wealth at last;' and the poem ends with a note of despair:

how long do we wait and grope  
in search of an elusive ray of hope.(p.58)

How summer holidays can be enjoyed with fun is well laid out in the poem 'A Summer Trip'. In 'Wings of Dragon' the poet is very critical on the loss of values in this once fabled sacred land where

'corruption marches with a heroic hand'. The poem details the present ills plaguing this ancient country. The poet's disappointment, anger and angst at the changing values in this value-based society with deep-rooted ancient ethics being debased has been well depicted in a large number of poems, reading which often makes a reader pensive. There are several poems depicting nature and natural scenes which are brought alive to our senses. Likewise the poems 'The Fly', 'A Shadow Play', 'Biting Breeze', 'Fury of the Flood' and a few others are remarkably drawn as paintings in their natural colours. For instance the poem on the fly presents the pleasure a small fly can give to the observant eye of the poet while the shadowy evening with the dipping sun provides enjoyment to the dull senses. The anguish and the pain of the hard-working people like the peddler and other sundry people who are starving for food has been poetically presented in an effectively poignant way. After the hectic activity as age catches up, the sunset falls on one's life with the corresponding loss of strength of mind and heart. The mosaic of emotions and feelings gushing into the head and heart finds a realistic expression in the poem 'Retirement Reality:

He dies in fact on the day he retires  
and resurrects to turn a new leaf ...  
To him his only prayer is to depart  
ere his limbs and senses retire to part. (p.77)

There are poems which are intensely reflective in nature and the poem "A Broken Statue" belongs to this class reflective in thought and pensive in feeling. The broken statue with its marvellous granite beauty lying at the entrance of the ruined temple moves the heart of those who glance at it: "While dark cave men found pure joy in art/fanatic hands break the art and its heart." (p.79). The state of mind politicians is chiseled well in the poem "Liberal Leader" and the state of affairs created by them is painted in the poem "A Cry in the Jungle". How the poet finds himself out of place in a hi-fi party is stated in the poem "In This Party". "A Phone Call" is a poem which brings to mind the various feelings and emotions which get evoked on the phone-calls of various types

of friends and how the talk creates varied feelings in us. “In Retrospect” is a reflective poem where the poet urges the reader to reflect on the life led and ponder on the same. The English adage “Sweet are the uses of adversity” forms the main stream of the poem “Sweet is Adversity”. How adversity affects one’s life is well stated in this poem. The poet’s sense of loss is depicted in the poem “A Journey in the Jungle”. Nature’s true contribution to human life is presented impressively in the poems “Plants” and “Sparrows”. On reaching the senior citizenship a poet feels the “shell shock” as the old age hangs heavy on his shoulder. This emotional feeling is well brought out in the poem “After Sixties”. There is a biographical tribute to Prof. Venkateswar Rao Dukkipati who rose to dizzy heights in the academic field in USA with his eminent learning. The poet shares with the reader his feelings towards his learned friend and pays a high tribute to “Prof. Rao” in that poem. While the poem “Fireworks” expresses his appreciation of the local people for the celebration of America’s Independence Day at the West Haven beach in the State of Connecticut, the poem “Statue of Liberty” is a memorable sonnet on “the giant awesome statue standing as the shining symbol of the noble mission of spreading the gospel of Liberty to the human race” and it echoes the message “Arise, arise! Freedom is your breath and birthright”. While the poem “Buddha” has seven stanzas of four lines each with rhyme scheme urging the mankind to follow the path of dharma, the next two sonnets are on Christ and Sri Aurobindo and they are written as high tributes to the great spiritual personalities separated by a long span of two thousand years who devoted their lives till the end to lead the humanity “to the light of eternal bliss”. The poem “Lord of the Universe” sings paeans to the Supreme Power and Force:

Millenniums ago before Christ  
 the Vedas and Upanishads revealed  
 That and only that fills the Universe  
 That is the Supreme Power and Force;  
 It has no name or form or limit,  
 Above birth and death it is Infinite (p. 100)

The concluding poem “Nothing Follows” is at once mystical and philosophical, at once abstract and bewildering: “This air, this water, this land –/nothing is ours, nothing belongs to us;/Myself I am not, me I don’t own,/But everything is mine, ours,/I pervade the whole universe/Every atom in me is not mine/but I occupy every atom, every line.” The conclusion is exceptionally brilliant and illuminating and the greatness of the poem lies in its extraordinary simplicity and unfathomable depth:

When we come we bring nothing  
When we leave we carry nothing,  
then why this petty play of heat and hate;  
before we depart let us do a bit of good  
leaving a trace of fleeting fragrance (p.102).

Thus each poem evokes every verve and emotion in the reader. It is no exaggeration to say that all these poems proclaim T.V. Reddy as an eminent poet of the East and the West.

I shall before concluding on this work would like to write on the opening poems “Human Touch”, “An Echo”, “Untraced into Dust” and “Search for Peace”. Human journey has been a long one from land of darkness to the present times of light and wonder. “The route is untamed and unmapped”. Yet man has been able to conquer the hardships, pain and sorrow; but in the bargain he has lost the virtue of being human and the “human touch”. The poet in the opening poem “Human Touch” laments on the loss of that basic virtue which makes us human and prays in the end that the only way to return to it is with the right mix of “Substance and shadow” which “can deliver the man from the fatal fix.” The poem “An Echo” is a well-crafted one and here the poet draws a picture of human plight in the present times, of man’s vanity in thinking that “We are unconquerable”, but the human state is “still so miserable”. The poet wonders as to “How long do we see the rehearsal/of this dull replay of the shadow/of the bereaved truth, a widow.”(p.10). Reddy compares the miserable state of the bereaved truth to the miserable plight of a helpless widow as in the present times falsity and hypocrisy has overtaken and overshadowed the rightful way of humanity. Still the poem ends with a note of hope:

“reed, a weed, transforms to flute/leaves a halo of sweet echo” (p. 10). These two poems “Human Touch” and “An Echo” enshrine the message of the poet T.V. Reddy. Further it is seen that sum and substance of his message is depicted in the poems “Untraced into Dust” and “Search for Peace”. Both the poems ring the same message in the same tone. The poet’s heavy heart speaks about a historic town that lies in ruins destroyed by the “gory hands and fanatic heads”, the royal palace built heroically a thousand years ago. The poet recounts the glorious past and how today it lies in ruins, lacerating the heart of the observer. The poet prays in the poem “Search for Peace”: “Let us search for a safer place/that gives a slice of peace/in this dark confounded land.” (p.22). Thus T.V. Reddy, a much mellowed person, compassionate, humanistic, reveals himself and his poetry celebrates life to its core.

*Golden Veil*, the latest collection of poems, heralds T.V. Reddy as a major poet in the annals of Indian English literature. There is a stamp of his unique poetic excellence and simplicity of style which is at once subtle and natural, which does not bewilder a reader. Every poem calls for a meditative reading and asks for a response. There are 75 poems each responding to a situation on the vicissitudes of life presenting a panorama. The poems are memorable pictures of rainbow colours and festivity colours, melodious, chanting and reverberating to the tunes of music, rhythmic and pleasing to the ears and taste of the readers. The opening poem ‘In the Shell of Solitude’ is a beautiful expression of the shy nature of the poet who prefers ‘to stay in the sober shell of solitude’ and his inability to ‘transform my mute cells, new or old’. The poet seeks the kind rays of Grace; bereft of it, these lives and lines can’t blaze. The poem ends up with a sententious remark:

Courage often makes a common man a legend  
Or one has live and crawl as a lone lizard. (p.9)

The poem “Old napkins” speaks about the plight of old men. Old age is a bane and the poet compares it to “Old Napkin”. The plight of old men in the present times is well-depicted in this poem. In the poem “Unsolved Mystery” the poet depicts the changes that



have been brought about from the past “passive remote village” to this progressive age robbing of its peace and of being” like a frog in the well”. The poem ends up by saying: “All the technical strength fails to find to His abode the way/The more we grow the more the territory of hell and its sway.” In the poem “Need of the Hour” the poet laments about the corruption and dishonesty which has crept into the public life after India gaining independence. Such thoughtful poems abound in this collection of poems. How a smile becomes a saviour is elaborately thought out and well-brought out in the poem “Smile the Saviour” and the poet lists the changes a smile can bring in one’s life. The same thought with the advantages of a smile is expressed in the poem “Lines on Smiles”. The poem “Choose the Right Path” reminds us of Robert Frost’s classical poem “The Road Not Taken” on the same theme. Reddy advises the readers to choose the path of Truth although it is an arduous and difficult path than the path that leads to “pleasures and treasures in one leap”. It compels comparison with Frost’s poem; while Frost’s poem moves at the physical plane, Reddy’s poem wafts us to the higher realms of spiritual plane with its irresistible melody and sublime thought. Moreover what is more remarkable about the poem is that Reddy succeeds in giving the essence of the much revered *Kathopanishad* and this has immortalised the lines of the poem:

Mind tempts me to sail through the warping windy way,  
 Inner voice urges me to climb higher above this clay;  
 Search for Truth, an uphill task, leads to lasting bliss,  
 We are not sheep to graze and relish ephemeral kiss. (p.16)

The poem “Beyond Neon Lights” sings paeans of “the Supreme Light” which sees everything, but we can’t see it with our normal sight:

Beyond neon lights glows the light of the Lord  
 Nature of the Light is beyond the words of bards  
 The Supreme Light sees, but I can’t see that Light  
 The inner lamp in me is dim and almost dark...’ (p.17).

The poem “Soon the Sun does set” is a philosophic one about how the best of time would end up as a setting sun leaving “without

heat, rage and rant". The gift of freedom is pictured in the poem "A Bird in a Cage" and the poem gives expression to the lament of the caged bird and speaks about the value of freedom. "No More tears" is a poignant poem where the poet recollects the loss of his love, quite obviously his better half; all the tears had come out at the moment of the exit of his beloved and now there are no more tears left in his heart and only "Vacuum reigns with the exit of his love" and "On dull mechanical lines life does move." (p.20). What a moving poem this is! Its beauty lies in the silent expression of the depth of his love to his dear departed. "Forget Me Not" is a very melancholy poem; the feeling and emotion of a sick and dying lady leaving her dear and near ones is well expressed bringing tears to the eyes. It is a heart-felt pensive poem; the ageing poet's trauma and stark reality of death to come about closing before his eyes the beauty of life is penned lovingly in many poems. "The Meaning of Love" speaks about the wonders of love. The poem "Make this Life Real" is the emotion expressed by the retired old poet: "Decades I served with feet on wheels/till wheels fell victims of wear and tear" The poem ends up with a prayer to the One Supreme to make "this piece real, not a dream. The poem "Tell me What he is" is about the arrogance of men in position and power. While the piercing cry of the poor villagers for a pail of water which is dearer than blood is brought to light in the poem "Water is dearer than Blood", the miserable situation of the poor city dwellers is painted in the poem "Pyres mad Fires" which presents the problems in metropolitan life and the plight of the present contemporaneous situation and state of affairs in lines that reverberate in our minds: "Many bruised scars and stains sink and stink without ink/in the sewage streams of our populous mechanical metro../We are all one greedy chaotic mass of ungrateful brutes/..."(p.27). The next one "Star is a Star" is a reflective one with pensive charm with its allusion to the fair lady symbolised by the star and the line "Star is a star with its winning twinkle" lingers long in our memory. The poem "Syntax of Love" tries "to analyse the complex structure/of the woven threads of subtle life" and open the concealed meaning of "locked letters and sealed lips" and describes the virtues of love, both physical and

spiritual. See the flow of the lines with their unceasing flow of music:

Looks are not simple listless looks  
but profound ravishing virgin books  
with the enchanting calligraphy  
of ceaseless flow of celestial kisses (p.30).

The next one “Let us Sing as One” is purely a romantic poem in praise of lady love: “You are the beat of my pulse and heart/and sweet symphony of my art of life” (p.32).

“Unmask Thy Veil” is a serious poem written with dramatic force and directness although it starts with his earnest plea to the lady love, most probably his wife, to “tell me here and now and unburden yourself” and “unmask thy veil to break thy walls and wails”; in the end he transcends all these bonds and boundaries and expresses in soulful prayer:

With will let us free our self from the veil  
and try to seek the truth behind the veil  
Ultimate Truth lies beyond the golden veil.’ (p.33)

The poem “Mansion in Ruins” is a descriptive poem of a ruined mansion at the outskirts of his village. The power of nature and of the Almighty using us as a tool or as a toy is presented in the poem “Dumb Toys”:

We are all dumb toys or struggling ants  
to sail or sink to the whims of sealed fate. (p.35)

“Thy Echo” speaks of separation with loved ones. It is a very touching poem with a tinge of sadness and strain of melancholy:

‘How I wish to sail with thy smile till the end!  
Oh, you are cruelly snatched away at the fated bend  
Every moment lives and breathes with you  
As long as this heart beats there is thy echo.’ (p.36)

How the neighbours feel jealous of the poet’s hard work finds expression in the subjective poem “Let me stand erect”; he says “In higher centres of learning malice reigns” and

When they wish my doom, by God's will I bloom;  
 When they long to see my quill and will broken  
 I move and march with an unruffled mind unbroken.

He says he likes to be reticent and gentle and aloof and he does not forget his modest past –

From pensive past rooted in pain and penury  
 I march through varied shades and scars of injury.

The fact that he is a simple, sincere and modest person is echoed in the ending lines of the poem: “Soaring above the clouds of regrets and total neglect/I hope to leave a few humble lyrical notes to recollect” (p.38). “Alone as a Bird” is a Nature poem reminding the readers of the poetry of Wordsworth. So also the poems “Sylvan Scene”, “Riverside”, “Our Thirsty Land”, the sonnet poem “Look at the Stars” and “Bankrupt Clouds”. “Aim High” ends up with a fond hope: “At our aiming high, let envy and ennui frown/With the power of will let us reach the crown”. The succeeding poems “Ultimate End” and “To Rest in Peace” which are sonnets are a proof of Reddy’s mastery over this genre of poetry and here as in other poems lines race with ease and music rings in our hearts. “Eden Garden” is a descriptive garden that brings the park alive in the lines, “End of the Arch” speaks of the inevitable end to this tedious journey i.e. death: “With age and rage I can no longer march/My pale face sees the end of the awry arch.” There are several autobiographical pieces sounding personal notes and of the end to be faced as in the poems “The Cold Foe”, “This Fragile Body”, “If Words Dry and Die” and “My Shadow”.

“My Father’s School Days” recalls the times of the poet’s father and how they were taught in those days by strict orthodox teachers on “slate of sand carpet for hours without a halt”. This poem reminds us of Oliver Goldsmith’s poem “The Village Teacher”; the ending of Reddy’s poem proclaims the nature of the quality and standard of education in the past: “The lines they learnt stayed alive till their end/and shone unstained by the wily modern trend.” “Jai Jawan” is a tribute to our brave Indian soldiers who lay down their lives heroically to the country. Rural village life is

painted in the poem “Today’s Rural Life”; so also the poem “Our School Days”. There are several nature poems like “Summer Sizzles”. “Flowers to Bloom”, “Green Canopy”, “At the Field at Noon”, “Watching the Field at Night”, “Night Watch”, “Track without a Trace”. The miserable plight of the people of the middle class finds a picture in the poem “Middle class Men”. The poet hails from the rural background. And he has not forgotten his early life of struggle in the farm land. There are poems purely on rural life painting the plight of poor farmers – “Erstwhile Farmer”, “Seeded Soil” etc. The poet is primarily a teacher and as such he pays tribute to the art of learning in the enlightening poem “Learning is Life”. The poet has also reflected on the self of man in the poem “Ego”. The sonnet on “Hope” is a brilliantly penned piece disclosing the power of hope:

In the golden cage of the heart it sings and swings  
 kindles and spurs the dormant mind to heroic feat ...  
 It is the straw that leads the desperate man to the shore  
 And hope is the miracle key to open the victory’s door (p.84).

There are simple and evocative poems on nature and love such as “Nature”, “Nature of Love”, “Her Eyes Glow”, “The Letter”, “Let Me Dream” besides lyrical poems like “A Lonely Star” and “Listen to our Song”. The Collection ends up with an autobiographical note “Longing for Rest”, “What I Like” and “Grow old we must”. The last poem is “Waiting for an Avatar”; millions are really waiting for a messiah to arrive on this earth and bless us with peace on this terror-ridden corrupt world. The poet has rightly ended the book with a highly relevant and meaningful poem.

Reddy’s next book *Quest for Peace – A Minor Social Epic*, published in 2013, is a masterpiece and it is a long continuous poem running into 1665 lines, structurally designed as a minor social epic and composed on the theme of quest for peace in this world suffering from the systematic deterioration of moral values in the social fabric of our everyday life. The Preface outlines as to how the social epic is divided into seven sections which present the restless life of the modern man whose life, as the poet puts it runs on the

running wheels. The language of this poetical work is simple and energetic, to a large extent in poetic prose, written in a style easy to read and digest, but the expression is captivating with its effective rhyme creating magical charm. It reflects the contemporaneous social situation with public life full of corruption and cheating, deception and degradation, and unlawful activities flouting all moral values and social norms which mankind struggled to achieve with blood and sweat after so many ages. Vote-bank politics and unscrupulous distribution of freebies by parties in power at the cost of the vast majority of the middle class people is depicted in memorable lines:

For bumper harvest of votes to ensure power  
 Governments indulge in cheap tricks to shower  
 even non-essentials as TVs and laptops as freebies,  
 to fill the huge deficit break the necks of the bees  
 by imposing heavy taxes in varied forms and laws  
 breaking the aching backbones of the middle class (p.20)

See how the recent economic depression at the global level is graphically presented here: “When big Lehman brothers, financial giants/and fabulous funding banks file bankruptcy/heartbeat of global economy halts and faints,/even imperial States wriggle in economic epilepsy;/when the sturdy walls of mighty Wall Street crack/even the Great Wall and the Red Fort miss the track./Already walls of New York face the blasting wreck when Twin Towers fell to terrorists without a check.” (p.36)

The poet calls upon the humanity to restore peace and order, religiosity and healthy relationship among various sections and societies, creeds and races. This is an excellent work first of its kind in the annals of Indian English poetry. It is a highly laudable poetic work, a great landmark in the realm of poetry with social consciousness and commitment. The prescription for the cure of all the ills and evils of the society is suggested in the ending lines that transmit the ethical message in the form of a spiritual capsule:

This life is the supreme gift of the One Supreme  
 to bloom into life divine, not to fade as a bad dream;  
 What we do shapes our ends on this creative clay,

The Self in us is a mute witness to this mixed play. (p.60)

Reddy's latest poetical work *Thousand Haiku Pearls* (2016) is a collection of 1008 haiku. Haiku is a Japanese mode of poetic expression blending into nature format in the background with 5-7-5 syllabic structure. The poet makes it clear in the Preface to the collection that he has departed from this rigid pattern, but has retained the basic structure of three lines. He states that he has tried to breathe rhyme into this miniature form thereby lending melody and dignity to it. There are many specialists writing haiku poetry like Md. Fakruddin, R.K. Singh, Biplab Majumdar, S.L. Peeran and others. Md. Fakruddin and S.L. Peeran adroitly follow 5-7-5 pattern, but R.K. Singh does not; his haiku pattern is much less. Composing haiku is an art. T.V. Reddy has mastered this art and his haiku represents a large arena of life and public life embracing every aspect of human emotions, experiences and situations. There are a large number of haiku on nature, beauty, love, grief, disappointment, grace, smile, laughter, pathos, morality, violence, terror and other aspects. All haiku in this volume are profound, extremely readable and enjoyable. See how the poet presents the present social predicament threatening at the macroscopic level in a simple micro-verse:

With Hi-tech talk the leader flies,  
Poor farmers' suicides miss his eyes;  
he is blind and deaf as a rock.'  
(p.8).

'A woman vendor  
with her basket full of fresh apples –  
buyer's eyes on her fairer apples.(p.29).

Midsummer plight,  
Sparrows drop on burning ground –  
insects at street light. (p.39)

“Birds fall from the sky/Lifeless on the ground they lie;/air pollution” (p.58). This haiku in p.58 is the spontaneous outcome of watching the CNN News on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2010 which informed that in USA 5000 birds fell from the sky and died of a mysterious

disease resulting from air pollution. See how he chooses to satirize the day light robbery of the medical doctors who always choose to fleece their helpless patients: “Doctor’s prescription/is a long laundry list, a convention,/a barber’s saloon” (p.59). Prof. Reddy who is primarily a teacher and who says his life is fulfilled in having served as a teacher brings out the real spirit of teaching profession: “Teaching is not enough,/Living in it is the real stuff;/seed turns to leaf” (p.66). “Studies of humanities/suffer unpardonable neglect, face exile;/Morals, buried in grand style.” (p.116). See how satirical the lines are political leaders and their seasonal promises:

Political promises –  
 ministers lay foundation stones –  
 mocking cemetery stones! (p.116)

Reddy’s haiku on spiritual thoughts are excellently written, surpassing almost all the haiku poets in giving expression to what is inexpressible and what is transcendent beyond space and time:

The eternal Director  
 is beyond the bounds of Time and Space;  
 Only Truth can see His face (p.130).

Our minds will sink,  
 He is beyond the range of ink and think;  
 Surrender is the only way (p.130)

The poet ends this book with an ever memorable piece of haiku: ‘To realise a piece of the Self/before this body becomes old and cold/the Spirit must be bold.’ (p.132)

T.V. Reddy is a master poet having established his credentials with his exquisite and marvellous poetry. He has been a long-standing and outstanding poet who has won the hearts of critics, academicians, literature students and readers. As a person he is humble, simple, chaste, loving and endearing. He is a hard-working soul recognising merit in every soul, more so in poets, poetasters and novices. His poetry books, novels, books on criticism and grammar have left a mark on Indian English literature, especially on Indian English poetry. Reddy’s poetry is best known for its simplicity, exquisiteness of expression, rich imagery and musical



cadence of sweet beauty and melody and for its extraordinary focus on the reality of rural life. It is not an exaggeration to say that he is one of the outstanding world poets who have succeeded in immortalising the world of literature with his substantial qualitative poetic output always aiming at perfection which is a rare feature in the modern age.

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**Dwarakanath H. Kabadi:**  
**A Much Accomplished Poet**

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In one's long march of life, one experiences many things. One finds joy and pleasures; faces disappointments, despair and despondency. The mind meanders. Emotions play havoc leaving one with unfulfilled dreams. Despair knocks one's door and death lays its icy hands.

We inherit our customs, traditions along with our religious view of life. Sans which, the life would be meaningless. Mere fulfillment of desires or its non-fulfillment leaves one in joys or in despair and the whole world looks topsy turvy. Man through his millennium living has realised that to make one's life meaningful, one needs to bridle one's hearts' fool hardiness and mind's meandering and to look into one's own heart and soul to seek light for ultimate bliss, solace and happiness. Through failures and despair, one realises higher moorings and achieves wisdom, which ultimately guides the soul to reach its goal.

The body pleasures are temporary but it does give joys. Though pleasures fade and at times it fails to come within the grip of every one yet majority of the mankind satisfy the body's pleasure more as a biological need. However, diseases and strife's does elude happiness and joys. Poetry is an expression of one's experience in verse form, an outpouring of the soul either of mundane feelings or of its higher moorings. The thoughts and emotions intertwine and move as a free flowing relishing the readers and one feels elevated. Poetry gives pleasure to the readers. The verse form varies in its

compositions based on the themes which the poet chooses to express himself.

The emotions that originate in the mind leads to happiness or to sorrows and pains and ultimately to silence. A poet is in a position to translate these emotions into words through use of imaginary, similes and metaphor. As poet PB Shelly puts it:

We look before and after  
And pine for what is not  
Our sincerest laughter  
With some is fraught;  
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thoughts

It is the saddest of thoughts that give rise to sweetest of songs. A poet who is in a position to clothe with words the emotions of happiness and pathos, can be said to be an accomplished one. Schopenhauer holds that tragedy arouses in our consciousness a 'spirit of asceticism' or 'resignation' or 'self-surrender'. Happiness is surely of lesser degree in its experience than sorrow, as sad and tragic feelings invigorates the mind to free itself of baser emotions in order to give room to happiness. Schopenhauer states, "we are brought face to face with great suffering and the storm and stress of existence, and the outcome of it to show the vanity of all human efforts. Deeply moved, we are either directly prompted or disengage our will from the struggle of life, or else a chord is struck in us with echoes a similar feeling." As happiness is inherent in the attainment of truth, so too the same happiness is an inseparable part of an individual's existence that gives birth to poetry.

From these points of view and on an appraisal of Dwarkanath H. Kabadi's poetry, it is seen that D.H. Kabadi has been able to dream for a rosy future in his youth, when he penned a long two thousand five hundred line poem in *Chariot of Dreams* published by Mrs. Chandrakanth D. Kabadi Sricharan publications in 2002 after a long period of five decades of its penning. The poet went on to become a major poet in Indian English with his umpteen publications. The last of his works is *Snail Pace Street* brought out by the same publisher in 2000. D.H. Kabadi has been an innovative

poet and his contribution to the Indo Anglian poetry is through his short poems of three lines without any syllabic pattern, as in the case of Japanese 'Haiku'. He has termed them as 'flickers'. Two publications of 'Flickers' are named *Rye on the Raviness* and *Golden Glimmers* published by him in 1985 and in 1997. Besides publishing limericks in a composite form and named as *Kabadi's Glimmericks* published in 1994. He has also published love poems with a little *Melting Moments* published in 1970.

From a reading of these collections, it is clear that D.H. Kabadi is an acclaimed poet of India having accomplished the essence of poetry touching upon both the pleasures of happiness and tragic feelings.

In his note to the *Chariot of Dreams* the poet states that 'The Chariot arrived suddenly and it ran inside me with such force and speed that it over took me driving me into a trance. Soon after that, a divine spirit possessed me'. The poet was eighteen years old and had read poetry of Tagore, Keats, Wordsworth, Byron, Burns and others. A friend encouraged him and his friend's sister coaxed him to write something like Tagore's *Gitanjali*. This triggered in him a sudden burst of creativity and within two weeks, he penned *Chariot of Dreams* which saw the light of the day, when the poet reached 65th year. The poet begins with a prologue.

Dreams are the stuff of life  
And when dreams soar like jets  
Over the crimson horizon  
My speeding sparkling chariot  
Racing at the speed of thought  
Runs to catch them near the sun"

The young poet has captured his divine dreams and penned it in excellent lyrics, bubbling with vigour, enthusiasm, fervour and reverberating with consciousness and imaginary. This piece of poetry is rare in its distinction and of very high order compared to the age of the poet, when it was penned. There are thirteen sections with a title and ending with an epilogue. M.S. Venkataramaiah poet and Editor of *Bizz and Buzz* has written an 'afterward', as an

conclusion expressing his praise, picking up gems from the entire work and throwing light on it. For a poet of eighteen years to pen such a long poem with a superb command in syntax and English, deserves accolades. The imaginary is very sublime, thoughts subtle and the poem takes the reader to a world of fantasy and illusion. A clear reading of the entire work shows that the poet at his young age has shown enormous maturity with deep grasp of the religious dogmas which the poet inherits. His deep piety and faith in the Creator and of the higher destiny waiting at his door is reverberating in this classical work.

The poet has dedicated the poetical work to the Lotus feet of Lord Venkateshwara and begins with profound epigram;

Thought is creation  
Thought endangers hope  
Thought encases despair  
It's thought that remains eternal  
It's in thought that God dwells

The poet pays his obsequies to his deity and signs paeans to the Lord with lovely imagination:

“The melting snow like twinkling pearls  
Dropped and faded in the ocean  
The tiny waves cranked  
To touch my humble feet  
To kiss and tickle my senses  
What a glorious experience

The spiritual experience is deeply felt by the poet and his heart's outpourings is spectacular one. One feels the deep piety of the poet and one can emphathize and relish the poet's outburst on his experiencing the effulgence of the Lord.

My heart leaps at times  
A heart that eternally throbs  
With pleasure that fills my soul  
To my heart's struggle  
You are an everlasting witness  
My lord I do see all the splendour

In our ancient land, great saints have reached spiritual attainments at a very young age. It is gratifying to note the spontaneous expression of the poet glorifying the beauty and splendour of the Lord. The poet has inherited the rich traditions of the land and his maiden venture. *Chariot of Dreams* is indeed a work of class. It deserves an eminent place in our rich literature. The poet's search for truth and to reach it is well expressed;

We resumed our eternal journey  
 Unheaded, unstopped by any change or challenge  
 We emerged with  
 Our soul from the farther skies  
 Our soul of life will be again sown  
 Into the work of millions blooming earths around.

The dreamy self of the poet has journeyed in the space in the *Chariot of Dreams* and records his profound experiences. It is truly a genuine spiritual experience. The work deserves to be read by all those, who yearn for a spiritual journey and hold hopes of higher feelings and elevation.

The poet D.H. Kabadi's major achievement is the invocation of *flickers*. In his 'Foreword' to *Flicker-1 Rye on the Ravines*. 1985. Edwin A Falkowski, Managing Editor of *Poet Intercontinental*, Campbell, California USA has placed high compliments on the poet's achievement. He writes:

The seeming case of composition has created a tidal pull of adherents who pawn three liners, seventeen syllables, more or less, as haiku when they do not even qualify as the plebeian senryu. Dr. Kabadi, recognises the stringent calling for extreme selectivity in haiku and need not bow to the disciples of Issa, Buson and Basho, as he pledges no allegiance to their form but dares to compose of, from, and for a fresh realm.

Adding – slowly one by one  
 I buried my words in that grave  
 See..... Again a new dawn

With this example of "flickers" he moves into the modernisation which does not try the proven forms from the pali

and Sanskrit but hopes to establish a freer regimen which will in turn be shunned by young writers ad infinitum. He declaims:

Wheels of windmills  
Just rotate  
Nowhere to go

There are hundreds of “flickers” of three lines. Each ‘flicker’ has profound thought and experience expressed in capsulated form on every aspect of life’s experience. There is enormous ingenuity, innovation and talent of highest order which has gone into the composing of these ‘flickers’. R.K. Singh in his illuminating forward to his last work “Snailpace Street” has dealt in great detail on all aspects of these flickers.

R.K. Singh writes:

I view his ‘flickers’ essentially as experimentation in the game of haiku. In a non – traditional meditative mode. Kabadi vividly captures his various moments of experience, however ordinary and raises consciousness to a height where imagination acquires characteristics. His three –liners, nearer his native genius and sensibility flicker subtlety of a moments interest experience with rare spiritual insight and added to the on-going experimentation in haiku/senryu the world over. He is original in his expression just as he has admirably adapted the traditional kainu/senryu form to his own expressive needs.

To quote some of his ‘flickers’:

“In the skies “In her bosom  
Meandering Kindling my fire  
a tornkite” sporting sprees”  
“Painting for breath” a tiny straw  
An old man floating in the air  
Counting his foot prints carries my weight”  
“The night” distant boats  
Keeps eating stay afar  
Aborted dawn suspended ambitions”  
“The moon” this city noise  
Hides in the wrinkles so cruel  
An ancient bed dancing death drums”

R.K. Singh further writes in forward:

Kabadi addresses himself to some extent to some of the eternal themes of poetry such as love, physical and human nature, relationships, transience, and death, and wins over thousands of readers through a careful attention to 'form' and language. He doesn't waste words and has a strong sense of rhythm. He gently touches the reader's heart and mends and activates their imagination through the ideas and images he conjures, pursuing his own style which ultimately enhances the meaning of his poems. Despite occasional infelicities or signs of conflict between intention and expressions, Kabadi has made his impact with experimentation in verse making, especially 'Flickers' which are also the basic unit of his regular poems, the very grammar of his poetical thinking.

R.K. Singh concludes:

Kabadi's poems in general and flickers in particular, bespeak a discipline of the spirit and creativity, underscoring an intimate understanding of the reality and unity of the personal and universal and an intimate act of coagulation as well as self-cognition. These enrapt him in his personal presence, an experience of life inside the life, an awareness of the spirit as a living presence, which is purified and purifying, a merging with the energy which creates and sustains a feeling of emptiness and fullness, and rejoining of the same. Such is his poetic integrity, intensity of insight, and egoless faith and thinking, at time I feel he is himself written by flickers; it is he who happens in them. So deeply felt are his flickers; it is not always possible to subject them to rational comprehension, evaluation or judgment, like haiku, they turn out to be spiritual.

Provocations, communication with the self or nature a deliberate attempt to return to the eternal, or to become part of macrocosm to comprehend microcosm. Since the poet's mind is in the ever ascending flame of creative aspirations, it doesn't matter what his weakness are; he is simply evolving and breathing the joys of creation, sharing his fullness and liberating us from ourselves. He is concise, colourful, meaningful, with multilayer depth, through association with the interior of the world nature, as also his own



hidden self. One experiences his hushing and listening to himself, his yearnings for, silence, the pure essence itself.

Nar Deo's Sharma has done a dissertation for his PG Diploma on the 'flickers' and the said dissertation has been published with title "*Style in the Manneristic Poetry: Flickers*" (published by M/s Chandra Kantha D. Kabadi 1995). This is an excellent research work and an in-depth study has been done, in his introduction, ND Sharma writes:

The flickers differ from the haiku in the matter of syllable count, but there is an emotive and syntactic similarity between them. Like haiku, the flickers consist of semi-sentences, disjointed syntax and spiritual insight. The quantity of syllables varies from 9 syllables in the flickers, but a haiku consists of 17 syllables: 5, 7, and 5 rigidly.

He concludes his introduction by saying that

To some extent, Kabadi evinces the linguistic inventiveness of GM Hopkins in terms of linguistic deviations, and he is paralleled to E.E. Cummings in connection with graphological deviations.

The flickers are translated into several, foreign languages because of their popularity outside India. The individual poetic grammar and symbolic foregrounding of linguistic elements contribute to the complexity of thought in flickers. Little stylistic research is carried out on flickers. The flickers sustain profundity of thoughts and multidimensional connotations because of the subtle pattering of style.

ND Sharma has devoted one chapter on the "Interpretations" of 'flickers'. He has attempted to unlock the inner meaning in a few complex flickers to show the depth and profundity in it.

In his work *Snail Pace Street* the poet has reached his climax of poetic creativity. This work depicts the sorrows, disappointments, despair and desolation. The pangs of the conscious are laid bare. "The sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thoughts" are borne out in this work. The lasting poetry is one which gives lasting pleasure and as pointed out initially it is the pleasure, which follows

the experiencing a “Tragic feeling”, which leads to ultimate silence and to the experience of the ‘Eternal Truth” DH Kabadi’s work has been critically acclaimed by the reviewers. The poet is at his best in use of similes and metaphors and his imagination soars like a skylark to the heavenly abode. The poet walls and weeps at his conditions and on his dreams dashing to the ground and death being round the corner.

I see from the hell hole  
Of stagnation  
The decaying corpse of time  
Starting at itself

The birds again build their nests  
For a new dawn  
With renewed light the sun rises  
To fill my corpse  
The light of a new life  
Fills me Dreams Time

The poet’s sympathy for the wretched is deeply expressed in the poem “Disposable Gods”:

Fallen faces  
Eat garbage  
Forgotten pages  
Lick the faces

And again in “Wants and Wails”:

in the ocean  
Of the ever hungry  
Wants and wails  
The quick sand  
Of worries  
Deepen to  
Multiple miseries.

The poet is sarcastic and ironical on the rich exploiting the poor in “Existence”:

The pride  
With touch necks

Over the mansions they have usurped  
The vast estates that were once forest  
The memorials built for their dogs  
On priceless land

The poet's sorrow is thus expressed in "Sparrow and Sorrow":

There's real magic  
In the happier pat of life  
Then why am I  
A tragic poet  
I have answers  
But the tongues  
That ask question  
Have no ears.

The poet in this collection has shown that he has realised the truth of life. The dark seamier side of the life has opened his eyes and soul for self-realisation. D.H. Kabadi has been acclaimed and has achieved recognition both nationally and internationally. He has earmarked a permanent niche in the annals of Indo Anglian poetry.

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## **Multi Colour and Multi-Dimensional Vision in the Poetry of I.H. Rizvi**

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I.H. Rizvi was a well-known and well established poet, who attained name and fame both in India and abroad. He was an editor of *Canopy* a biannual English poetry journal, besides being a bilingual poet, critic and retired professor of English. He had been a long standing poet penning verses in Urdu and English, having brought out nine collections of English verses and several anthologies. He had received critical acclaim and awards. What is it that is so enamoring and pleasing to another author/bilingual poet that requires mentioning and to be written? It is the uniqueness in composing poems not only based on themes and churning out poems, romantic in nature but also being socially conscious, ironical, and critical of the society and the yearning of the poet for peace and to achieve happiness despite so much of pain, despair and despondency experienced by the poet in his long march of life.

In his erudite forward, the poet had described the nature of 'Human Heart', what it bears and how the poetry is born therein. The poet writes:

Human heart is a boundless ocean, a perennial spring, and endless river, a limitless treasure-house, an infinite firmament and a bottomless cave of thoughts and feelings. Thoughts and feelings ebb and flow, gleam and glow, lie and sleep, crane and peep, pine for attention and crave for expression. The expressions take many forms but the best is admittedly poetry.

Banquet full definitions of poetry are dished out and some of them are by and large accepted. In my humble opinion, poetry defies analysis and no definition can encompass all poetry. It is also a folly to discuss how and why poetry is written. The song of a bird, the smile of a flower, the sight of a rainbow, the fall of a leaf, the prick of a thorn, the piercing of an arrow, the throb of a wave, the drooping of the winds, the charms of the beauty, the sigh of the love, the pinning for the star, unfulfilled longing, the betrayal of innocence, an untimely death and a thousand other things may inspire a poet to write a poem.

A poem is not a half burnt piece of cigarette, a fair of compass, a broken bottle of wine, a creaking bullock cart, a hoarse gramophone record or a rotten pile of words....

A poem is not a mere laboured mental exercise. It must convey the sense distinctly the hall mark of poem is the desired effect. A poet has no right to pass judgment about his own poetry. It is the prerogative of only those who go through it.....”

I.H. Rizvi has made a good attempt in describing as to how a poem is born but he should have also given inkling as to what makes a poem a good and a great one. Is it a mere emotional content or thoughts with good figure of speech, use of idioms, imaginary metaphors and simile? Or is the realisation of actuality and reality? Or is it the vision that a poet sees and describes it as beauty and truth. “Beauty is truth, Truth is beauty” is it this thought which is communicated in a very clear terms, in a known poetic speech and format with rhyme and rhythm, with flow and tension that makes a good poem? Or is it the metaphysical thoughts expressed after seeing a vision, and achieving reality and its communication, which makes the poetry a great one? All in all a poet carries a tradition and raises his level of thought and action, emotions and content, language and expressions to a higher degree to delight the readers by breaking new and fresh ground that makes the reader relish and enjoy the poems.

Be that as it may, I turn to the topic in question to record my impression on the poetry of I.H. Rizvi more particularly with reference to collection “Fettered birds”. The hallmark of I.H.

Rizvi's poetry is the discernible and immediate recognisable feature of Persian, Urdu poetry in his poems. As a bilingual poet, I.H. Rizvi has chosen the format of a Persian-Urdu poetry more particularly gazals to pour forth his deep felt emotions.

In the 'Gazals' the idiom of expression is love, about the pangs of separation, of the delight of meeting and joys felt by a lover, about the stories of *Gul-o-bulbul* (Rose and nightingale) *Gul-o-khar* (Rose and thorn) *Shams-o-Kamar-sitare-o-Saiyaree* (Sun, Moor, starts of planet) *Dhoop Chaoon* (day and shade) *Raat-Dhin* (night and day), *Bayaban* (fields valleys) *Sehra-o-gulistan* (Desert and garden) *Bood-o-tarap* (separation and grief) *Jam-o-Saqi* (wine and bearer) *Sooz-o-gudaz* (thirst and pleasure) *Khaid-o-azadi* (imprisonment and freedom) *Jallad* (Executioner) *Khaid-o-Saiyad* (Prison and flower) *Boo-o-gul* (fragrance and rose). *Lail-o-nahar* (night and day) *Aasman-o-bayaban* (sky and plains) *Darya-o-samunder* (river and ocean) *Sahr* (dawn) *Shaam* (dusk) *Ishe-o-Mohabat* (love) *Husan* (Beauty) etc. etc. We find Dr. I.H. Rizvi exploiting these themes to his advantage in all his poems.

Thus, I.H. Rizvi has beaten a fresh path in the Indo-Anglian Poetry and brought in linguistic and vernacular influence in his poetry which is quite discernible and noticeable. The poems are multicoloured and are multi-dimensional. Hence, we can certainly call the poems of I.H. Rizvi as good ones or as good poetry as contrary to the 'run of the mill' ones, which we find in the poetry journals published in India.

Let us look into these idioms used colourfully I.H. Rizvi in his poems in "Fettered Birds". The opening poem "Fettered Birds" speaks about the bird being chained to its lot and how the fowler controls their moves. "Birds helplessly fettered/chained to their lot/strive on wings of vision/to recall the happy days/when they sucked fresh and fragrant air, and kissed flowers at will/and chose their twigs to sing". Again he continues to speak about. "The fowler controls their moves" and ends up to describe the flight of the bird in cage as "They are glued to their frozen lot/and will never get out of its clutch/till they fall/to the final stroke'.

Let us see more examples. In “Transmission” again the poet speaks about “The bird of fancy cannot fly/its wings are crippled and hang down/like two last leaves from a dry twig/I struggle hard to dress the wounds/of the bird with fresh drops/from the immortal spring of love”.

In “Hecatombs” the poet again speaks about the caged birds “if birds are caged, their songs throttled/and valleys are shadowed by gloom”. In the poem “unheard messages” the poet recalls the ‘lovely letters’ sent by friends with petals of roses in it’s fold. “Petals of roses from far off friends/in folds of lovely letters/are more eloquent than the words/carefully chosen by the sender”. The poet ends up tenderly by saying: “the unmistakable message/is imprinted deep on my heart/I need not read between the lines/I pick them up on my palm and wish/they speak on the sender’s voice/but the petals fall from my hands/and soon are rent without a sound”. The crushed rose”, “I discovered a rose/crushed between two pages of an old book/ages ago it was gifted to me” and ends up by thanking God “Thank God” the rose has not turned into dust/like the body of a human being”. Though time has been fleeting but the memory lingers.

In the poem “Solace” the poet speaks about the wounds and pains. “the wounds are bleeding drop by drop/and vultures round you jump and hop/and bouts of pain ever pinch in your mind/as thousand needless velvet grind or dash against the sheet of heart/like dagger, knife and dark/like balls of squash against the wall.....” The Poet describes a lake at the foot of a forlorn brown rock and compares it to a picture of an age old human third. “Like a women lying flat/in all her emerald glory/a like waits at the foot/of a forlorn brown rock/for age old thirst to come/and have a thrilling bath”.

In “Responsibility” the poet lingers around the hope “No river should let her water be/red with the blood of innocent men/helplessness should not look/in vain for help from cruelty. The poet is compassionate and melancholic at the plight of his fellowmen. Women, orphans, destitute and shed tears of sympathy

in large number of his poems. He yearns for 'peace', 'solace' contentment' and wishes to drive away the 'Dreams' that won't reach its fulfillment. He bears love for a woman. "love me as a woman' who would self-surrender "in the land of bliss/in heave of pleasure/and melt in me forever/to prove that you are a woman". A truly eastern thought and image of a loyal and dear wife, who would merge with her husband by effacing herself.

In 'Dead weather' the poet speaks about "The earthen lamp of desire/is neither lit up nor dies/its wick is left unreplenished/no flowers or butterflies are seen/the weather of beauty is dead". The poet has succeeded in realising higher thoughts and has conveyed his emotions and feelings in a subtle, simple way, rhythmic with free flow of words and communication of his message with clarity, by use of similes and metaphors, which are hallmarks of good poetry. This is seen in the poem. "The endless movement", when the poet imagines to reach the depth of the sea and to measure its vastness. He ends up by saying "but waves forget that life inside the sea is a part of limitless vastness and is never at rest for a movement and eternally moves towards the doom". Profound thoughts indeed.

The Poet does introspection and has inner sight and looks inwards in several of his poems like in "A figure" I am alive 'Blocked 'Fear' "No more' No more dreams please'

The poet shuns terrorism, barbarity 'fanatism' excessive religiosity and advises humanism and gentlemanliness. Thus I.H. Rizvi has chosen a path of universality and humanity, when in several poems he pines hopes for the humanity to achieve rationality and compassion to achieve bliss and happiness.

In his preface to *The Valley Still Blossoms*, Rizvi echoes P.B. Shelley's defence of Poetry by saying: "In the modern world anything from birth to death may be the subject of poetry. However, the best subject for poetry is love in all its variety and shades. That is why the world of poetry is unlimited. It is the song of life and it will go on forever. Let us continue singing the song of poetry"



Poetry defies a definition: Although great poets have attempted to say much about how a poem is born and how a poet using the language as a vehicle expresses his felt emotions and experiences to a happening or an event. The said expression has to be logical, clear with use of good expression, figure of speech and in the poetical tradition in the known formats of poetry. Modern poetry although is not written in the poetical formats and with the use of syntax, yet the fact of expression of emotions in perfect language with clarity of mind and use of imaginary is foremost. A poem should lead to delight, pleasure and wisdom. From these standards, the poet I. H. Rizvi has risen to great heights.

The work "*The Valley still Blossoms*" has got 37 poems on various topics. This shows the variety and multiplicity of thoughts of the poet. The poet has multi-dimensional vision and he is in a position to respond to several things around him including nature. The romantic poets of England were nature poets. Nature formed the backdrop of poetry. William, Wordsworth, John Keats, P.B. Shelley exclusively worshipped nature. In this regard the poet I. H. Rizvi is not lagging beyond. In his little poem "The Valley Still Blossoms" the poet has picturised nature's scene in a colourful way and the reader relishes the imaginary drawn by the poet. The striking lines are:

Birds close their wings in their nests  
A fowlers raid the vale at dawn  
And autumn in turn takes hold of birds  
And grass wraps up it dried up wings.

The poem ends up with wisdom and profound thoughts:

The valley takes a turn and gleams  
With fresh leaves and new flowers  
And beams in light and waves in joy.  
  
No evil force can wipe it off.  
The valley still blossoms and spreads  
The fragrance of hope and joy.

In continuation of similar expression of poet on watching the nature around the poet, we find several poems. Some of the poems

are profound with depth of thoughts like “The Dawn”. Tress do not speak” “Clouds”, “Transformation”. “The Melting Garb” ‘Snowfall” “The lot of all” “The fate of Snows”, “Night”, “The Lament of a Mountain”

We find in the book, the poet touching on vicissitudes of life. His expression of human characteristics and relationships is also brought out in several poems like “Unbroken Threads” “Battle of Wits” Human Relationship” and “Break this Silence”

We find the poet also expressing his chagrin, anguish and pain on the plight of women in some of the poems like “The cage” “Gathering Your Sorrow” “Bleeding Tears”

There are two poems which are very touching with pathos and grief’s. They are “My life Partner” and “Losing the Life Partner”. Both the poems bring tear in the eyes. It is this quality of the poet to touch the readers’ heart which makes the poetry of I. H. Rizvi a laudable and praiseworthy.

The poet has also touched upon the aspect relating to “The Reign of Terror” and on the march of civilisation in the poem “The Onward March”

The poet in his foreword refers to love and various aspects emanating out of the emotions of love. The poet is at his best in the expression of love poetry, as can be seen from the poems like “For those who love me” The Face of Hatred”, “Will you do it?” and “Waves of Loves”

The book ends up with three chapters of Haikus. The first chapter of Haiku covers all aspects of human life and the second chapter of Haiku is on “Lake” and the third one is on “Pond” The Haikus are required to be read and re-read to mine the depth of feeling and profound thoughts imbued in them. A few are quoted here:

The heart’s curtain  
Has been burning for years  
Now turned to charco

The candle burns  
Moths are burnt to death  
None to bury them

Thirsty thorns  
Under cover of grass  
Wait for tender feet

Surrounded by  
Beauteous hills and trees  
Lake rests in perfect calm.

No stone can crack  
The ribs of the pond  
Shakes and regains composure

In conclusion, it has to be said that the format chosen by I. H. Rizvi is of a Persian/Urdu poetry more particularly Gazals to pour forth his deep felt emotions which are noteworthy and lasting.

### **References**

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## R.K. Singh and his Poetry

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R.K. Singh is an academician, a poet of standing, who has been acclaimed as a major voice in post independent era. A well-known critic and a person who cares for the voiceless and marginalised poets in the country.

Yking Books, Jaipur, India, has brought out the entire collection of poetry of R.K. Singh *Sense and Silences: Collected Poems: 1974-2009* with an extremely aesthetic cover with a picture of a nude women lying in grass surrounded by pipal leaves signifying love, beauty and wisdom. The back side of the cover page has the latest photograph of the poet, in the background is a Muslim period monument with calligraphic writing of Holy Scriptures.

The blurb speaks about R.K. Singh's achievement as an academician in as much as he has authored more than 150 research articles, 160 book reviews and authored 35 books which include 12 collections of poem, which have been translated in many local and European languages. R.K. Singh is an innovative Haiku and Tanka writer, having won acclaim and prizes in international contests. He is also well known ESTist and currently heading the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad.

The outstanding feature of the poetry of R.K. Singh is its sensuousness, explicit and graphic description of intimate relationship with his best half and bed mate in his initial work 'My Silence' and other subsequent works, As a young man, R.K. Singh was thrilled, excited and uninhibitedly details his sexual release, his passion and love. He is a great connoisseur of beauty, love and sex.

But that is not all, the poet is sincere and honestly deals about social issues and hypocrisy. He calls a spade a spade. He is truthful in his exposition and never minces words.

R.K. Singh does not title his poems, but they are numerically numbered. In the words of I.K. Sharma the poetry of R K Singh displays the power of plain words, scaring the puritans and taunting the purists, speaking for love, sensuality and meaning of life. I K Sharma has done a thorough analysis of R.K. Singh's work. In his forward to his latest collection "Sexless Solitude and other poems", I.K. Sharma states that the poet articulates his perceptions, his experiences in a very unconventional way. Not at all shy of using words associated with sex, he puts them to different uses in his poems. He further states the poetry of R.K Singh "makes purists of literature believe that the poet is a shameless hawker of sex in the street of literature. His poems, they think, have soiled the white house (not White House) of literature; such persons in fact suffer from agoraphobia." I.K. Sharma further states that: "Dr Singh manages to tell his experiences, bitter or sweet, mostly bitter, in minimum possible words. He would eliminate all the non-essential from his compositions. He would chiefly exploit, like Hemingway, the vigour of verb in his poems, and avoid the pomp and vanity of adjective altogether. This way of writing makes his poems far different from the poems we often come across in Indian English poetry magazines." He further notes: "Dr Singh's poems are sober, mature and disciplined. Though written in free verse they are yet compact. Neither the words nor emotions go astray. No clichés exists there. Only the power of plain words on display."

R.K. Singh's poetry is not "run of the mill" one and following the traditional and much beaten path. His poetry is mostly sensual, imaginative, original and innovative.

Among all his work the "Sexless Solitude" section in the Collected Poems is monumental, classical, and his masterpiece. The poet has poured forth his emotions in a most chiseled form, bare like "the tree/green and wide/abundantly dressed/over flowing/spreading her sleeves/blesses all/in her cool

shades/solitude teems/with breeze songs/I feel nearer God.” These are the poet’s opening lines in praise of his beloved, but the poem sums up the poetry of the narrator.

The poet is not ritualistic nor an atheist but he has broken the cocoon of religiosity and considers himself neither a Hindu, nor a Muslim, nor a Christian. The poet is influenced by the Bahai’s faith, its message of universal love and brotherhood of man.

R.K. Singh’s poetry is far from being didactic or philosophic, but the poet does show concern for the underdogs, sidelined persons, fallen women and those women who are rejected, put to hardship and difficulties. The poet speaks about the happenings around him, about himself, about his best half’s response with him in his bed, the attitude of his children, his colleagues, his critics about the world and the people in the society. The poet has gone further to write about too intimate relationship with his best half, which is generally neither spoken of nor written.

The poet has shown concern for the environment, about the dust and fumes of Dhanbad, the place where he has been living for more than three decades. He has observed the lives of the down trodden coal miners and the hardships faced by them, about the water shortage, about the pollution, garbage and pseudo personalities and hypocrites.

The poetry of R.K. Singh cannot be classed with any of the western poets or class poetry but his is innovative, creative, fresh and new, and can be classed as postmodern, current and contemporary. The poet is sure to open up a school of his own, with his own appreciators and fans. The poet’s work has been acclaimed and a number of PhD scholars have taken up his poetry for study and research work. Innumerable articles have appeared in poetry journals about his poetry. Contemporary scholars, professors and poets have brought out books on his poetry. R.K. Singh is hugely adulated, appreciated, criticised and some have condemned his earlier collection for being too sensuous and comparing his poetry to that of D.H. Lawrence.

His poetry is bereft of rhetoric, and far from being prosaic or thematic; it is untitled, unrhymed and unmetred. It is also ironic and satiric, especially against religious taboos and irrational customary practices. There is a tinge of pathos as well, and his personal suffering and suffering of people of all classes are brought out well. Many poems are reflective and meditative, and sometimes they tend to speak about his personal philosophy, views, perceptions and sensitivity about the world and people around him. The poet is at once simple and complex but he hardly taxes the readers' mind with verbosity and high bombastic language.

R.K. Singh has experimented with language in his own way, leading to a new path in the annals of Indian English Literature, or for that matter, in English Literature. His expression is bold, truthful and straight away, catching the eye, startling, and sometimes shocking and amazing. The poet has never theorised but has put to paper all that he has felt, experienced and experimented. He is a very clear thinker and level headed. He has spoken about his personal life of sex, insomnia, hope, fear, quietness, wakefulness, dream state, semi-dream state, sublime state, despair, frustration, dejection, pessimism, personal likes, dislikes and even personal secrets.

The poetry of R.K. Singh can be classed also as metaphysical in as much as he does not reject God but keeps away from all forms of religiosity. He is mystical in that one can live a full and rich life, enjoy the company of ones mate, satisfy oneself fully and be above board, above the rigmarole of life, reach higher stage of consciousness and attain the supreme bliss, 'moksha' or 'Nirvana'. For the poet living a fuller sensual life is not an impediment but the poet never sounds amoral, promiscuous or a cheat to his genuine love. He does not want to betray his love nor be halfhearted but would like to be fully devoted and live in full measure and satisfy his beloved fully. The poet desires to live a pure, simple, straightforward and truthful life and detests hypocrisy of all kinds. He is against make ups, fashions, showiness and pretenses of people. He is against the politicians who promise and cheat the electorates; make tons of money, loot the common man and stove off the money in

foreign countries. He laments the exploitation of poor and down trodden in the name of religion, customs and politics or for any other purposes. He speaks about the Bhopal gas tragedy, about the suffering of common man due to floods, earthquakes, droughts, famine, civil wars, chaos, confusion, looting, and havocs created by Nature. About the exploitation of poor nations by civilised ones and about failure of democracy and various systems in the society.

The poet decries the unnecessary idolatry about the exploitation of devotees by priests and religious taboos, about the pollution of the holy rivers in the name of God by His so called 'god men'. The poet speaks about the petty mindedness of people "living (in) their smallness in a small world (and) they cease(d) to grow and be human". The poet bemoans the loss of meaning in life and says that he can't be comfortable with their bragging ego as they are "corrupt to the core/they eat into our fabric:/I must search my own way/through empty cups and alleys/in body rain love/or plant new phonies." Thus the poet being dejected with the systems, religiosity, hypocrisy and meaningless of life around has undertaken a lone unbeaten path in search of truth and light. He ends up in finding love being the only source of solace, tranquility and to reach the sublime and higher realms of consciousness.

For him, "poetry is prayer/in life's vicissitudes:/a saving grace against manipulated or/unmanifested odds/overwhelming without/warrant or patterning." The poet in his opening lines in the section "Above the Earth's Green" says that "I do not write the sun, storm or sea/but recreate myself and others/in verses turn time and pluck stars/to find my way through masked trenches/witness to my sinking into mud/that curves the memories into bias/disgrace dust, sky wind, and all relations/windows of emotions I must chain/to breathe a pure breath without passion/and discover essence of beauty/spring a move towards self-harmony/perfection and peace, prelude to nude/enlightenment to carve life in full."



## **Esoteric, Aesthetic and Metaphysical Poetry of R.K. Singh**

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Man-woman relationship since their creation as Adam and Eve has acquired the status of solemnity and respectability. Their divine creation is spoken in the Holy Scriptures. The Monotheist religions do not depict the creator in any image nor speak of His presence as an Avatar or in any Manifestation, but the Hindu ideology differs on this aspect. In Monotheist religion, sex has been depicted more for procreation only and the couple serves as the fulcrum for a happy family relationship and as an unit of the society. The intimate relationship and as an unit of the society. The intimate relationship is neither spoken of nor depicted in images or in art form or in poetry. It is considered as a taboo and as a sacrilege. While the Hindu philosophy differs on this aspect of the matter also. Sex is not a taboo and the scriptures speak about the intimate relationship between God and Goddesses. Love has been considered also as a source for 'Nirvana'. To understand the aspect of divinity and divine love, the carnal desires should be fully satisfied. Sex or 'kama' is also a way to reach the ecstasy with intermingling of the souls.

Poetry is an expression of the emotions felt and experienced. So long as the expression and utterances are put in a subtle and sublime way for the purpose of relishing it and for delectation without hurting the sensibilities and without being profane, then it assumes the form of an art.

Matrimonial relationship has always been held to be sacred. But in the present modern times, we see disloyalty and break-up in family relationships. Love is lost and the fragrant flower of matrimony is decaying. The sexual liberation, openness in society and promiscuity is growing in the western society and the eastern society is not lagging behind. Social diseases are setting in. It is in this context, poetry which serves the society as a mirror and to cleanse it, has now assumed the role to again lift the societal's response to sex towards sublimity and restore it, to its high pedestal. So as to save the matrimonial relationship and bring back the charm and fragrance in the lives of the couple.

R.K. Singh in this regard has shown deep introspection on the soul's higher moorings and conciseness with purity of mind. His poetry visualises sensuous beauty and feels its pulse. R.K. Singh has not only emerged as a sensuous poet but he is a rare one, who has found himself realising spiritual experiences also in sensuality. Therefore it is my belief that through idioms, myths, symbols, higher thoughts propagated in the Hindu philosophy, solace, bliss can be attained and be one with the Higher Being.

Beauty is idolised in the form of a "Devi" The better half of the man is the wife, a devi, whom conjugal bliss is attained. In Hindu tradition, wife has to live with dedication and in the service of her husband. Initially, the wife has to satisfy the basic needs and urges of a body; then to take care of the husband treating him more as a child, who requires be caring and loving. Then as a loving mother to give him solace, peace and tranquility during the march of life, when man is faced with his vicissitudes.

R.K. Singh appears to me to be a poet par excellence from the Indian point of view. His poetry is expressed in a concise, precise, crystallised form about his higher moorings and inner realisation. His observation of the society and its depiction in verses are a perfect mirror of the contemporary life. He is not one with common man and his penchant but he is much above them, like a lotus floating in marshy water but yet retains its beauty. He is like a rose among the

thorns emitting sweet fragrance. A rose is a friend both during grief and during joyous and happy festivities.

On a perusal of his poems, it can be categorised in the following themes (a) Poems on life's vicissitudes (b) Social observations (c) Soul's realisation (d) sensuousness and reverence to beauty and sex etc. Sensuous experience is depicted on a highest plane same profanity and vulgarity. On each of these headings much can be written and spoken on the poetry of R.K. Singh.

In so far as the composition of poem is concerned, it has to be observed that there is no strict metrical form or presented in a known pattern of poetry. It is interesting to see that poems emerging with tremendous depth and end with an epigram.

On a reading of the poems in his work, *Above the Earth's Green* (published by Writers Workshop Kolkatta) the striking feature which is noticeable is that poems are all numbered without any title. Few poems are in few lines only, few in haiku and Tanka form, why many are multiple ones. All the poems are infused with a rhythm and there is a reverberating consciousness. They shine as a starts in the dark sky with pithy sayings, which are proverbial in nature. It is very clear from the reading of the poetry of R.K. Singh that the Hindu philosophy and the yogic thoughts have deeply influenced him. He appears to be a self-attained personality without giving anywhere in the poems, the feelings that he is under the influence of any sect or under the grip of any particular philosophical or mystical or yogic thoughts of any specific school of thought. His poems reflect depth and consciousness of higher moorings, presented in a simple but in a sublime manner. The tone is touching to the core of heart. At the same time, we would find that there is sensuousness and thoughts lingering around the mundane aspects of life. It is very clear from the reading of the poems that R.K. Singh is certainly an attained yogi having attained higher consciousness by his own self-analysis. Through his inner moorings, facing turmoil's, mental anguish and pains, he has attained spiritual enlightenment.

R.K. Singh has certainly a message to convey and it is projected in a new light to the civilised world. Today, the contemporary world which has opened its windows to scientific and rational thinking and wishes to understand divinity in a more logical and in a clear way without being influenced with any superstitions and myths. R.K. Singh has projected the old wine in a new bottle. It appears that here is a Clarion's call to the humanity to seek divinity while also being immersed in the mundane life. Thereby one can attain spiritual solace and happiness. R.K. Singh's poetry reminds me of the likes of Khalil Gibran, Rabindranath Tagore, Shri Aurobindo, J. Krishna Murthy and Krishna Srinivas. His poetry has a tinge of Meer Taqi Meer, Zauq, Ghalib, Daag and Dard of Urdu language. Hafiz Shirazi and Oman Khayyam of Persia. It is no exaggeration, for me to say this, as I have nothing to gain by mentioning this in this write up. It is my reading and feeling pulse of the poet in each of the poems, which makes me say so. The poems are presented numerically as in Urdu, Persian and in Arabic Ghazals, Ghazals speak about the pangs and sorrows of beloved but it is romantic in nature also and the Ghazals also have depth with metaphysical thoughts as well.

R.K. Singh is a sensitive soul and his sensitivity, social consciousness and spiritual attainments can be seen in his poetry. Poem No.1 speaks about poetry which is being a prayer of life's vicissitudes: – a saving grace against manipulated or unmanifested odds overwhelming without warrant or patterning. In this chalice, the poet has encapsulated the meaning of poetry, R.K. Singh's life is not to write about the glories or about defeats or being in the sea but it is to create and for self-realisation and put forth his experiences in verse form. In Poem No.2, he utters that one is required to find a way out from trenches, when one is sunk in the mud; which creates bias, disgrace and pollutes the mind. The poet urges that the "window of emotions should be chained" to enable a person to breathe pure breath without passion and discover the essence of beauty. Oozing out as a spring to move towards self-harmony, perfection and peace, which is a prelude to nude enlightenment to carve life in its full. The same thought is reflected in Poem No.4 and

the poet states that he knows waves that roar and he lives through silence of shore, although the sea grows in him. Again the poet refers to his self-introspection in poem No.10 and 11, when he mentions that he knows that a fire burns/the thumb-sized flame/beyond the heart. He, therefore, restlessly seeks light in shadow. He is feeling the heat of the light and sees “the light by light itself”. Poem 10 speaks of inequality and expresses the essence of the soul to see “light in the dark life”. Although, truth is as brilliant as the sun yet one feels being in shadows and in darkness. Therefore, we find that poem 7 and 8 speak of “ugly ghosts rising to mate in the moon light tear the tombs and frighten with fingers; rhino horns rock the centre and the same shadows spring from night whispering darkness and fog the street light”. The poet tries to find a way out of his darkness and the shadows, while he is walking alone against the wind unseen and unheard, which glide into his dreams and create circles or spin the wheels of miracles with blind faith. The poet is looking into his own strange eyes in the mirror and tries to probe the progress of his wrinkling heart and wonders as to how to bear the wounds of curiosity (Poem 11). Thus, the eruptions and scars remind the poet of our weakness when we are fighting ourselves with others to disrupt the balance. The poet cries out “O Mother, I fear diseases born from within”. The Yogi is looking into himself and questions about himself and as to what he is? And how the scars are created due to “his own short comings”.

R.K. Singh due to his profound thinking and self-realisation has raised himself above his shoulder, when he expressed in Poem 43 about death being common to every creed and to ever living being. He has observed humanity being disrupted due to various inner turmoil's due to its own wrong doings. He has observed the weaknesses of politicians and men in power and persons who gather around to condemn and criticise each other. The poet expresses his anguish and pain in Poem 14, wherein he expresses his helplessness in the “games” that he cannot play due to which he has made enemies under the unliving sun and due to the cunning world around him. He feels himself obsolete in mind a land – where God seems to be irrelevant, in view of people being naïve and indulging

in double talk. He ends up by saying ‘although poets are good but they are foolish’. A poet is a realised soul, who cannot live himself in a society, which is ridden with mirth and swamp. This thought is recurring in several of the poems. In poem 23, he again expresses his despondency on watching a modern city, which is turned into “stone cool city frightening the oval existence and tempting vulgar feats with awnings”. In poem 24, he has so subtly brought forth the thought that “even if heavy rains, the darkening clouds and shapes of jungle animals would not disappear but they would continue to stay in the eyes with icy night waving tails in dreams or blazing time”. The despondency of the poet writhes with pain when ends up by saying that “he sees through strange tales/winds spin across chessboard/whether playing or watching; myths of victory weigh heavy, it is better the poet should keep quiet lest the earth mourn poet’s truth. In these lines, the realisations of the Higher Truth have been brought forth. We can compare these poems with the profound thoughts as found in the scriptural sayings and in the poems of Sufis, yogis, and mystics. We find in the poetry of R.K. Singh, metaphysical thoughts oozing out exuberantly.

The poet compares the wretched people to dogs, who defecate in the front gate, lawn and backyard and the poet expresses his disgust on such people gossiping and denouncing in corner meetings; throwing stones and chasing away truthful people. He also refers to the promiscuous ladies and compares them to ‘bitches’ bottom in season sexcites, they can’t control their passion”. He advises very stoically “let’s ignore them/they’re dogs and detractors/defecating barking”. R.K. Singh like a holy personality advises forgiveness and soliloquies in poem 26, when he utters “they use my open door/for their invectives/against me/I keep no accounts/and no bars”. While condemning the persons using the name of faith and god/politics fuels bigotry/stripes the prophets”. The poet points out that these evils cease the reasoning especially when the mind purveys prejudice; age shuts the door and ends up with sententious remark. “Everybody paves his own way to the grave”. Again in poems 28 to 29, the poet expresses his anguish on people who believe in god and yet are prepared to kill. Likewise, he

satires the politician who are “based neither knowledge nor principles but scans irresponsible”. He like a political philosopher muses on the power which is for free money/hawala, gawala and/loots to strip democracy. In poem 29, the poet has brought out all the ill effects of freedom available in society. The freedom and liberty has been granted to enable the common man to live in peace and bliss but the politician misuses it. In poem 30, the poet expresses his anguish when he utters that “during such happenings God stands smiling” quietly and “the criminal dies and his followers extort sums of samadhi”. Although, in this poem, the poet has shown his pessimism and questions the evil overwhelming world. Yet in other poems, he expresses about self-realisation and attainments through hope, patience silence and meditation. The poet expresses hope amidst so much of grief and strengthens his convictions that “love is god’s grace to hope and live” (poem 45). As observed the poet has felt his higher moorings through sensuousness as well as his realisation is brought forth in his verses. The sensuous poems are not of a vulgar kind with profanity, but the poet has experienced deep love towards his beloved. His anguish, pangs and sorrows are laid bare on the bosom of his beloved to find peace and happiness. The realisation is found in poem 9 when he utters “he flashed a faint smile/holding pen between fingers/God dropped in his mind/enlarging moments of happiness into life”.

In poems 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 52 to 62, 67, 70, 84, 88 to 93 the poet has brought forth about the feelings experienced in the mingling of souls through mingling bodies for higher realisation. He puts for the belief that “seeking fire in the/furnace of delight I fail/to weld my fragments/into one lasting love/I act delusive orgasm/to get our myself/tear dreams in holes/live bit by bit, in pieces/restive as ever”. Again the same thoughts are reflected when he mentions of realisation through love and sex. “I am dying to connect/myself to your navel love/and feel your heart beat/inside your breast space/cared by blood at your altar/sip life in your flame”. The poet blissfully expresses that it is love which is retained in the heart and which burns like a flame is to sip life in the beloved’s flame. Likewise, he again reinforces his belief that bliss

attained in total embrace and merger with his beloved to reach higher consciousness in poem 16 when he utters "you were so near yet/I couldn't reach your body;/half risen sun/I couldn't rise to embrace/half met eyes/half said prayer". The same thought is again brought out in a very rhythmic way, and about the essence of worship in poem 17 when the poet utters "as I repose/in the wrinkles/of her face/I feel her crimson/glow in my eyes. Her holy scent/grows inside/a sea of peace/multiplies in the mind". The poet finds refuge in the cage of the beloved's heart and thus strengthens his belief that it is love and love alone which is an answer to the nibbling problems of the humanity. Today, the humanity is found to be in the cross road with open sex and with promiscuity bringing in social diseases and disaster. The poet points out that the sensuality cannot be escaped and it cannot be enchained and bridled but it requires to be recalled and through sensuality and being loyal to one's own beloved, one can attain higher consciousness, peace and solve the multiple problems of the society. Thus, R.K. Singh through his sublime poetry, through worship of beauty and sensuality, has put forth in a most appealing form. On the reading of his poems, one gets enlightened but not in the least experiences sensuality for baser pleasure but it is the yearning soul, which attains higher consciousness, achieving bliss and ecstasy.

For brevity of space, many of the poems could not be analysed in this article. However, the poet's utterances show a continuous thread for love. There is an outcry to reach divinity through love and sex and through the appreciations of its beauty. The poet takes us towards self-realisation with his pithy sayings molding within eastern and western thoughts. The poetry of R.K. Singh is a path as a flame. It is modern and appealing to the sensitive souls. The poet is very sincere in his utterances and truthfully confesses himself unabashedly to reveal his inner turmoil, and pains and his ultimate self-realisation.

The poet concludes in poems 108 and 109 by stating that "I am my own proof/I don't need my neighbour's wings/to vindicate my flights". He has come out with truth of life, when he mentions



that “silence is/mantra in action/beginning/divinity’s descent/and change in/inner being/enkindling love hope and faith”.

R.K. Singh’s poetry has been well analysed by large number of critics for various aspects and the themes which are found in his poems. I for one would like to place R.K. Singh among the first rate sophisticated and yogic poets of India. He has thrown new light, painted new colours and in a fresh perspective projected the ‘Ever Lasting Truth’ which is to be found on self-realisation, while experiencing the vicissitudes of life. R.K. Singh has brought a new message to the hungry selfish and sensuous world of realise the truth and its beauty even while being sensuous, by being loyal to one’s own beloved and by creating a harmonious domestic life.

In conclusion, I would like to quote poem 64 to 66 which sum up R.K. Singh’s philosophy and esoteric feelings and experiences and thoughts:

Poem 64:

Trapped in hope, O God  
How unhappy we remain  
For a little happiness  
From the cross we seek  
Joys of living in fear  
Dusk winds up last up rays

Poem 65

Sin is soluble  
In poetry and craft melts  
Ice cream cone or bone

Poem 66

White is sun sweet risk  
Refreshing senses tingling  
Reign raging passion”  
Life’s coming spring  
Would have turned tragic  
But for the grace of  
Love and poesy

R.K. Singh has created a permanent niche in the heart of modern world poetry. He is widely published and has made a name as poetic critic as well. It is hope that many students of Indian English literature would take up in large numbers the study of R.K. Singh's poetry to discover esoteric, aesthetic and metaphysical thoughts.

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## **Patriotic and Nationalistic Note in C.L. Khatri's Poetry**

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C.L. Khatri needs no introduction to contemporary Indian poets in English. His erudite scholarship, deft learning and profundity of expression and high sounding rhetoric is not displayed in his poetry but the poems are presented in a simple, rhythmic style posing the structural forms besides, being modern in a free verse. There is combination of the old and new form; the voice and tone being sensitive, with social consciousness echoing in his poems. In deep faith in his religious dogmas and his love for his country and its welfare oozes out in his poetry. The very fact that he has chosen title his anthology Kargil and dedicated the poems 'Kargil-1', Kargil to the nation speaks of his deep patriotic and nationalistic fervour and about his profound public spirit running in his veins.

Our country had to battle with our inimical neighbours on several occasions including fighting the proxy wars forced on us. Kargil is the latest one and our armed forces fought bravely and won a bounding victory at great strategic point on the Himalayan peak. Kargil for the poet is a place where our country gave a befitting reply to our enemy. For the sensitive poet, Kargil stands: for any problem physical or metaphysical – that the world, the nation and individual are fighting jawans. For the poet “poverty, violence, illiteracy, breaking bounds of fraternity, corruption and moral degeneration” are required to be won. According to the poet, they are “greater Kargils where we have to fight with the same dedication which inspired our jawans (Preface).

The poet's commitment is brought forth in the poem with this side, which is the opening poem:

Swear, I won't keep mum  
Mortgage my tongue  
Or wag my tail  
I will cry  
Hoarse or sweet,  
My lips will thunder like a Luther,  
Pen snug in my finger  
Like a Sun will fire,  
Not to invoke Mother Kali  
But to wake up her sleeping lions  
To determine the destiny  
Of their destiny-makers.

The poet's intention to pen poems is to instill fervour in the minds and hearts of his fellow patriots. He has chosen his field of literature and poetry, in particular, to "wake up" the nation's "sleeping lions". The poet has taken up a stupendous task, which every poet endeavours to convey to his readers. Poetry has for long served such causes. The rich literature of any nation has been the poetry, be it in its epics, mythology, or scriptures. The poetry with rhythm, music, and lyrical in tone always rises emotions and passions and serves the cause of communicating the higher consciousness and to wake the sleepy soul to attain its destiny.

Our poet doesn't want to lag behind in this task. In this slim anthology his "hands .....hold mirror" to "show their blood stained faces/and the crown made of ribs and bones". The poet takes a vow to "tear the viels" with his "nails of Narasimha" until his patriots "know their real selves. The poet's determination is explicit when he utters. "But my soul will wait/until they are purged of all droths/and emerge like phoenix". We see this theme running throughout the anthology in all poems. The poet is reflective in 'Walking Alone' and is aware of his short comings and the society he is living in as well

When night dawns, shadow springs  
I turn back, look behind  
And see myself and my shadow

Walking along on a hard and pinching road  
Along the roaring, surging escape where  
Ghosts dance with glee in the chilly air.

In “Manomania” a short poem, the poet speaks about men being “busy today/feeling their ego/patting on their backs/in manomania/lost in voluptuous lust/celebrating the carnal gains/they don’t know what they have lost/and when their souls starved to death?” In “Gunfire” the poet speaks about the malady faced by humble rustics during adverse situations.

The “Celestial wine” is a beautiful villanelle wherein the poet has come out with an epigram; a profound resolve indeed. “O God, to you, I all my care resign/be it the evening of my fate or noon/let’s by each drop of celestial wine. Let all our acts be a prayer divine.” Poet’s declaration is to lead a pious and virtuous life to achieve glory of a peaceful and successful life. I feel no pain” is a “Rondeau” wherein the poet’s attempt to strengthen his resolve and to be courageous and bold is brought forth when he says, “Now even if you in the shire/I feel no pain.” The poet welcomes “the millennium” hopes that the world be free from the last millennium bugs. “That nexus haunting all through”. He addressed the curl “cyclone” which causes destruction and plays havoc and heaves a deep sigh of animism, reveals his unfailing resolve and unflinching faith in human ever to battle against the atrocities of nature. “We accept your ...../but we exist as long as/we continue our fight/against futures wild justice “in the divine design”. The poet is fully conscious that it is the “stream of love” which “runs through the universe wash away the shadow lines/that separate cause from effect”. He is philosophic and contends that “peace and bliss in each soul/bring emergence of peace in universe/free from villains of Divine Design”.

Rag picker is an outstanding poem and brings forth the epoxy of a rag picker, who is always optimistic to see light at the end of the tunnel, which could turn his wheel of fortune.

Still I am privileged  
 For I can dream  
 Some coming forward  
 Tearing this veil of darkness  
 And lighting the lamp lying  
 There in rag.

Waiting for a sun rise is a pessimistic poem. The poet expresses responsiveness and despair on watching his home state being eclipsed and the astrologer predicting its death. “But meet their own death” He expresses his woe in these words; “Dark descends on Bihar/prospects of light to mar”.

The poet depicts the life of a “clown” and is melancholic and willful on his condition. He writes “You are my clone/and we together have made death a clown” “Gardens of Gods” is religious hymn in which the poet soliloquizes “I am searching for the song of silence/s a..... sight/to sow the seeds of strength/soulful self-esteem” He is hopeful of bringing change among his followers by making this ..... I will graduate them in grammar of God/with love and care of gardener/watch them grow into garden of gods/before I am buried into its breast. “In Khajuraho’ the poet describes the temple stones and ends up questioning’ “with words engraved on stones’ ask a depicts his condition in “I am burning like a candle/in the dark recess of time/to spread the light of Christ/to extinguish himself/to sow seeds of flower/to show that beauty is there”.

In the “Foot prints”, the poet warns those who attempt to “wash away the foot prints of Gandhi/with your (their) dirty water and will find in the end that “the foot print will come up/and rest on its breast”. The poet is fully conscious that good will triumph and succeed over evil and it is not that all the time there will be darkness though” peace plays seek and hide” (peace). The poet states that “peace is neither sold in market/nor invented in the lab but rests in breast”.

The poet, in his poem entitled “My Will” does not want his body to be ‘ consign (ed.) to flame”/or be buried in the grave after

his death” instead of it he urges. “My eyes are borrowed/so are my livers, lungs, limbs...../Let them go where they belongs to/And let the remains tell/what death is worth even in hell” The poet, we find, despite expressing stoic courage and patriotic fervor and religious zeal in his poems remains melancholic and depressive in his moods and afflicted with pain on watching the state of affairs of his nation. We can sense it after reading his poems “death’ Radars’ A Tribal Girl’ ‘Darupadi’ ‘Generation gap’ ‘Heaven of Freedom and ‘My love’

The poet reaches climax in the poems “Kargil-1”, “Kargil-2” and Kargils wherein he has paid tributes to veer jawans for “they have won their Kargils”. He introspects and advises his countrymen. Let’s be Jawans of Kargil/Arise, Awake, Ascend/And fight to the end” But who is committed/to this unfortunate country?

The poet queries in “Politics and Temples” “What can people do/in this politics prone land/where political fair/runs round the year/but to harvest politics/there is little vacancy/except in politics or temples”. The poet is, here, critical and ironical on the states of affairs. His resolve to “cry hoarse” in his opening poem is brought forth fully in later poems. The poet yet understands that it is ultimate destiny alone that guises the nation. Thus, we find the religious dog is also unconsciously breaking the resole of the poet to wear “nails Narasimha: to “tear the veils” as he had uttered in his commitment gets commitment). The poet brings forth the havoc; the nuclear proliferation has brought to the world in his poem “Hirosima Hog”

Besides this strain of patriotism and religiosity we also find poems with romantic sentiments, the poet in ‘Night’ reminisces meeting his beloved and so also in the poems “Devaki” A complete Epic, Friends

It makes me weep  
To see democrats playing with you  
As kids play with a toy  
Turn it, twist it, break it  
And then quarrel over it.

“Elephant Tusk” is a descriptive poem in the power and how ‘power’ erupts and the “law is a captive” of poet’s will.

“Returns” speaks in an anonymous voice about the nation building buildings, offices, sky scrapers and what not and how it toils day and night for its citizens to give them power, pelf and what not, but in the end what the citizens give it back. The poet questions; what is the return of my toil/starvation, exploitation, disease, death and what else? The same thought reverberates in ‘Tandav’ wherein risks “Tell me, how long will you be/coy crowd in Kurukshetra? Blends up again by asking “Tell me, for God’s sake tell me/when will the earth’s stupor end”? The poet ends in the anthology with a remarkable poem. “The Feudal Sun” who caught the thief once but then the nation is robbed. The Feudal Sun does not throw light on our faces. Hence the poet with a powerful rhetoric questions the Feudal sun. “why don’t you throw light/on their faces”?

C.L. Khatri has, in his maiden anthology, given a clarion call not only to his fellow beings and patriots but has shone like a star in the sky. He has risen on the horizon of the Indian English poetry and hopes to rise to its dizzy heights, with his next collections being brought forth. He is making waves with his editorship of Cyber Literature and as a poet critic. His poetry is sure to sail smoothly during the turbulent times to reach to the shores of high success even as S.C. Dwivedi may have the following to say:

The substance and the form of all poems are closely related. They are full of didactylism, aesthetic pleasure, wisdom, mythical method, vision and a typical Bihariness which is the hallmark of his poetry. By Bihariness what I mean is that sense of perfection, ideal tendency and native vigor which he must have got from Nagarjun, Dinakar and Renu.

Ongoing through the Poet’s second collection, *Ripples in the Lake*, I could see the poet much affected with the happenings around him and about the happenings of the Modern Age. Literature is a mirror of society. It is the poets who are in a position



to see the under-belly of the society and point out the ills of the society.

There is a tinge of spiritual thoughts in the poems. The poet feels for the decadence of the culture and the values held by our country. The verse “tears” is a critical piece and the Poet does not spare any one, He call a “spade a “spade”.

The poet in the poem “Pitirin” exposes the hollowness of the present time in the following the rituals, without understanding the meaning laid down by our ancestors. So long as our elders are living, we do not respond to their needs, nor do we pay our respects. On their demise in order to fulfill social obligations, we perform the rituals by feeding Brahmins and carrying on all the other rituals to “Drive away the spirit of the dead” and there by the performer absolves himself of the Pitirin (The debt of father on son) the same thought is expressed in “Brahm-Bhoja”. Here the poet is expressing the feeling of a person who has participated in Brahm-Bhoja. The scary person has felt the assumed ghost speaking to him with regard to the food served to him. Fine sentiments are expressed in this poem.

The Poet has captured the feeling of villagers on the water shortage in the poem “Water”:

They curse their neighbor abuse the rule,/ they don't have an  
alien rule to curse. /We are stabbed in the back by our sons'  
/Moan the freedom fighters /who can neither swim across /nor  
climb up the top are doomed /to sink inch by inch by the weight  
of years.

The pun and criticism of the present rulers abusing the power and not responding to the need of the times is brought out by the poet in large number of poems.

We are aware of the fate of the person who rides a tiger and never dismounts, as he would be afraid that if he dismounts, then the tiger would eat him. This thought has been brought out by the poet in the poem, “He who rides the Man”, in this way:

He who rides the man, rides the number, the equation, the words, the house, the relation between you and me. He who rides, the man, Knows it is as dangerous to ride on as t get down”

The title poem “Ripples in the Lake” is an emotional poem which expresses the emotions held the poet.

I couldn't hold ripples,/ they filled in my pages, /critics called them verse.

We find large number of poems expressing the joy, mirth and pleasure, which hone feels on seeing the Nature's scenario like in the poems “Spring”, “Summer”, “Winter”, “Rose”, “Fish”, “Mirage”, “Leaves”, “Carrier crow”, “Morning ritual”, “Moon”, and “Sand of Sea”.

There is a poem “Bapu” which brings out the way, the “Father of the Nation” has been forgotten. Instead of being remembered and his message being followed, we find the National adorning his mantle, cap and attire, and the same disrespected and his work dislodged.

“Your cap, /and Khadi attire, /hijacked to mask power and pelf,  
/as the sea hides the blackness of sky./ Bapu, I do not feel your/  
touch in the actors on the pulpits /changing your name,  
/swearing by your name, /seeking mandate in your name /like  
an apostle. /They dump you on the comfort stations”.

There are poems which speak about the sick mentality of people who indulge in promiscuity and take advantage of the fallen woman, one such poem is “Deserted Breast”.

“I can bear the blaze,/ tyrannical sun pours on my breast. /For  
my tall green gowns are striped, /my children are haunted, /my  
breast is blasted”.

The poetry of C.L. Khatri leaves a deep impression on the mind. One feels like reading it again and again and pondering upon the themes of the poems. The poet's effort in bringing the poetic effects in his poems leads the reader to thoughtfulness; and makes them pensive and sad There's are several sententious remarks and

didactic sayings, which is the hall-mark of C.L. Khatri the poet is required to be watched, as from his pen several good poems are purring forth time and again. We wish that C.L. Khatri will become a major voice in the present scenario.

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## **Human Concern, Pathos and Tragic Feelings in the Poetry Manas Bakshi**

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Manas Bakshi is a well-established contemporary Indian-English Poet, hail from West Bengal. A free-lance journalist by profession, associate Editor of *Bridge* in making with a doctorate in rural economics. A learned person, a deep thinker. His profound learning, reflection on myriad aspects of life and his deep meditative mind has put forth a series of questions on all aspects of human activity. His pondering, pangs and sorrows and the impressions gathered by his meandering mind is reflected in his verses.

Manas Bakshi hails from the 'city of joy', a city with millions of teeming humanity with deep suffering and pathos. A clear reading of the poetry of Manas Bakshi shows his sensitivity for the suffering humanity and concern for them. There is a string of pessimism than hope and the poet questions not only the age old beliefs but the systems governing the lives of the humanity. The poet is afflicted with pathos and has lost hope for dreaming a great future for the hopeless people living in destitution, utter wretchedness and in chill penury.

For the purpose of examining the themes in his poetry, three of his collections are chosen for his work:

1. *The Welkin in Blue Yet in Agony*  
(Published by Frima KLM Private Ltd, 1995)  
Hereinafter referred to as *Twibya*)

2. *Of Dreams and Death*  
(2000 – Frima KLM Private Ltd,  
Hereinafter referred to as ODAD)
3. *From Adam to Myself*  
Frima KLM Private Ltd, hereinafter referred  
To as FATM)

Manas Bakshi's utterances are sans sentiments of religiosity or its passion. The statesman, Calcutta comments on his first work "Intensely poetic in their character". The Telegraph, Calcutta says "adventurous in imagination and style of expression". While The Hindustan Times describes his work as "Dramatic and vivid" The Hindu praises him for having "Philosophical musing", while The Herald sees his poetic outpourings as the endearment of a "Strong spirit". Bernard Jackson, the English critic says there is 'an unmistakably deep sense of personal loss of some vital close relationship. It is almost as if the poet decided not to make actual reference to relevant harsh circumstances in his life, but has chosen instead to represent the world that he now sees an emergence from unmentionable vicissitudes; He quotes in support of this view from his poem "Resurgence" (*Twibylia*)

"And have lost the beginner's rhyme  
In another world  
Growing within me  
To wrap up the embryo  
Of a frozen time.

Prof. K. Jagannathan sees *Twibylia* as a Poet emphasising more on the darker side of the human life either personal or general. Like Jaques in "As you like it" he squeezes melancholy out of life, blends it with age old philosophical concepts. A reader would enjoy all his poems in the collection with some strain now and then, as they are reflective in nature".

Patricia Prime, while reviving *Twibylia* says "The new compilation testifies not only to Bakshi's technical mastery, but also to his spiritual vision. His poems bring joy to the ear and by their transcendental shimmer, inspire a spiritual hunger.

“Bakshi is never content simply to describe or even just to meditate, instead he draws out subtleties of meaning, animating them through the stories he creates, exploring and interpreting realities which speak too of contemporary issues.....”

Kumar Chandradeep reviewing ODAD in cyber literature has this to say –

Manas Bakshi's fourth book of poetry "Of Dreams and Death" is divided into four sections. "Of Life and Longings" "Of Love and Betrayal" "Of Pangs and Passion" and "Of Dreams and Death" as if they are four successive phases in man's life. The volume consists of forty four poems or rather 44 snapshots of the four thematic segments taken from different angles portraying his different moods of pains and joys of anger and agonies of loss and achievement. Each section begins with an epigraph that sets the tone of the poems in that section”.

Further he concludes by saying that

“His poems in general are more reflective than descriptive and have their own irresistible appeal direct and intimate. He ransacks nature or imagery and his smiles are often elaborating that leaves the reader gazing in the multiple possibilities of implication besides the obvious ones”.

Patricia Prime reviewing “ODAD” in Poet 2001: says

“To me the striving characteristics of Bakshi's poems is their resonance. Word and image, as sound, echo, bound and rebound – as for example, in the poem “Waiting for:

Something is to happen/somebody will come? The homing birds/the gathering clouds/have some secret message/on their way back .....

She further says that “Bakshi's collection is a thought provoking exploration of languages and image” and concludes by saying

“There is a great variety among the poems. There are the haiku like poems, there are lyrics and there is the teasing out of the metaphysical and satirical. As Bakshi's themes have evolved so

has his style, developing and modulating into various form, but always with an essential lyricism. To read Bakshi's poems as they unfold in "Of dreams and death" is to grasp the depth and breathe of the poet's career and the many sides of his nature. This work is superbly illustrates the poet's tools of his trade, alliteration assonance and so forth. Each poem is a self-contained, syntactical and emotional unit, linked to what has gone before and what will come after".

Bernard M. Jackson while reviewing "of dreams and death" (*Bizz Buss*, April June 2002) says that "The Poetry of Manas Bakshi encompasses with a microcosm the enigmatic role of Man whichever strives to harness. Time itself in order to achieve that degree of constancy which would thereby afford a greater meaning to one's very existence. For at best the life of Man may be seen as true paradox. We are possessed by love, that greatest of all human emotions only to witness its transaction and eventual loss with the relentless passing of the years and changing circumstances. Similarly, our very associations are seen to wave. Basically, we realise this stark reality but also equally recognise that future is anathema to our very sense of being. It is in this context that the duality of Man is considered by this eminent writer and thus a fascinating dichotomy is created in his poems".

O.P. Bhatnagar reviewing "ODAD" in *Bridge-in-making* 31<sup>st</sup> number May-Aug 2001 describes the work of Manas Bakshi as follows:

Of dreams and death is the fourth collection of poems of Manas Bakshi. It carries forty four poems divided into four sections. As a freelance journalist the poet exhibits a flair for unembellished language verging on exactitude and enlightened clarity. There is neither a display of wasted sentiments nor a forcing of ornate idiom. The language is easy flowing of with poems on conveying meaning through intellectual play of images. The traditional method of imaging similes and symbols has largely been dispensed with rendering Bakshi's style and composition simple and intimate.

He further concludes by saying “While the concerns and themes of Bakshi’s poetry are emotional, their poetic manifestation seems less than emotional. For emotions are found best expressed in poetic imagery, while Bakshi seeks to avoid. That is why there occurs a lack of rhythmic charm and sanctity in some of the compositions, especially when the poet discounts reality as opposed to dreams. But what Bakshi loses by way of music and rhythm he gains in intellectual authenticity and directions. There definitely is much one can find engaging and engrossing in Bakshi’s poetry”

Kazuyosi Ikeda of Japan while reviewing the fifty collections *Form Adam to Myself* in *Poet* July 2003 has this to say;

The book of poetry *From Adam to Myself* written by Manas Bakshi is a splendid excellent collection of the author’s fascinating poems. It contains over 50 poems, singing of various kinds of subjects in nature, human beings, and society. The extensiveness of the themes the poet taken up is astonishing. The poet’s penetrating eyes turn to the inner world with a human kind and the outer world in nature and society. Moreover the angles of looking at the things and the phenomena are very different and lead to variety of issues of lyric, imaginative, significant and philosophical characters.

Though, he believes in the existence of higher being but he has questioned the believer and the ways of the destiny.

In “ODAD” the first opening poem is a ‘prayer’ wherein he does not place paeans to the Lord but shows his pessimism on the way the things move in the world and how he is held as a mere pawn:

My Lord/you are at play/I’m but your pawn/please don’t  
fumble “To goad me ahead/if the darkness/hidden behind/the  
anarchy of the deprived/Brings us sudden/but already  
overdue/ruins at the dawn.

The poet sounds more as a naustic, disbeliever who expresses his anguish and pain on the Lord being a silent spectator to the affairs of Man. This feelings run through all the works of Manas Bakshi. Manas does not sound to be an atheist but can’t accept the



age old beliefs of Karma and the beliefs that man has to pay for his past sin. He looks into the human weakness and sketches them and shows his disinclination to the belief that man's actions are preordained. Thus, the collection of FATM is prefaced with a 'testament', wherein the poet utters that "Worship to praise/ Blaspheme to denounce/God/In manmade image/Through/Ages and age/To/Come alive/in calibrated cult/And Fade out/In lost faith". This epitomizes the philosophy of the poet. His pessimism, his tinge of disbelief, and the sufferings of mankind stirs his conscious. At times he is cynical and critical through most of the time, the poet is philosophic. It is clear that the poet's utterances have depth of feelings and emotions. They are well chiseled with intellectual bearings and logical conclusions. The format chosen for expression is free verse without any bridling of rhythm and meter, or rhetoric but uttered in a simple effective tone. The poetic vision and surrealistic dreams of the poet is not to escape from the reality into ivory tower or to a world of make belief and shadows. The poet is one with happenings of the world, with the man on the street or with the neighbour. He has a keen sense of observation and insight into the ways of then world, his penetrative mind probes and his poems end or begin with an epigram and profound poetic statement.

We can empathise with the poet with each of his poems. There is no such sentimentality or to escape to the oblivion or to the dream world. The poet is one with humanity struggling to find meaning and relevance of life and death. The poet has attempted to go to the root of each situation. His poetic eye and imagination catches the theme. He attempts to give sap to the roots to enable its shoots to branch out into a flowering tree in the bright sun shine of life. The poetry of Manas Bakshi that his poetry is born out of deep concern for the mankind. There is universality in his approach and are deeply poignant. The poet puts forth his utterances straight from his heart. As the poet puts it in 'substitute' (*Twibya*)

"This is not/perhaps the time/I could give you/a read rose of total change-/instead I give/the imprint of an age/Poems of love, pain and mortality/Have retained". He shares his agony in "Echo

(*Twibyyia*) wherein he portrays silence which has dawned due to loss of live in matrimonial life but without saying so that it is that affair but the poem makes it clear it is so. He concludes the situation of such a life which is on rocks to paint a picture common to all;

You and I/both have surrendered/to an irresistible self/unable to hide that indelible burn “Such pathos rings in “When you call it a dead city” (*Twibyyia*) nothing more than defiance/Cries the city/under the comprador’s canopy”.

His desperation is painted in ‘Foreordination’ (*Twibyyia*)

“Every time it’s a wrong place/I come to/having crossed a long way/Wrong person I address in a world/High connection along pays – ? Someone I took for/is not the one I come across.

Such feelings are again repeated in “FATM” “Shares the travails of hell/and the bliss of heaven”.

And ends up this poem “A century Anecdote” (p.9)

Creatures beneath the tree  
Tense with primitive nail  
And atomic teeth  
Learn to lurk behind  
A camouflaged look

By such utterances, the poet has attempted to expose the hollowness of man, his vanity and pride. The poet derides man’s weakness though man claims to have attained the bliss of heaven. The poet’s pain and anguish is brought out in “For one alone in the crown (FATM)

A drop of tear  
A replica of  
Thousand woes....

In “Human Vultures” (*Twibyyia*) a long poem, the poet has sketched the way men in wolf’s garb are vultures to peel the skin of subdued and wretched human beings instead of being a source of succor and relief. This is a most beautiful poem in the composition. He ends up by an epigram to say that Man has returned to his original fold of a baser animal;

Here/is you origin-/the memory/Of your early days/Scratched  
by turbulence When/On the muddy water/of existence/The  
somber sun plays/And/You wait/for a moment/The rest of  
life/Be consecrated.

The little poem “The Welkin is Blue Yet in Agony” sketches the present mankind’s plight where despair rages and man has lost all the meaning of life. The poet’s heart bleeds.

“The call of the song – bird mingles with/That vast  
endless/Far away from the bourne of my casements/May be in a  
more arid land/Than the earth I conceive at present/Still the lonely  
rainy noon descends/From the blue, on a riot-ridden land/And  
caresses my drowsy eyes” In this poem the poet laments on the  
destiny of the dream

In this poem Manas Bakshi laments on the destiny of the  
dream

Then the game of hide and seek  
Dallies in the lap of memory  
The feeling birds envelop my plumage  
In a thrill of transient raptures  
And as they return, they whisper  
The welkin is blue yet in agony

In “A secret Game” (*Twibyyia*) the poet sketches as to the role  
of man on earth. “Man on the earth/takes up a path/Rain  
soaked/Or sunburnt/An often unveiled mist/Exists  
between/Raindrop and sunshine/streaks are inclined/The changing  
sky/Witness to all this/Keeps the game/Undefined”

In the poem “An Untold Story” (*Twibyyia*) the dreams of a  
“dying man’ and its agony is brilliantly brought out:

Scrubbed – as much/as you think of it/this living is meant  
for/that ultimate state of being

That poet ends up by philosophizing:

Then only silence/the perfect emblem of a solemn sight/that in  
the unknown mood of mind/Makes a dispassionate  
self/Accountable to the riddle of the earth/somewhere

perhaps/Life's paid its living worth". In "And that is of no avail" (*Twibyyia*) the poet weeps at the loss of the ecological balance and what man has done to nature:

Yet with ecological balance lost  
To slake an endless thirst  
The heart be numbered can get back  
The tulip of sweet enchanting past

The poet imagines on seeing a running river and juxtaposes with life in "Wandering at a Winger Evening" (ODAD)

"I find each/river undulating with breezy waves/Evocative as man's inborn language/in the world at its beginning"

While musing on death, the poet turns spiritual in 'Reflection' (ODAD)

The green leaf of faith shivering  
As every moment of salvation sought  
Turns into a dismal reflection  
On my posing  
What I am not"

The poet has sketched about the crocodile tears shed by lamenters and mourners in the poem "on his death (ODAD)

"Those who often jibed at him assembled to make  
An assessment of the many facets.  
Of the situation that forced a life to end  
In deception, drudgery and loneliness"

The sacrifice of life by a loyal soldier for his country and the consequent grief to his family is portrayed in the poem "Kargil Skirmish" (ODAD)

The poet in the poem "Beyond Consolation" (ODAD) speaks about life:

"Life is a flower/that never blooms alone/And death is a destiny/One day everyone/has to treat as his own".

There are sensitively worded poems in various sections of "Of dreams and death (i) Of life and Longings (ii) Of Love and betrayal (iii) of Pangs and Passion (iv) Of Dreams and Death"

Philosophical thoughts and higher mooring oozes out in these sections. The poems are somber and grave, reflective and deep. The poet's depth of feelings and his concern for humanity and for the under dogs shines in all these sections. All in all the poet is quite in blues and there is not much of cheer, gaiety and joviality but measure of seriousness. The poet has himself put it succinctly in the poem "The Wandering at a Winter Evening"

As I stoop to this midway tranquility  
This winger evening  
Allows me not to go beyond  
The periphery of a silent search  
Into man's inner world"

In "Of Dreams and Death (ODAD) the poet has depth of emotions and uttered in crystal clear language, lucid and smooth.

Dream is the last word  
It may seem  
For everything remaining  
Insatiable, unfinished"  
"And death  
A point of culmination  
Drawn out of several strokes  
Perfect and abrupt  
Towards lifelong perceptions

In the section "Of Love and Betrayal (ODAD) the poems come out of disappointment a lover faces in love and muses philosophically than romantically.

Love/A private word/etched on/A deep rooted wound/of/A  
lone sufferer/not/Looking around/in Fear of own  
shadow/elbowing/Him/her out/and/Betrayal? A fruitless  
tree/with/only its shadow to offer/when/the living being is/in  
its need/Rolls it up before/love/is one with/Physical needs.

In 'one day I Realise' the poet attempts to find equipoise in his beloved "Once again/I seek refuge/in your lackluster breast but expresses his disappointments in not finding "The first day fervour/Exploring the bodyline" but only to find "A crop/Growing cactus like beyond the conjugal clue" It is in these verses, we find

the poet's utterances to be one of pessimism and seeing the darker, seamier side of life. One gets a feeling that the poet's heart and soul is filled with pathos, with unfulfilled dreams and desires dashing to the ground like a torn kite in a rough weather. The poet has no answers or solutions to the dejections and multiple sorrows and disappointments in life. He draws a similitude of 'Kurukshetra Contours' (*Fatm*) to the present times and finds the same devilish people, who attempts to beshame Draupadi and there is a ring of truth in his poems. "Abhimanyu reborn/Trapped in Chakravayuha everywhere/And Bhishma like cult figures/Always remain helpless onlookers". The poet has attempted to discover his agony, to etch his pangs on the canvas of his mind, to enable it to ponder and give his answers. The poet has attempted to give colour to his sorrows and tone to his ears. There is tension in his verses and it reverberates with assonances. The verses echo and the reader is left in a thoughtful mood. Thus, Manas Bakshi's poetry is thought provoking with depths of emotions and tinge of melancholy but short of depression. Sometimes his voice is consoling, sometimes angry but ultimately to make the readers realise the foolhardiness of life's action. The poetry of Manas Bakshi is quite serious contemplative on personal, social and metaphysical themes.

There are about fifty poems in the collection (*Fatm*) on varied themes with use of rich imaginary on each flowing simple language. The technique employed to etch out his thoughts and emotions in his utterances is unique and original in style.

The poet points out in his opening poem 'A wayside Vignette' on watching a wall poster with a leader's face, distorted by air and rain, with slogans for a change, how a poem is born:

"The twists and turns of life  
And an enduring icon  
Shapes reality in intuitive eyes;  
Another poem is born"

In Centenary anecdote, the poet reflects on his 21<sup>st</sup> century and utters:

A flowering tree

This 21<sup>st</sup> century  
Shares the travails of hell  
And the bliss of heaven.

And the ends up by commenting

“Creatures beneath the tree  
Tense with primitive bail  
And atomic teeth  
Learn to lurk behind  
A camouflaged look”

By such utterances, the poet has attempted to expose the hollowness of man, his vanity and pride. The poet derides man's weaknesses, though man claims to have attained the bliss of heaven. The poet's pain and anguish is brought out in “For one alone in the crowd”

A drop of tear  
A replica of  
Thousand woes....

The poet does not hope for a Dharma Raj but utters chagrin:

“Dharma Raj in disguise  
Doesn't enter, rather escapes  
With a piece of rotten bread  
Perhaps to share it with  
The crippled old man  
Who lives with the dog  
On the pavement....”

In the poems, ‘A lonely lady-1’, ‘A lonely Lady-2’ and ‘A lonely Lady-3’ the poet sketches the griefs of a lonely dejected and weakened beaten women;

“When instincts fail/Words of consolation too/But the aura of  
love-bud/In the calyx of life/Survives till death’

The title poem “From Adam to Myself” brings forth the attitude, feelings and emotions, and philosophy of the poet. “Through several ages/ascribed myths and ancestral beliefs/Edging for a confluence/where one has to return/all the inherited ruins and substance...” Thus, for the poet, the ancient man continues to live in

man, to create torture and hell for him with his passions. The theme is the crux of the poetry of Manas Bakshi and it serves as a little to his collection.

For the poet even a bird which visits his drawing room, does not give him joy but only reminds him of misery and grief. "It enters my bedroom too/Unmindful of its mate/Calling in the far away grove/Unmindful of day/its posterity could be in a shambles".

Thus we see the poet singing his sad songs rather than enlightening the readers with joys and bliss, with soul's ecstasies and higher flights of imaginations, to raise one above the mirth and vicissitudes of life. The poetry is somber, serious and at times pathetic. Some romantic readers and poets, who find joy in the nature and in the soul finding peace in higher love, faith and hope may not much relish the poetry, as it strikes at the root and exposes the hollowness of the listless living.

The poet utters this in "A love sequence"

"Will the man at the other end  
Wait for sometime more  
Or pluck the budding rose  
As his own?"

The poet grieves over the social problem of "Sati" in the poem, "Another Roop Kanwar" and ends up by uttering "She could never think/Her in-laws would meddle in/Her personal affair/And settle the dowry dues/With inhuman torture".

Thus, the poet has attempted to open the eyes of heartless humanity to the never ending woes of the paradoxical living, where faith and hope does not find a shore of bliss and ecstasy; as found in his closing poem "Missing Thy Kiss"

When you/Return me/with a smile/and not a kiss"

"I ponder over/the last train at night/Had I ever/had it to miss"



### *From Adam to Myself*

*From Adam to Myself*, is Manas Bakshi's fifth collection. Manas Bakshi's utterances are sans sentiments of religiosity or its passion. Though, he believes in the existence of Higher Being he has questioned the beliefs and he ways of the destiny. The collection is prefaced with a "testament", "Worship to praise/Blaspheme to denounce/God/In manmade image/Through/Ages and ages/To/Come alive/In/Calibrated cult/And/Fate out/In lost-faith". "This epitomizes the philosophy of the poet. His pessimism, his tinge of disbelief, and the sufferings of mankind stirs his consciousness. At times, he is cynical and critical though most of the time, the poet is philosophic. It is clear that the poet's utterances have depth of feelings and emotions. They are well chiseled with intellectual bearings and logical conclusions. The format chosen for expression is free verse without any bridling of rhyme and meter but uttered in a simple, effective tone. The poetic vision and surrealistic dreams of the poet are not to escape from the reality into ivory tower. The poet is one with happenings of the world, with the man on the street or with the neighbor. He has keen observation and insight into the ways of the world, his penetrative mind probes and his poems end with an epigram and profound poetic statement.

As P.B. Shelley puts it: "Our sincerest laughter, with some pain is fraught.

Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought". We can empathize with the poet with each of his poem. There is no such sentimentality or to escape to the oblivion or to the dream world.

There are about fifty poems in the collection on varied themes in easy flowing simple language. The technique employed to etch out his thoughts and emotions in his utterances is unique and original in style.

The poet points out in his opening poem "A Wayside Vignette", on watching a wall poster with a leader's face, distorted by air and rain, with slogans for a change;

“The twists and turns of life and an enduring icon shapes reality in intuitive eyes: another poem is born”.

In “Centenary Anecdote”, the poet reflects on his 21<sup>st</sup> Century:

“A flowering tree, This 21<sup>st</sup> Century shares the travails of hell and the bliss of heaven:”

And ends up by commenting: –

“Creatures beneath the tree tense with primitive nail and atomic teeth learn to lurk behind a camouflaged look!”

By such utterances, the poet has attempted to expose the hollowness of man, his vanity and pride.

In “one day I realise”, the poet attempts to find equipoise in his beloved. “once again/I seek refuge/In your lackluster breast”, but expresses his disappointment in not finding “the first-day fervor/exploring the body line” but only to find “A crop/growing cactus-like/beyond the conjugal clue! ” It is in these verses, the poet’s pessimism is reflected in seeing the darker, seamier side of life. One feels that the poet’s heart is filled with pathos, unfulfilled dreams and desires dashing to the ground lie a torn kite in a rough weather. The poet has no answer or solution to the dejection and multiple sorrows no answer or solution to the dejection and multiple sorrows and disappointments in life. He draws a similitude of “Kurukshetra Contours”, to the present times and finds the same devilish people, who attempt to beshame Draupadi and finds “Abhimanyu reborn/Trapped in a Chakravyuha everywhere/And Vishma like cult figures/Always remain helpless onlookers!”

The present youth’s predicament in finding employment is brought out in “Youth Time-2002”; “In his blood as in his untold words:

“An arrow-struck bird suffers the agonies, of a quizzical birth!”

Yesterday’s revolutionaries are in the eyes of the poet a red rose and he watches them burning in your incompetent hands, “that have snatched the dream/of a promised land” and the very savior has turned into:

“A revolutionary in 1971 turned a vote-catcher in 1996”

In the poems “Curse”-1 Curse-2” the poet finds “Beauty is baneful/to the bird/trapped, caged and priced/for being beautiful” and laments.

“only knows/How baneful it is/To be bruised by/A caged living/In a civilised society/Vocal about human rights”.

Such thoughts reverberate in large number of poems in the collection. He poet chooses each scenario to paint his tears of blood and anguish. Like in “Hidden factor”, the poet speaks of the dreams crashing to the ground:

“Every night’s dream of hibernating, in a multistoried apartment, hides somewhere, the pavement dweller’s Cry for a crumb!”

In the poems “A Lonely Lady-1”, “A Lonely Lady-2’ and “A Lonely Lady-3’, the poet sketches the grief of a lonely dejected and weather beaten women:

“when instincts fail/Words of consolation too,/But the aura of love-bud/in the calyx of life/Survives till death”.

The title poem, “From Adam to Myself” brings forth the attitude, feelings and emotions, and philosophy of the poet.

“Through several ages/Ascribed myths and ancestral beliefs/Edging for a confluence/Where one has to return/all the inherited ruins and substance –”. Thus, for the poet, in the ancient man continues to live in man, to create torture and hell for him with his passions. This theme is the crux of the poetry of Manas Bakshi and it serves as a title to his collection.

In the poem, “To my Father”, the poet sees his sagely father’s face, “Prudent, strained with age/Allowing perhaps little change/to caution me, as before, against/Yesterday’s adolescent craze/Today’s growing impatience and/Tomorrow’s waning credence”. The poet grieves over the social problem of “Sati” in the poem, “Another Roop Kanwar” and ends up by uttering:

“She could never think/Her in-laws would meddle in/Her personal affair/and settle the dowry-dues/With inhuman torture”!

Thus, the poet has attempted to open the eyes of heartless humanity to the never ending woes of the paradoxical living, where faith and hope does not find a shore of bliss and ecstasy; as found in his closing poem “Missing Thy Kiss”: – “When you/Return me/With a smile/And not a Kiss”

“I Ponder over/The last train at night/Had I ever/Had it to miss”.

### *Not Because I Live To Day*

Manas Bakshi’s sixth venture of poetry titled *Not Because I Live Today* deals with a variety of relevant modern themes and subjects these themes vary from romantic love, illicit sex, prostitution, politics, and modern science and test tube babies. The variety of themes in itself gives a mixed poetic experience deserving repeated readings which the verse sustains.

The title poem makes impressive statements like:

Death is conceived/in every momentary cry/And  
The colour of love’s changing everyday.  
The Poet is actually aware of the temporal and the ephemeral: –  
Ah! Who’s born to die/In a future dream?

The poet is conscious of the implications of the poetic craft as is shown by the very title: “When the manuscript ridicules me”:

Words that will never imbibe/the stark reality’s Braille/When  
man is both/An outcast from the heaven/And a survivor of the  
hell;

In the present day world, big business is religion or politics and this may delay poetic justice:

Nor is poetic justice expected/when a big business is/Either  
Religion or Politics.

There are many poems which deal with the themes of romantic love, sex, sin and the experience is transformed and sublimated into interesting verse – with satisfactory imagery and diction. For example –

Wilderness came shapeless/Hand in hand/Man and woman/Went down/the serpentine lane/to trace out the root/of desire's pain/embracing sleepless nights/Within instinct's dark terrain (Transitional) (p.21)

The bondage of concubines is brought in the poem 'An Indian at the close of the Twentieth Century' (p.22) "Where a 'Debdasi' finds/Her chastity savages/In human bondage".

The poet sadly says: "What you have left me with/Not enough for this savages right to plunder."/The last line is truly pathetic: "You were once mine!"

Debdasi, harlots, whores and prostitutes are recurring words and themes: "Legislation of prostitution/and computerisation of emotions/For a sophisticated dive",

Waiting/in the eyes/of a past-prime harlot,  
Silently as the desire/Lurking between the poised thighs.

Some of the verse is difficult to comprehend at the first reading. It seems to create a meaning by abstruse suggestions, roundabout implications and distanced references. This makes it not merely allusive or elusive or abstract, but sustains the poetic intention with an often strange poetic effect.

The Independence Day reflections states that the country had made: "Fifty five years of tall talk, gimmick/And efforts to tame us – all in vain."

"Super cyclone takes its toll/In one state, food in another-/Drought will definitely be there/Devastatingly, in the next year."

The poet has become a predictive scientist in the above lines. In the last two lines, the end of the present regime is predicted:

“Hallelujah: No bar to our trips for death toll/In a bourgeois democracy chanting its own dirge”/(August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2002) (p.82)

The need for privacy and independent breathing space is effectively expressed in the poem “Breathing Space” (p.74): “Somehow, somewhere/All we need/is a breathing space, To express ourselves/Beyond a cajoling “hello” or a mocking “hi”/To feel the pain of a falling star/In the isolation of/Each individual self.”/

The collection has got fifty-five poems and the blurb makes impressive and interesting reading. The poet has a good track record and a praise worthy bio data. Mention must be made of the poet’s felicity of language, rich and varied diction, use of striking images, similes and metaphors and an overall sophistication of style.

Word and phrases like “quirk of the Sun”, “Nostalgia moist memory”, “of simple or abstruse art”, “Vignettes of life”, “Unknown Language metamorphosis”, “auroral celebrations”, “patent word floundering on the edge”, bring out a maturity of poetic craft and experience though at times making the reader run to the dictionary.

Then sophistication of diction, imagery and style then repeatedly creates a considerable poetic impression and appreciative response from the reader. This slim volume of mostly short poems makes a worthy reading creating a real interest in his other works.

### ***Man of the Seventh Hour***

During his convalescence, Manas Bakshi had reflected on the life lived by him all through years. Any person in such a state of mind and health would view life in a different perspective, like a withdrawn Buddha. Manas Bakshi having undergone turmoils of life and experienced its vicissitudes, brought forth enormous poetical works, expressing deep human concern, pathos and tragic feelings in is poetry. Now, on retrospection, life has been viewed as a complete circle in his latest collection, “Man of the Seventh Hour”. This collection is not in the form of individual poems, but, it

is in the form of an epic. Like Krishna Srinivas, who in his monumental work, *Five Elements*, brought out the philosophy of life; so also Manas Bakshi has also realised the Truth, which has revealed on his higher mind and on his consciousness.

Manas Bakshi has now reached higher consciousness and has viewed life on a higher plane. Krishna Srinivas in his *Five Elements* concentrated on Water, Wind, Fire, Earth and Void; while Manas Bakshi in this volume has divided his lengthy poetical work in *Seven Hours* preceded by a Prelude. Each of the chapter begins with a quote from an Eminent Poet. We all are aware of seven deadly sins in which man indulges in, on account of which, his life leads to unhappiness, sorrow, and depression. The poet in this work has realised about the Seven hours in Man's life, which totally encapsules him.

Manas Bakshi has now reached highest maturity of mind and with his past life experience, he has been able to pen on the "Seven hours of human life." These seven hours according to the Poet are "Victory", "Desire", "Greed", "Fear", "Rage", "Conflict" and "Decadence". As stated, the Poet has reflected on these aspects of the matter with a "Prelude". The Prelude" refers to man-woman being a universe. The Poet has rightly uttered that the human being has emerged from primitive age to the modern age; from void to vibrancy; from subjugation to emancipation, from beginning to end and that it is a process of compelling reality. He has crystalised the entire history of man-kind from evolution to dissolution, as if it is an unfolding mystery of a life-cycle, a strange continuity in all that is materialistic, all that is supernatural, all that is universal, all that is super-natural gyrating, in the poets own entity. And he concludes the prelude by stating,

Everything mundane and beyond not beyond my ascetic  
perceptibility.

In the first para, of the First Hour: 'Victory', the poet refers to seven seas, seven hills, as Iris of life. The first Hour: Victory, speaks about the creation of man and woman with the legacy of Adam

and Eve, Time playing its game, full of turns tricks. The first hour refers to:

The aesthetic magnificence /the Cosmic splendor,/ That's the  
Universe, /Blooming into beauty, /Every morning, /Yet not  
fading out, /At night,/ Glimmers to show, /Nocturnal ecstasy,  
/Rhapsodic too, /To redeem itself,/ In /Human movements,  
/May be/ An ascription/Of His divinity and diversity.

In the first para the Poet has transported himself into the higher feeling and reflected on the cosmic splendor of the universe beyond the contemplative mind as quoted primitive mind looks into the world of nature and in the wild inebriation of an intimate dream experiencing everything new and serene.

The Poet concludes the “First Hour”, by referring to the victory of man focusing on New frontiers around his progeny's survival texture.

The Second Hour refers to the examination of one's own self; beyond self; enlightened itself by unraveling new horizons of creative urge day by day in enrichment of values and ideas.

The Poet refers to the realisation of self in the art of knowing life itself. He draws images from the nature, from his own inner self to expound the Truth of life.

In the Third Hour: “Greed”, the Poet refers to the basic instinct of man i.e. “lust”. How the lust as an innate urge smitten by instinct's scourge makes human mind turn divergent, if not wayward, with greed and craze entering human destiny's third phase.

The Poet has dwelt at length on exposing the deadly sin “Greed” and as to how it has an impact on human civilisation. He also refers to the present day 21<sup>th</sup> century man, who is unable to satisfy himself on account of this ‘greed’.

The Fourth Hour refers to: “Fear”. Fear grips human mind as a snake coiling a tree. It is the fear which has led to man's downfall again and again. The poet experiences the feeling of fear and



has exquisitely brought out the aspect of fear in all aspects of human life.

The “Fifth Hour is “Rage”. This deadly sin can “batter the dreams of man”. The acrimony of rage imprisons man and leads to extremism and terrorism. The poet like a philosopher has dwelt deeply on the aspect of rage and has shown how this feeling of rage has lead man:–

From Babri /to /Bamiyan, /From World Trade Centre/to Tube  
rail in London

The Sixth Hour is “Conflict”. The poetic vision expressed in this chapter is prophetic sans obscurity and exhibits supreme craftsmanship; intellectualised observation of life, moral realism and integration of personality. In this chapter, there is purity in the imagery, the tone and theme has a rich tradition and the poet has broken fresh grounds to communicate the higher feelings and experiences, which is too often felt by large majority but failed to express it in poetry. To quote one stanza in support of the above observation: –

When man becomes the victim of his own guileful game having  
only sinister motive and inhuman attitude to blame.

The Last hour is “Decadence.” The poet draws strength from the mythology. He refers to the suffering of martyrs in the Karbala War front and about the young Abhimanya in the Kurukshetra battlefield. The poet has felt the Reality and the Truth, Effulgence and Beauty which has reflected on the higher mind and on the consciousness of the poet. There is inner vibrancy and the poem “Man of the Seventh Hour” is at once profound and magical, wise with insight, sparkling bright. There is precision, economy in language, defined images and in depth understanding of the human weakness, expounded beautifully by the Poet in the “Man of Seventh Hour” by drawing imagery from the nature. The work of Manas Bakshi is bound to receive applause. Manas Bakshi has now turned out to be a major poet, with his profound reflection on life in this work “Man of the Seventh Hour”.

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## **Traditional Indian Woman's Suppressed Voice in the Poetry of S. Radhamani**

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“Frailty thy name is woman” uttered the great bard. It is so true to the womanhood and to the tradition bound woman, particularly in the Asian countries and more so in India. Woman's liberation moment is gaining ground all over the globe but it is yet to gain tis ground in our tradition bound, superstitious, myth-ridden ancient land.

Women's voice was heard for long and from ages but only in the songs sung to highlight the spiritual yearnings or in the lyrics and in the passionate love songs. But Indian woman for long has been under the grinding wheel enchained, voiceless and made to surrender to the whims, fancies and eccentricities of the “savage” man, his over lordship, and to treat woman as a chattel. Her life is a saga from birth to death beset with agonies, pains and untold sufferings. Though much has been done to ameliorate the plight of Indian woman from the time of William Bentick, to curtail evil practice of “Sati”, and that great man like Raja Ram Mohan Roy clamored for the widow's remarriage and for restoration of her rights. But the pace of reformation is still slow. The voice of the woman is yet to be heard fully though women in India have been fortunate to occupy high places of power. But the tradition bound society is yet to liberate the Indian women fully.

Indian woman's voice was heard though Meerabai, Sarojini Naidu, Tora Dutt, Kamala Das, Imtiaz Dharkar and Scores of poetesses and ever more, who are now on the scene. But what is so

unique to pick and choose S. Radhamani to speak of as a representative voice of the Indian women.

S. Radhamani is a “Frail Woman” who has all the clippings of an Indian Woman, tradition bound, deeply spiritual, a loving devoted wife, a duty conscious citizen, a humble lady teacher in a male dominated chauvinistic society, a voice of multitude of suffering woman in all concerns of the society.

S. Radhamani is urbane, cultured, highly qualified but a simple, humble lady sans pretentious and airs of scholarship, though having obtained Doctorate in English literature with further qualifications of obtaining Post Graduate Diploma in the teaching of English language. She has over 27 years of teaching experience, besides brilliantly managing her household and bringing up her sons and passing on the traditions of yore and educating them brilliantly. A duty-ful housewife of a scholarly husband, with a very happy and blissful conjugal life.

Now what has S. Radhamani to offer in her profound verses brought forth in four volumes:

- (i) *The Times Ahead are Propitious*  
(Self-published Madras 1996)
- (ii) *Thistle and Transformation*  
(Writers Forum, Ranchi 1998)
- (iii) *Tirings of Transition*  
(Writers Forum, Ranchi 2000)
- (iv) *Obsessions and Transitional Exuberance*  
(Writers Forum 2001)

A glance by any lay reader poet, would find the verses completely different from the ordinary mundane ones, which passes off as poetry. Poetry has a tradition and a poet keeps up to the tradition. Tradition not necessarily in the format of literalness, in choosing meter and form, which now world binds a poet. The poetry has now in modern times been liberated from the high tradition of format, meter and rhyme, but not in the least has it

failed today in recognising rhythm and communication. A poet should be able to communicate the poetic feelings, emotions and certainly can be intellectual and pour forth the metaphysical thoughts. Poetry is certainly not for communicating ideas, for which prose suits well.

In this context S. Radhamani has succeeded in being modern, liberating herself from the cliques of the poetical form. She has chosen free verse to breathe freely her deep seated emotions; her felt experiences, choosing carefully themes – from being spiritual, metaphysical, social criticism, voicing about the depressed and suppressed ones; sharing the feelings of the lonely and sad woman's. Radhamani's imaginary and idiomatic expression is unique and so also her choice of similes and metaphors. It is certainly a fresh voice, a different one. The tone is both electrifying and elevating.

It is scholarly and intellectually stimulating with use of powerful rhetoric to convey the message. The poetess voice is also at times angry, expressing pain, agony, suffering and anguish, crying and weeping at the deprivation of the basic rights and making the woman go round the treadmill, thorns, and to make her to walk on sludge, glass pieces, torture her in hellfire, drown her in oceanic grief's and pathos; make her to carry night soil and what not? But the mysteries surrounding the life and the superstitions does not numb the poetess. She pins her faith on hope, on higher yearnings, and for spiritual elevation to reach "god hood". She is fully conscious of the society's lackadaisical approach and apathy to the woman and powerfully pleads for their welfare. Not just for the woman in all their woes but the poetess has a keen eye on the social problems which has beset the society from ages – prostitute, beggary, crime, rape, child labor etc., Thus, the voice of a S. Radhamani is not only cosmopolitan, urbane but it is mature, sane and powerful one. Among all the present days poetess of our country, S. Radhamani stands out as a light-house beaming light all over, as her poetry is all compassing.

S. Radhamani has dedicated all her poetical collections to her spiritual mentor and guru Sri. Ganapathi Sachidananda Swamiji.

For the poetess, her guru is a true Avatar of the higher Divinity, descending this planet, beset with strife, chaos, atheism, anarchy so as to guide the humanity starved with under nourishment of faith, love, hope, sincerity and humility. In the poem “A devout prayer and humble beginning” (The Times ahead are propitious, for short TTAAP) she offers all her works to the divine feet of her guru to seek his benediction and divine grace, to fulfill her task without any impediment and disgrace. She expresses her profound faith and pins her hopes in times of stress and distress, seeking His Holiness never failing clemency and solace.

She utters her humility by saying that “the pride and pedigree should never lead me to distraction” she pours forth her genuine spiritual expression on her esoteric encounters with God; during her concomitant visit to temples, while prostrating before the Almighty in the sanctum sanctorum when fested with mundane pollution. What does she realise? “A Catchword Consoles her” – “Endure Now, Enjoy later, work betimes/Reap forever. Absolute Surrender unquestioned, supplication to me/And The Times Ahead Are Propitious”, “A deep spiritual awakening in her has made her to totally surrender without complaints, grievances or woes to the Almighty which according to Poetess will bring salvation during these times of strife and turmoil.”

The title poem, “Thistle and Transformation”, again is an expression of achieving grace through her visits during pilgrimages to her household deity on top of the temple at the serene cliff

Describing her hazardous journey she bursts out:

The colored flowers of Thistle/ Close by, a touch of feather and  
sponge to my bleeding toe,/ a steady celestial fire through the  
air/transforms me too!

In her praise be to her mentor in “Tidings of Transition (TOT for short) the poetess places her pains to her mentor guru, a reincarnation of Dattatreya, Trinity in one, creator, protector and Destroyer. She expresses her faith and devotion by uttering:”

Thou, savior of the simmering shivering, Redeemer of the  
rudderless, I'm indeed Bless Manifold, For Thy Holiness has  
absorbed into Thine Dive munificent fold.

In "Crucible" (TOT) the poetess states that when the quest for  
Eternal infinitesimal becomes unquenchable or irredeemably deep",  
The crucible evaporates, crumbles 'A celestial confidence creeps to  
swell in "her Poem" "Divine Phillip" (TOT), the poetess eulogizes  
her guru and speaks of his fame spreading "far and wide/filling the  
void/A Phillip to divine, dimensions.'

In the "Pathless Journey" ("Obsession and Transitional  
Exuberance" for short "OATE") the poetess pictures her "pathless  
journey" to spirituality with metamorphic idioms and expressing  
anguish at the present times which has jettisoned the teachings of  
Christ; the message of Bhagavad Gita" in this Kali – Yuga "the  
poetess" "sighs" it is pathless journey".

To the poetess, her "knowledge of the Upanishads  
upholds/that the soul is the spirit divine/which dwells in every  
being holy and mundane,/sad and sanguine, proud and  
prosperous/virile and vociferous, uncouth and ubiquitous/but my  
intuition dictates/soul is an embodiment of sacredness/Noble and  
essential goodness seen everywhere".

For the poetess. "Soul is the life breath/if the palpitation  
ceases/the soul migrates/yet another replies/The soul is the  
incarnation of your previous birth (7. What is a 'soul' TTAAP). In  
this poems. Radhamani has come out explicitly in a very clear way,  
her understanding off her scriptural knowledge, her profound  
learning and scholarship.

S. Radhamani in her preface to "OATE", states "TTAAP"  
focuses upon the selfish, egoistic temperament of man's nature,  
aggravated by jealousy. Her second book "TAT" reflects upon the  
innocent victim's passivity". A total resignation and surrounded to  
the Holy feet of Divine Avatar, while the third book "To ensure  
upon a Kaleidoscopic zone of transition, metaphorically and  
physically and even on the mental plane, a total sanguine shift,

which is possible only by “Divine Intervention”, while in the fourth book “OATE” the poetess states that she has brought forth about the innumerable culprits, nay sinners, who have been in a subtle and surreptitious way inflicting pain on the innocent, are caught red handed due to the unforeseen power and their true color is exposed.

Let us have a brief bird’s view of all these aspects in her poetical collections and leave the literary and scholastic aspects for analysis to the learned critics.

In this brief analysis, I would like to look into the following themes:

- (i) Life’s vicissitudes
- (ii) Agony and ecstasy of Indian woman
- (iii) Social sensibilities
- (iv) Self-introspective reflection

Nationalistic and patriotic feelings in these four works of S. Radhamani.

In ‘boom and doom’ (TTAAP) the poetess questions as to whether we need to flout all our norms in this age of cryogenic engine and concord aircraft. In this poem and elsewhere the moral sensibilities of the poetess is around to make profound utterances.

If you are going to be blind to the gifts of God,  
I would vouch safe that our  
Dooms day is Near Sure, O Lord!

In the poem, “A Glare or Share” (TTAAP) she expresses her anguish and cries out “But ALAS! How many ‘beings’, being with us, wound us, harm us, cast vituperation on us,/the venom is least hurting./and supposedly human is devastatingly damaging”. In ‘is the world too much with us or without us (TTAAP)/, she keenly observes the world around her and observes “The World is rotten and wrongs begotten’ and ends up by expressing her despondency thus “All are bound to have their Day and Doom”. In the poem



“Soaring life” (TTAAP) the poetess states that “hardly few can realise, that life will be only straw and hay”.

In the poem “A Soliloquy” (TTAAP) the poetess makes loud thinking on her own life, advice for maintaining the marriage’s celestial bond/whether you get married to man young or, old/you must be true and your beloved partner. The poet thus holds on to the Indian tradition of being a true and a loyal wife.

In “Life now and Never”, (TTAAP), she sounds optimistic on ‘life’ by quoting Chekov “Life will be beautiful two or three hundred years from now’ and ends up with a sententious remark

Man’s heart is like an unweeded garden unless he is good, his actions will not bear succulent fruits.

In “Dark Times” (TAT) the poetess reflects on the times we live in and wonders as to what has happened to the land of Sita and Ghandari as ‘serenity and seriousness disfigured with the cheapish sneer, “and “The benign Earth yielding to pressures of filthy fissures” as the times we live in are “Dark as devil Dirty as a sink’ and ends up with melancholia “Woe to the cursed times! I foresee,/Dooms day is not far off/to devour and to redress’. The poetess in’ “Throbbing humanity; a juncture where menfolk meet and depart./Yet, the train moves on and on .....”.

“In Banality of Existence” (TOT), the poetess reflects on life as “to exist in a world of treason and treachery,/of people unable to come to terms with reality and reason and ends up with a pithy saying ‘the answer is “resurgent waves/swallow empires and vampires”. The poetess has done lots of introspection and philosophically muses in TOT, her third collection. The same thought of the “Mother Earth Quivers’ is repeated and the gloomy self pessimistically utters “Mother Earth helpless as severed arm reaching to save the distorted face”. Again in “Encore” (TOT) the reflection of life’s ship sailing slowly and steadily like the growth of an embryo in the mother’s womb, is brought forth, with metaphors and figures of speech.

Such thoughts again reoccur in “Penury Bounteous” (TT) where she compares “Life, analogous to a knife point,/yet pointless, purblind,/apparently transient still”.

S. Radhamani the poetess has scholarly observed life in many of her poems in her forth collection “OATE”. In the poem ‘floating plank’ she observes ‘The light wooden plank/Sea-saw in the currents of the river./Reminds me of the jejune, barrenness of life,/Like a heavy anklet on light feet”.

These poems keep reminding to a reader about the sorrows a solitary woman faces, meeting single handedly and bravely the life fortunes and misfortunes in the present times.

S. Radhamani’s poetry on expressions of emotions felt by a lovely, sad, forsaken woman and those undergoing misery, poverty, suffering brought forth lyrically is something which requires a keen look. The underlying depth of feelings and demotions brings out the anathema of the present day caste ridden society faced with multitude of problems, leaving the woman folk in distress and in drudgery. To being with, let us take few examples from her first work “TTAAP”. In the poem “My Luxury” the agony of loneliness of a woman is brought out:

How often loneliness has served me soothing as a soothsayer  
More often than not, my aloneness  
Has assuaged me with assurance of unconditional prayer.

She wails in the poem “Publish or Perish” (TTAAP) “I did not have the stamina,/to withstand the contentious jeer and sneer/inwardly I was cursing them,/out I came with a cheerful nourish, “Publish or Perish”. She speaks of the struggle of a poetess in getting her poems published in this poem she consoles herself in “Grief is but brief” (TTAAP) by uttering:

Your suffering is not of ethnic eruption for the whole humanity  
is undergoing similar kind of privation.

S. Radhamani has faced turmoil’s, sufferings and challenges in her career; she is autobiographical in several of her poems to paint the plight of similar woman in our society. In the poem “Before and

Behind PH.D” she outlines her struggle she faced in obtaining her doctorate degree; and ends up by painting her blues thus, “Withal I would in all certitude/assert to my audience,/that the final our come was the toil of/utmost diligence and patience”. Thus, she advises woman folk subtly to shun jealousy, express gratitude to the Divine Being by surrender, of course not without expressing anguish in her poem “Suffering to what extent” (TTAAP) by questioning as to how long one should suffer.

My suffering due to others’ sufferings and frustrations, should I suffer?, how long?, how much?, The drama of life has a stage Full of diabolic devils and flamboyant villains too.

S. Radhamani is fully aware of human weakness, weakness of mind, heart and passion which makes one to succumb to multitudes of treacherous situations. She advises stoically to keep the tongue within the narrow precincts (“Wrong or Harangue – (TTAAP) and to adopt a posture of Warmth and Smile’ in her poem “Unbreakable Bond” (TTAAP) to seek divine blessings. She has pictured “Mixed Moods, (TTAAP) and beguiled “Friend or Feud” (TTAAP), when they lay traps and expresses her gratitude to God for saving her from such false friends “I broke from the clutches of this demon – like creature”. The poetess has done self-introspection in “Query or Quandary” (TTAAP) by posing “Who am I? Why I was born, Whence do I exist?” “On ego” (TTAAP) she has this to say, “ALAs! mankind invites its doom by its Ego of desire and damnation”. She has done retrospection on her twenty five years of married life in “A Retrospection” (TTAAP). This poem brings out the distress of an Indian House Wife. “After five years of married life/I recapitulate and relapsed into grief stricken strife”.

She has answers for, her folks in quagmire to bear patience, with (“Silence! Silence!! Silence!!!) (TTAAP) as “That truth would be protected by the/God of Cosmic Dance”. Again warns of misuse of “Words! Words! Words! By (TTAAP) lashing tongue and advises “So my dear child! Be wary of your tongue/Lest it should land you in abysmal worry and wrangle”. The poems in “Thistle and Transformation are anecdotal to bring out about the plight

of a woman in our society, how a learned lady is queried by a journalist (“Negation or Confirmation”). “To face dark time”. Where mammon is worshipped”. How the meandering mind causes complex webs (“Human a Conundrum”). She has bemoaned the condition of women in our country in “womanhood or wormhood: “Dignity hounded/decency hurled at”. The poetess is all praise for “Mother Teresa – Manna from Heaven!”

The poetess pleads for a distraught woman which is brought forth brilliantly in a large number of poems in “Tidings of Translation”. The woe of womanhood is sketched in “A ray of hope” and the poetess visualises “freedom from the life which is an aged body lying on the wooden plank”. So also she visualises freedom of a bird and a caged bird and how out of sympathy for the plight of a caged parrot, she frees the parrot thereby symbolically the poetess has sketched the plight of a caged woman. In “At the age of nine and nineteen”, she narrates how a girl of nine, enjoys skipping with a rope and the same rope, wrought havoc, when she is nineteen, roped in wedlock, to be unloaded on her head and shoulders with the household chores by her in-laws. The agony of a woman in the hands of a man is brought forth in “Shaper of Global Destiny” and warns man.

Man! You forget the fatigued farmer/as frail as the long pointed ladder,/his nymph – like dedication neglect,/the backbone of the nation treated with a dent,/his back double rent, curved,/as moon crescent, or/sickle/glossy, shining as aquarium tub handy;/when rains, his sweat wet the paddy.

She paints the plight of rustic woman in the same poem:

“The woman folk serenading their infant,/ in their cradle like saree instant”

In “Bagavat Gita Child”, the various crimes committed on women are brought forth and so also their sufferings. In the poem “A Dive in the night street”, she painfully pours forth her grief stricken heart by visiting the ways, a woman is exploited for sex and how a woman safeguard herself with Divine help by Vedic chanting, till a woman reaches her home safely, while driving home, when the city

sleeps. This is a beautiful poem expressing the anguish, fear and anguish, fear and despondency of a decent woman, when apprehends fear, while returning home after her umpteen cores.

The poetess expresses her sympathy for the wretched who are down in the swamp and in destitution in several of her poems, “Tender to be tethered or withered”, “Penury, Bounteous” etc.

In her last work “Obsession and Translational Exuberance”, the poetess has done lots of retrospection on her selfhood and many poems are biographical. It gives an inkling into the mind of a working woman faced with tides and tides with despair and hope, her dreams, her temptation and yearning to live a peaceful and blissful life with all comforts and freedom.

S. Radhamani is a sensitive soul, pious, religious, godly and yearning to enlighten herself and to wake up the sensibilities of her fellow men to look into the plights of the miserable women, so as to awaken the sleeping nation and bring back “The Dharmic principles of non-violence/and avowed Ahimsa....” Back into the sacred laws of the Buddha and the Mahatma (Whither gets thou independence!) TAT) she is proud of ‘the wavy tricolor triumphant/flat atop ..... (The Flag and faux pas (TOT) and prays and hopes for the grace to shower in this Millennium (“Millennium Expectations” – The Millennium Dawn” (TOT).

S. Radhamani has reflected soundly on all aspects of human life from Indian Women’s point of view and about the plight of a woman in a contemporary society. She is at times sentimental and angry yet she has deep faith in the ways of God and pins her hopes in the Divine intervention and also in the sails sailing smoothly with the guidance of saintly avatars.

S. Radhamani’s poetry requires in depth study to spell out many themes and passionate appeal made by her for drawing attention of the society to the plight of suffering woman. Hers is not a playful witticism and parody but it is a serious poetry for higher thoughts and reflections. The mood is though melancholic and at times depressive, yet there in optimism, hope and absolute faith in

the Almighty, who is the succor and redeemer and the poetess dreams of a society where the Ramarajya prevails with ahimsa and peace.

S. Radhamani deserves all accolades for bringing forth her four collections to endear herself in the poetical field. She has etched herself a place in the annals of Indian English Poetry.

**A.P.J. Abdul Kalam: A Legislator and  
Messenger of Love to the Mankind**

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Poet P.B. Shelly's concept of the poet as a legislator and 'messenger' who communicates messages to mankind from an 'ethereal world' merges into one of a musician playing a lyre. A poet touches an enchanted chord and reanimates the reader's sleeping cold and buried images of the past. Sensations (messages received by the senses) or memories, stored away at moments when our feelings have been engaged, are a common possession of both reader and poet. When the right string is plucked, they are awoken and placed at the service of the poet. Sometimes, a poet's search of an image is fully conscious. Wordsworth may have been thinking of this when he wrote of 'emotion recollected in tranquility': a feeling is recalled; this effort of the memory forces up the now buried impressions on which one accompanied that feeling; and they become the images of the poet. A poet allows the images to form with all their associations and brings up from the unconscious anything he already possess a fragment of it. A poet moves the sleeping images of things toward the light. A poet once he recalls that feeling he may be able to describe with great accuracy the accompanying sense – impressions that he absorbed at that time and in that place. The feeling that are rooted in the sensory experience and the spiritual state are expressed poetically in the vocabulary of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching. Sense-impressions are the valid currency of poetic experience and the means by which it is communicated.

In his work, *An Approach to Criticism*, John Ginger, further writes, “ideally, a similar metaphor should be evocative create resonance, inspire us to transfer feelings from a remembered sensation of our own to the new experience for which the poem is a formula. But there are other requirements for an effective comparison. The reason, perceiving hidden relationships should ensure that it is accurate. And the poet’s desire to establish a certain mood will lead to the search for comparison which is appropriate to his intention and in harmony with the other imagines”.

In this context, when we look for some mystical experiences or spiritual states in the poetry, we feel moved and elated. It is only the poems of great poets, which have such a quality to communicate the poetical images and experience to the reader with a great amount of clarity and lucidity of expression. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam has not only been Scientist but also a poet of eminence. The poems which have so far appeared in the issues of *Poet* from Chennai, show a high degree of spiritual yearning and the poet has been very successful in communicating his felt experiences with employment of strong imaginary and idiomatic expressions. The coining of phrases is pleasant. The poetry is a path breaking one in as much as the scientist, administrator and writer has shown he other finer dimension of his personality, which is compassionate, and possess a deep yearning for the wellbeing of the entire humanity. Thereby the poet has crossed the barriers of caste, creed and color and truly reflects the high spiritual moorings of this ancient land. The poet has searched for the “Eternal Truth”. He has allowed his spirits to soar heavenly to experience the effulgence of the Eternal and the Single One, the Maker of our destinies. The poet has realised the truth and has felt the cosmic balance in the nature and has found the reflection of Master in the beauty of His creation. The poet has truly established himself as a “legislator” and “messenger” to communicate the message of love to the mankind.

A great poet does not simply reflect passively in his poetry the ideas of his age, but in a real sense contributes to the shaping of contemporary thought ways A.P.J. Abdul Kalam has been a pioneer defense scientist, in being a “Missile Man”, and in shaping the



destiny of our nation. He has rightly been conferred, the highest civilian award of “Bharat Ratna” for his glorious achievements. Such a person like a missile scientist should bear a compassionate heart and a sensitive soul, being humble to the core, composing poems with passion is remarkable. There is sheer force in the poet’s delivery of his powerful but sublime emotions and thoughts. The message of love reaches to the readers and stirs them. The reading of the poems of A.P.J. Abdul Kalam appearing in the monthly journal “*Poet*” prominently is a sign post of the high quality of mystical and metaphysical poetry, befitting to the highest status held by the poet in the public life. The poet with his humanistic views of life, with his sublime and subtle thoughts, with his creative dreams muses to stir within the mind and heart of the readers, a spirit of universal love and compassion.

The poet’s attempt to rationalise the religious dogmas, his invocation of loftier scientific spirits and penchant to end communal strifes and violence, his love for nature and the clarity of his vision is clearly discernible in his poetry. The poet conveys his message to the mankind to make this planet a lovely, livable place and to enjoy the scenic beauty of nature by its preservation and conservation. The poet’s deep reverence to nature is brought out again and again in his poems. The poet reminds about the man’s moral responsibility for the creation of his destiny and stresses for upholding the moral values and high spiritual ideals of this ancient land of sages and saints. It is the poet’s belief that love to all created beauty and due reverence to created beings is true love to God. Like suffistic poet A.P.J. Abdul Kalam teaches universal brotherhood and reminds humanity to look for divinity in their own hearts and soul and illumine the same with high moorings and lofty ideals. His poetic world is a land of beauty and enchantment, far away from the fret and fever of this work-a-day world. In this world, the reality of life itself is transformed into the hazy fabric of dream and the sad burden of humanity is lightened. If poetry is to be valued by its power free from the tyranny of reality then the A.P.J. Abdul Kalam will have to be regarded as a successful and potential poet. The poem “Life Tree” (*Poet*, July 2002) is an outstanding poem. The

poet initially composed the poem in Tamil and then in English. The poet is in search of Reality and seeks it by raising a question:

Oh, my human race how we were born,  
In the universe of near infinity are we alone.

The poet seeks the help of the Creator in seeking an answer to this question, while in his seventieth orbit around the sun, the little habitat, the star where his race living, lived billions of years and will live billions of years, till the sun shines. The poet is fully conscious of his being a scientist and the search for the answer is in a most logical way. Thus the poet has revealed his intellectual integrity and coherence. There is depth of feeling, originality insight and forthrightness. In attempting to pose the question and finding an answer, the poet has enriched himself to discover his own self. The poet has attempted to fuse thought and emotion in images that have moral and philosophical implications. The poet has revealed his vision in the poem “The Life Tree” and has communicated his insight and felt experience with precision and clarity.

The poet travels in the cosmos to witness the divine splendor:

On the eventful day,  
I was flying, the earth below me,  
The human habitat vanished  
In the white river cloud,  
Silent, turbulent free everywhere  
The divine splendor reflecting.

The spiritual enlightenment is thus expressed:

The beauty entered into our soul  
And blossomed happiness into our mind and body

The poet reaches the zenith of his heavenly ascension and faces the divine and obtains the answer for the question posed by him:

You the human race is the best of my creation  
you will live and live,  
you give and give till you are united,  
in human happiness and pain,  
my bliss will be born in you,

love is continuum  
that is the mission of humanity  
you will see every day in Life tree,  
you will learn and learn my best of creatures

The poet conveys the message of love, charity, compassion and of forgiveness to the mankind. The scriptures say “Show mercy for mercy will be shown to you”. It is in these high ideals and in its practice, the life of the humanity is saved and its longevity is assured notwithstanding umpteen scientific inventions of destruction. The safeguard for humanity is in love and compassion. The poet A.P.J. Abdul Kalam has thus surpassed the ordinary and has reached the sublime and pure. The poet further captures his vision in words and pithily brings out his amazement and wonder on watching the effulgent heavenly beauty. The description of the “majesty scene of Life Tree’ is marvelous. The poet’s awe and wonder is again reverberated in the heavenly voice:

Flowers blossom,  
radiate beauty and spread perfume  
and give honey.  
On the eve of life  
Flowers silently fall to the earth, they belong.  
On my creation  
this is mission of human life you are born  
live life of giving  
and bond he human life  
your mission is the life tree.  
My blessings to you my creation.

The poet ends up with an appeal to his fellow men:

Oh my human race, Let’s sing the song of creation.

The poet A.P.J. Abdul Kalam in his monumental poem, “The Life Tree” has shown his high spiritual attainment and his soul’s yearn for the wellbeing of the entire human race.

My response to this classical poem “The Life Tree” is in the form a short poem “Timeless Age”.

Millions of years of life,  
on planet earth,  
evolving from amoeba to man,  
a process repeated in the womb,  
a replica of story of evolution,  
enacted in nine months.  
Life lived for any length  
is momentary on earth, a speck.  
The expanding cosmos  
Timeless, immeasurable.  
A lived moment in realisation  
enlightenment, surpasses Time.

### **Reference**

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, *Poet*, Chennai, April 2003.

**Srinivasa Rangaswami:**  
**The Poet of *The Wayside Piper***

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Poetry has been understood and defined in varied items. If it has been understood as a “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” of one’s own experience with the world he lives in, interacting in his varied shades and hues; it has also has been described as an expression of one’s own profound thoughts and reflections, which is universally grasped and understood. These expressions differ in prose and in poetry. In poetry, there has to be rhyme, rhythm, though not metrical as now in practice in modern times, but yet, the words and thoughts should be crisp, lucid and sweet and should flow smoothly like a stream and the reader should feel the pulse and the emotions of the poet.

If ‘variety is the spice of life’ and if life passes through varied vicissitudes, the experiences are also varied and different. Although the stages in life of a man could be divided on seven planes like seven heavens or seven colors of a spectrum of a rainbow, each individual person passes through these colorful experiences. The experiences that are gone through are put in words to delight the readers. It could be in the form of lyrics, sonnets, cu logy, limericks, ode, elegy, and epic. Haiku and Tanka are of Japanese versions. These form some of the important versions of expressions of thoughts and of emotions in verse. The poem could be descriptive of nature, of observation of manners, myths, superstitions and of customs, of daily mundane experiences of romantic feelings, expression of subtle divine feelings or expressions of one’s mystical

experiences. Sonnets are expressions of feelings of love, of mingling, separation or the charm of meetings and relations between the lovers.

Srinivasa Rangaswami in his collection, *The Wayside Piper*, has splendidly brought forth all the myriad experiences of one's own delightful world on its fruitful completion. Looking back in a reflective mood, after placing paeans to the Almighty, the Creator and Sustainer and thus realising the everyday "Maya" and essence of life; he pens the soulful tunes. Srinivasa Rangaswami's poetry in one born out of fulfillment of the successful life, having prayfully succeeded in avoiding the darker, seemlier sides of life. The poet is born in happy circumstances with good upbringing in a socially elite environment with warmth, comfort of the parents and being encapsulated from all the surrounding evils, pathos, grief, mirth, waywardness and anathema of life. Srinivasa Rangaswami begins with praise to Almighty, as he is born and bred in a deeply religious background. Thus he sings: "A small boat in a stormy sea,/mast half – broken/buffeted by ceaseless mortal cares,/I struggle in vain/to trim my sails/Steadfast home towards you.

These expressions are confirmation of the convictions and confirmation of the faith descending through generations. He poet sings paeans for having an eons held steadfast to the faith and practices although he had to move in the world of chaos, turmoil and in a world infected with infidelity, anarchy and atheism.

The poet recalls the moments of a devotee facing a turbulent situation,, when Lord came to his rescue and granted the Divine Grace to overcome the strife in life.

In Kurukshetra's battle field/the other day a faltering soul/thou lifted up/the divine eyes thou gazed/Thyself united the devotee, to see/What mortal eyes can't bear to see/Thine Divine Form/By supreme grace revealed.

Thus after due realisation and attainment, the poet opens himself in all his glory to reveal the Truth of the "Gita" teaching and achieving the Supreme Bliss and ecstasy. Though at one point

of life, the poet was shaken by the separation of his loved ones, especially parents and his dear life partner.

His realisation of the faith inculcated in him and the “Truth” of the revelation and his conviction in the vedantic philosophy of “Oneness of the Being” is thus revealed:

Thou art all/The shepherd/The sheep/And the mountain  
path/Why then this sport?

His humility, sincerity and total submission and surrender to the Almighty is thus expressed:

Frail that I am/Even as I am/accept/and by Thine boundless  
Grace/Plant me secure, safe, ever/In Thee.

For final merger, so as to see his effulgence and to sing his praise, after attaining purity of thought and action:

As I stand before Thee/in prayer, a thousand thoughts/ turbulent  
like the wind/take hold of me.

This is not a simple expression of meaningless words, but expression of Divine rapture on attaining self-realisation to sing his glory:

Oh for a ray of light,/Oh for a word of hope/Oh for a lightening  
touch/The grace of My Lord to save!

Here the poet comes out and speaks about his attainment:

And now, I know/By self-experience taught/What rich gathering  
glory/Attends/The Crumbled hard cry!/What retribution  
attends/The maddening hunger of the heart.

The poet is deeply drunk in the vedantic philosophy and is not just verbose and rhetoric but has penned his experiences after passing through various stages of “Larva to Pupa to Butterfly” and lays bare his thoughts and feelings for the posterity to remember and make best use of it, as it had been planted in him:

A compassionate soul, my guru/who sowed in me/the seed of  
contemplative thoughts/handed me a lamp to carry in my  
heart./to light my way, and/a mother, a gentle soul/who knew

my mind before I could/know, met my every wish/and with love  
and care,/nourished me.

Here is a Clarion's call to the changing social phenomenon, westernisation and giving up of ancient tested cultural ties. Only an attained soul who has been profusely and profoundly immersed in the Godly self by effacing his personal identity and self can speak for the generations to come. In this poem, he so subtly muses.

My mind is benumbed, deep descends a gloom/by sagging  
thought noting avails. Ever/the unremitting chase, the hot  
pursuit for/dizzy heights of inebriate power,/mounting mounds  
of worldly wealth,/lush valleys of lustful pleasure/love and  
laurels, and summits of spiritual ascent,/all the fret and fever and  
phrenic gyrations/in quest for self-identity/when, for sure,/all  
this must abruptly end/as the unseen hand pulls up the  
string/and the puppet is put back and shut in silence.

Depressed in the darkening cavern as I groped/streamed in a  
thin streak of light/illuminating a new purpose and meaning/in  
objects around. The humblest life lived,/I could see, is not lived  
in vain./each one of us,/in varited hue,/our distinct vasanas we  
bring/To touch and tint lives around us, and/Leave imprints,  
however faint, that in some way/induce hope, or solace, or  
happiness/in lives of others we hardly know.

Unaware, all the time, we scatter afar/Pollens that enkindle,  
enrich/Some waiting souls somewhere. And/Myriad memories,  
we leave behind,/As monuments of our living.

And strivings steadfast of our spirits/have served to widen  
human horizon, advance/frontiers of knowledge, skills and  
experience/and constantly add to the common heritage/of  
mankind on this planet.

There is verily a hidden purpose and a plan/in all of God's  
creation. Only we do not see/Every end presages a new  
beginning/In a grand cycle of perpetual renewal/and evolution.  
So that this our earth/shall remain/forever new and young.

It is in these verses, we see the glory of Almighty, who is all  
pervading and existing, thou in myriad forms, but unites all beings



to sing his praise and brings in a unique harmony and ONENESS which this blissful poet versifies thus:

I cannot ask for more, my lord,/How dare I/When you have willed this all and more for me./And above all, in Thy Supreme Grace,/Granted that I know, I feel,/Thine unseen presence ever beside, to guide,/To gently chide me on to the right path,/if ever I should tend to stray,/And keep me safe, secure, under Thine brooding wing/Of Love, first and last my sole refuge.

Compare this to the opening chapter of AL-Quaran, “AL Fathiha”

1. Praise to be the Lord, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds
2. Most Gracious, Most Merciful
3. Master of the Day of Judgment.
4. Thee do we worship and Thine aid we seek.
5. Show us the straight way
6. The way of those on whom/Thou has bestowed Thy Grace,/Those whose (portion)/Is not wrath/And who go not astray (Ameen)

By these utterances and verses, the poet has reached the zenith of inner peace and to the “Kaaba” of the soul; thus liberating himself from the “karma” and salvation undoubtedly attaining – “Mokhsa”. A realisation which every true devotee yearns and strives to achieve. One can sing paeans only on successful fulfillment of the entire cycle in the well ordained and guided way as the poet himself has put it so subtly which is in line with the universal truth found in all the scriptures. Thus, Srinivasa Rangaswami is a ‘citizen of world’ and has broken all the barriers of cast, creed and myths. The crescendo “There is no god but God” of Muslim Faith, reverberates in the songs of Srinivasa Rangaswami, a pious, virtuous, humble and spiritually attained and realised soul, when he sings:

A pitiless soul cannot hope to meet with/pitiful eyes. Not from an arid desert can gush/a joyful spring, nor bloom a smiling garden/of flowers. A stony heart can but host/a cactus of hostile thorns.

The self-realised soul, who has reached the shores and everlasting spring joy fully, describes “Life”.

It's ever a groping for a meaning.../The tapestry of life/Is ever weaving,/Unfolding newer and ever/Newer patterns/Changing all the time/Only the master weaver knows/The grand design, the ultimate whole,/Unrevealed to the human eye.

The loom does not stop/It's ever weaving.....

The poet has also realised that the world is a “maya” and has to end soon

“all this must abruptly end,/as the unseen hand pulls the string/and the puppet is put back and shut in silence’

Here is the expression of attainment of humility and life lead with simplicity which is divinity profound:

Depressed in the darkening cavern as I groped,/Streamed in a thin streak of light/illuminating a new purpose and meaning/in objects around. The humblest life lived,/I could see, is not lived in vain/Each one of us, in varied hue,/Our distinct vasanas we bring./To touch and tint lives around us, and/Leave imprints, however faint that in some way/Induce hope or solace,/or happiness/In lives of others we hardly know.

Unaware all the time, we scatter afar/Pollens that enkindle, enrich/Some waiting souls somewhere, And,/Myriad memories, we leave behind,/As monuments of our living.

The Poet closes his first chapter of self-revelation by profoundly bringing forth the truth of creation, which is now a universally accepted phenomenon both in the scriptures and in science in his poem “Chance Visiting”.

A speck, a spark/A cosmic accident/A meteorite hit.../Our life on this earth/Is a glorious birth./A carnival of blessings/A

largesse of happiness/Of experience tingling/In every fiber of our being.

O the delirious joy of living/The mystery and wonder/The grandeur and splendor/Of Nature's riotous spread:/The chance gift of being,/An entity of the human race/To strive and build and partake of/The noble heritage of mankind,/Summit visions of the Godhead/Gleaming in the heart.

A freak flash, a sunlit arc/In the dark..... This/Our life on earth.

In the last poem "At the Homing Hour" the journey has reached its high point and leaves its mark on the sands of time for the posterity to remember. Thus, the poet has joined the immortals. The poet sings:

As the evening shadows settle,/And weary limbs give way, and/The homing spirit seeks the nest,/Why this regret at this hour/It's all now over and/It can never be again/To re-live cherished moments/To meet again missed opportunities/Realise unfruitoned dreams

All journeys begun/Must end with time/Well or ill, what has been/Has been, as willed

Who knows, if granted the wish/To re-live,/You for sure, would do better/You have acted out the script/Allotted for your part, and/Fulfilled a hidden plan/The wiser power knows it all/There in thought you must rest/Regretless, resigned,/Wholly content.

Srinivasa Rangaswami is evergreen and has attained the 'Youthful' joys and to remain in this state of bliss and ecstasy. He has penned bout his eternal youth in "Young I am"

Beneath the autumnal bark/Lives a tree green and young/and in these haiku/"Time may write wrinkles/on your face, but can't dim the/glimpse in true Love's eyes"

"The red Rose comes with/The message that our earth shall/Remain ever young".

We, the Sufies believe in the soul continuing to live eternally and we revere saints of all hues. My short associationship with Srinivasa Rangaswami has shown me a person who is a 'gentleman

to the Core' and indeed a Sufi, a dervish and an attained personality.

### **Reference**

Srinivasa Rangaswami, *The Wayside Paper*, Writers Workshop, Calcutta, 2001

**Time Never Returns to Console:  
Poetry of Pronab Kumar Majumdar**

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Pronab Kumar Majumdar has attained name and fame in the Indian English Poetry circle. Although a retired bureaucrat having attained the position of Special Secretary to Govt. of West Bengal, his interest in literature both English as well as Bengali, has been enormous. He has been editing international poetry journal, *Bridge-in-Making*, for about two decades. He has brought out nine books of poems in English.

Pronab Kumar Majumdar is obsessed with the aspect of time, and all that it matters with the affairs of the human beings. In the quantum physics i.e., in the heavens, there is no measurement of time. Time plays an important aspect in our universe. As the earth moves round the Sun in perfect measure, life also gets measured with the passage of Time. The events which takes place from our birth till death is recorded as a matter of fact and history. An individuals' experience in life during the passage of Time is expressed both in prose and poetry.

T.S. Elliot attempts to explain the enigmatic nature of the phenomenon of past, present and future in his poem. To quote his lines:

Time present and Time past, are both present in Time future, and  
time future contained in Time past.

Edmund Burk who described history "as a part between the dead past, the living present and the unborn future". The poet

Longfellow reiterates his optimism based on implicit faith in the Supreme Being and utters:–

Trust no future, however, pleasant, Let the dead past, bury its  
dead, Act, Act in the living present, Heart in Thin, and God  
overhead.

Percy Bysshe Shelley, a romantic poet of 18<sup>th</sup> Century in his well-written article “A defense of Poetry” included in “The major works” published by Oxford World’s Classics, defended poetry as follows:

Poetry in general sense, may be defined to be the expression of  
the imagination’ poetry is connate with the origin of man.

P.B. Shelly concludes the article with his famous line:

Poets are the acknowledged legislators of the World.

The work of Pronab Kumar Majumdar reminds readers of the above article of P.B. Shelly, Pronab Kumar Majumdar has contributed much to the Indian English Literature and to the Poetry. Reflecting Time in the terms of Life, Philosophy, Landscapes, Societal Phenomena, love and grief and other sides. Each of the section of poetry has arisen out of deep reflection and with deep thoughts. There are as many as 109 poems in *Time Never Returns to Console* and only a serious person who wants to probe into the various aspect of life can find the poetry of Pronab Kumar Majumdar enlightening and illuminating. In his title Poem “Time Never Returns to console” the poet says:

Time never returns to give you back,/what you failed to harvest  
while on track,/a life is a segment of time an eternal voyager,/a  
man dwells in life a short comer actor.

The poet abhors violence around him and sincerely prays for peace. In the section “violence and peace” he quotes:

Why death is let loose against no-wrong Doers,/Religions,  
nations not essentially faulty goers.

In the section “Philosophy”, the poet has expounded his deep reflection on life. Several poems on various aspects of life are well

expressed with profound wisdom of the poet. In the poem discovery of the self, poet reflects: –

Everything is inside you,/Go back to discover and view,/Things  
you never knew.

In the section “Landscapes”, the poet has shown that he is deeply interested in the nature and in the lovely evening landscape. The poet has penned poems on “Nocturnal Phenomena”, “Light line”, “New Corn”, “A Wintry Morning”, “Desert Poems”.

In the Section “Societal Phenomenon”, the poet has penned poems on “Wedding”, “An Evening”, village Market”, “Trade of Blood”, “A Societal Crime”, In the Section “Love and Grief”, the poet has written poems on the following topics “Poems in Eyes”, “Secure Arms”, “Profile of Love of a woman”, “Last Love”, “To a Friend Gone”,. The last section of the poetry deals with “Other sides” It reflects about the condition of the editors in editing the poetry and journals. There are poems with titles “Kolkata At Ten In The Morning”, indifference”, “An Afternoon park in Kolkata Today”, He has reflected on a Dilapidated Poet”, “Senior Citizens”, and included the book with the poem “Flew away the Bird”.

In some poems, Pronab Kumar Majumdar has reflected, analysed and written about future generation. In all the poems the language is simple, ideas are effectively communicated and thoughts well expressed. The poems have depth.

In the collection *Where Time is Dead*, The poet continues in the same vein with the poems such as: “Where Time is Dead (pg.9); “Life of Time” (pg.10); “Age of Time” (pg.11); “Death of Time” (pg.12); “Life and Time” (pg.68), etc. The poet ponders on transience of time, has also expressed his emotions pertaining to the seamier and darker aspects of life. He has felt deeply on watching women being exploited in the poem “Non-descript Women” (pg.29)

He has also noted about the destruction of nature by man in the poem “Water the Trees” (pg.14); “Charred Rose Gardens” (pg.25); “The Tree is Dead” (Pg.28); “Nuclear Bird” (pg.32); “Fearless Global Village” (pg.33) “Dead Greens” (pg.60);

The poet also pondered on “Life and Time” (pg.68); “Fear” (pg.69); “Silence Zone” (pg.68); “Fear” (Pg.69); “Silence Zone” (pg.64); “Old Age” (pg.70); “Life and Death” (pg.71). There are poems which are reflective in nature and the poet has expressed about the feeling of loneliness in the poem “loneliness” (pg.76). The memories of the past are reflected in poems like “Lost Childhood” (pg.77). “May we Dream” (pg.78); “No Return” (pg.80); “What You cannot” (pg.81); “Last Dream” (pg.88).

The poet is also moved by the warmth of nature in the poem “Tsunami” (pg.57) and about the death visiting on the actions of terrorist in the poem “London on fire” (pg.82)

As can be seen from the collection, the poetry of Pronab Kumar Majumdar is more philosophical in nature. Man has realised from the observation of nature that there is an universal phenomenon covering the aspects of time and space, law of heavenly of bodied, formation of rain, floods and changes in seasons. Man has realised its profound influence on living beings on their habitats. Man being deeply contemplative in nature, reflects on all these aspects of life and his experiences with the nature is recorded the unique harmony in himself with that of the cosmic forces which propels the universe. The poetry of Pronab kumar Majumdar, in this collection, reflects about the transience of time and influence of nature on him. Time, if reckoned on cosmic scale, denotes infinity and eternity. According to science, Time comes to a standstill when a body travels at the velocity of light. However, everyday of our life on earth begins with a morning heralded by sunrise and ends with an evening following sunset. This daily routine, sunrise to sunset and sunset to sunrise, changes to days and nights, which ultimately becomes months and years. But:

“Time present and Time past,/are both present in time future,/and time future contained in time past”.

“Time is alive in the realm of relativity,/relativity signifies presence of time,/moments of time are nucleus of eternity,/Relativity is frozen in him”.



In the poem “Life of Time” (pg.10); the poet again reflects on this aspect when he utters:

Time is deathless soulless a general faith/really time cannot avoid process of death,/both young and old time may have lost,/unoccupied life sustains at time's cost.

The same thought reflected in “Age of Time” (pg.11)

The repetitive time is sick of age,/too long has been its relentless voyage,/Time's product is cosmic man, who but man do its nursing can?

Although many of the poems reflect depression of mind, on the sorrows of mankind, yet the poet is also optimistic and hopeful when he utters in the poem “Before Leaving” (pg, 13)

Before Leaving let all of us light up a lamp,/let us plant as sapling for a future tree,/thereby let us leave our living stamp,/Let us all make one person suffering – free.

While dreaming about life, the poet also has expressed his hope in the poem “Life is never an empty dream” (Pg.19) when he states:

Life is never an empty dream,/flows down many a powerful stream,/it is a creative articulate body whole,/it is never a drab length of time sole.

On the whole, the poetry of Pronab Kumar Majumdar is full of profound thoughts and are thought provoking. It is hoped that the poetry of Sri Pronab Kumar Majumdar is liked and appreciated by persons who are interested in profound poetry.

In his collection Faces of Love, the poet reflects on various facets of love in 144 quatrain like micro poems covering “a wide range of emotions and absence thereof in different perspectives, settings, including present day cyberage ambience and contemporary social syndrome”

Love has been basic and fundamental emotion of the humanity. Not only humans but every living being experiences love. Love has been inspired all most all poets to pen poems in every

language and sing its songs. It has been so from the beginning of humanity and will continue till its existence. The poet has grasped the essentials of love and has penned 144 quatrains like poem.

Every one of us has experienced love from the time of our birth. The foremost love is of our mother, who is our life star and barometer and a guide. The child grows and experiences the love of his siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers and important persons. But once a growing person matures he finds a need for a mate, not fuse for procreation and for companionship but something more and deep. The poet has experiences this mundane love and ultimately has also experienced the divine love of the unseen creator. He has profoundly put forth the various facets of live in the form of quatrains. The joy sorrow and pain of separation is felt by the poet. The inner urges, demands and cravings have been well chiseled and each quatrain is a gem on love.

Love is eternal and can never wane although:

Everything on earth someday is lost in natural decay.  
Everything on earth someday is lost in natural decay  
But does love ever suffer it, perhaps never (Quatrain No.1)

Love is ageless and flows like a silent river:

Never does love age  
A full cup is real success  
Near estuary river is slow  
Towards eternity going to go (Quatrain No.20)

Where beauty dwells there certainly is present love:

Love is every where  
Where is beauty  
She is superior  
To any other bounty (Quatrain 41)

Love has multiple qualities. It has found to be caring and sharing and never weak and meek:

Love is caring love is sharing  
Love is daring and is winning

She is never weak and meek  
Her silence does best speak (Quatrain 43)

Love is never demanding nor is it selfish:

Love never asks for  
Whatever it is  
Never asks for being seen  
Never plays childish (Quatrain 47)

Love is crystal clear and surpassed all barriers and distance:

Distance becomes immaterial  
When love is clear crystal  
Equal to lights speed  
She reaches destination in deed (Quatrain 50)

Love is courageous and is fearless and empowering:

Love is courageous  
Never daunts fears  
Once given due honour  
She will empower (Quatrain 70)

Love is more akin to a temple and faith resides therein:

Love is like a temple where faith does sustain  
Love is not a game of loss and gain (Quatrain 76)

Love conquers mighty and strong:

Love conquers each and all  
The perception is yet valid  
Best is love's conquest  
The conqueror is so candid (Quatrain 108)

Thus, the poet has sung the sweetest songs of love in each of the quatrain. The pleasure is in its reading and reflecting on each of the aspect of love brought out so profoundly. Only an accomplished poet can succeed in such an endeavour.

In collection *Where I as a Noun*, Majumdar reminds one of the Japanese poet Kazuyosi Ikeda who composes poems on objects and things including on animals and plants. There are 44 poems in this

book. Each poem representing one article or a thing, which speaks for itself. A poetry is known for emotional expression and experience felt by the poet which is put in a format known to the poesy. It has its own diction and syntax. The emotional expression of a poet is lasting in as much as the expression is universally appreciated for its uniqueness in putting the thoughts in a most delectable way in the known style of poetry or composed in a free style as is done in modern times.

The poet in this work has taken up various articles and things and events of life and given them expression and describes the activity they are carrying out to the benefit of mankind. The poet has referred to sun, lamppost, clock, scarecrow, ferryboat and also events like birthday, memory, tomorrow. There are poems pertaining to solitary rail station, traffic signal, crematorium, operation theatre, elevator, Mount Everest. There also poems on things which are of common use like dustbin, computer, wheel, dinner table, key, name plate, memory, mask and elevator. The poet has also spoken about mother, death, war and peace. Each poem speaks for itself on the title of the poem, for instance poem the 'Sun' speaks about its existence and about its family and concludes by saying:

I radiate light and million kind gasses  
Someday I will burn myself into huge ashes  
With all my family members shall I perish  
May be some cousins more life yet will cherish

In the above lines, the poet reminds us about the existence of all that is in the universe and dependent on the sun and even this sun is not permanent and it can vanish one day plunging the entire dependent bodies to perish except other Celestial Beings far away from the sun to shine in terms of the plan of the Maker. Likewise the poet has spoken about the function of lamppost, clock, scarecrow, ferryboat, railway station, traffic signal and various other objects useful in life. While reading each of this poem, one draws inspiration as well as realises the importance of each of the object for the existence of man. For instance, the poet in "The Dawn

Caller” reminds us of the service of a humble crow who speaks as follows:

My clarion call nobody wants to hear  
At my very sight do they sneer  
I am globe totter flying everything  
My identity is disliked scavenger

The poet further submits that a crow may be a humble being existing on the human throw away things but the poet wants to convey a message that even such an insignificant being do not commit nuisance and does not allow nuisance to grow and the poet concludes in the voice of the ‘crow’ that ‘Sadly to the euphony world I do not belong’. In his way the poet takes up each object and draws analogy to the human existence and its utility to Mankind, like the poem ‘Wheel’ which speaks about its importance in the following lines:

In the code of civilisations always recedes destination  
My swiftest rolling was found not enough to reach the goal  
Yet faster run human thought and imagination  
In cyberage software e-mail bring to dot the world whole

The poem “Mother” is an exquisite poem which is different from all other poems in as much as the poet speaks about the importance of the ‘Mother’ and how the Mother helps in the growth of a child and plays her role in the upbringing of the children and in maintaining the norms of the society. The poet concludes by say:

To protect my children I hold sword in hand  
I never tolerate evils and devils on my land  
My erring children always do I forgive  
Whatever it be in my lap them I receive

The idea of the poet in conveying message through these objects and speaking on their behalf is a novel way of expression. The poet has to be applauded for his service to the poetry in choosing to convey his emotions and felt experiences through the objects and things. The readers would feel the importance of each

and every object in their life and how important they are for us in our living.

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**D.C. Chambial's *Before the Petals Unfold***

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D.C. Chambial is an established poet, a critic, an editor and a scholar with a Doctorate in English Literature besides having served as a professor of English Literature. He has been editing *Poetcrit* for over a decade and the *Poetcrit* has achieved fame in the field of publication of poetry and criticism. D.C. Chambial has published several works and he has received several awards for his works. The latest of his collection of poems has been named as *Before the Petals Unfold* with a foreword by R.K. Singh and by Bernard Jackson. They have analysed and expressed their views on the poetry of D.C. Chambial. His work has also been reviewed favourably by R. Bhagwan Singh in *Cyber Literature* and by Jayalakshmi Rao in *Poetcrit*, July 2003 and other critics and poets have also brought out much on the poetry of D.C. Chambial. There is not much left for me to say. However as a lay leader, a non-academician and as a poet, I have attempted to reflect on *Before the Petal Unfold*:

R.K. Singh observes in his foreword:

Articulated in a comprehensible style, without any faddish affectation, Chamial's poems evolve through a lyrical concentration and visual imagination. One experiences his roots in the hills and valleys of Himachal Pradesh, which also happens to be the poet's place of abode. It is, therefore, not surprising that he weaves his verses on a note of native ecology, but takes care to provide enough space for readers to recreate them and see their own meanings hidden between short stanzas of two to six lines

R.K. Singh further writes:

Chambial's spiritual exploration, his in-looking "towards the eternal goal" or even seeking freedom from the "bonds of desire" overcoming "impatience", which is admittedly the major obstacle in inner evolution, should strike one as a fundamental change in his poetical thinking. Aware of the "eternal longing of the soul" he wants to cope with all kinds of crises, "riding the horse of hope" Hope is the key to emancipation, the evolution through the process of rising to the top and sinking to the bottom, like a fish, striking head "against elusive walls" (The Trapped). As a seeker of real happiness "against mundane gall and fright" he realises, one must shed hatred; "Let us leave behind/The world full of icy chill/and mount up a new hill/Where sun shines" (In Quest of Cheerfulness). In his quest, Chambial seeks to look beyond the apparent and now; he tries to "snap link with chain/of time and space (Boughs of Heaven) he distances himself from the visible nature and experiences "Ulysses beckoning from beyond. (When I was Green).

Bernard M. Jackson has stated as follows

The abstract quality of Chambial's writings is often surreal in the extreme, but obscurity was never a charge that could be laid against this poet, for here, for the most part, we encounter a characteristic flow of sensitive verse which is essentially subliminal and though often nightmarish in context, nevertheless reaches out towards hope with a positive absorbing wonderment.

Riding the horse of hope/Man is engaged, must cope/With the eternal longing of the soul/seeking beyond the sun (The Trapped)

Much of Chambial's verse contains the imaginary of warfare, fire and volcanic disaster. It is poetry of a man who has learnt how to grieve, and is expressed with the bold panache of a true artist. He certainly pulls no punches in his stark descriptions:

Blood and soil well blent/bodies wizen is snow and shower/grass grows in blood.

An explosion shakes/steel mansions collapse sand dunes/dreams drop in debris (Yugoslavia)



And in representing a vision of the mass-murder and brutal injustice – prevailing within that sad theatre of war, he remonstrates with The Creator, whose apparent passive withdrawal from all ensuing tragedy would seem to have opened the way for certain megalomaniac leaders and dictators to play the role of God in some ghastly parody;

God and self-styled/Saviours busy in lawful activities/death and doom.

Hatred and ego/embrace to prawn holocaust/illusion, new heavy (Yugoslavia)

As has been delineated by both the learned scholars, who are also poets and critics, the main feature D.C. Chambial's poetry is his imagery and use of symbols to put forth his emotions and describe the various aspects of life and experiences. The poet may be surreal in extreme but certainly, as Bernard Jackson has stated, the poet though have expressed his emotions in abstract quality but, he cannot be charged for obscurity. Poetic theme may be ordinary and everyday, but because he has five senses acutely sharpened, he can make us experience the smell of spicy hot gingerbread, the sound of a train rushing through the frosty night, the sight of the foam – flecked edges of a jagged reef, the touch of rough blankets, are therefore not ornamental additions to a poem but an integral part of its meaning and are there to give us greater understanding and a keener awareness. In order to deepen our enjoyment, which really depends on the vividness with which we see things described, the poet uses resemblance that have sprung to his mind and so we speak of the simile and metaphor enhancing the imagery. There is little virtue in a game of detection to find similes and metaphors; you must see why the poet has used them, and how he has used them, so that your senses too, become sharpened and receptive. Sometimes, the poet sets two sharply different pictures against each other; and in this way uses the power of contrast to make his imagery startling. In some poems, imagery and the magic of words help to create atmosphere. Poetry 'begins in delight' and all sorts of things delight us. In the modern poetry free verse has been chosen

by the poets along with the imagery and use of symbols for expressing their thoughts and feelings. D.C. Chambial has in his regard brought forth symbols variegated with highly refreshing themes with architectonic innovations. They are sensitive and highly assimilative, and reflect in his works, the contemporary Indian pre-occupations marked by changing social, cultural and ethico-moral values and mores. His fine trends show dynamic voice, novel spirit and energy, openness, individual sensibility and newer vision of reality. D.C. Chambial has shown concern from the human mechanism in the modern times. His poems relate to the modern life in a complaining tone. There is feeling of despair and bewilderment in some of his poems. (Kanwar Dinesh Singh and NDR Chandra, *Poetcrit*, July 2003). However the poet has understood the meaning of life. He has expressed higher mooring and higher ideals which should be followed by Man to raise himself above mire and mirth. He has depicted hope and has attempted to reach the final goal of far beyond. With humanitarian concern he has attempted to expose rampant corruption in the society. The tone of the poetry is marked by simplicity of language and style. He has chosen many themes and various topics ranging from multi-faceted aspects of nature and life to depict his deep felt emotions. There is a feeling of despondency, depression but the poet has not lost hope. The book "Before the petals unfold" reminds us of the poem "An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" by Thomas Gray and the line "Full many a gem of purest ray serene/The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear/Full many a flower is born to blush unseen/And waste its sweetness on the desert air".

We find similar emotions echoed by the poet in his work "Before the Petals unfold" There is fusion of emotion and images that have moral and philosophical implications. The poetry of D.C. Chambial is precise and exact. It shows awareness of the philosopher and landscape in India and what is involved in the local life. There is economy of words and the poetry reflects personal self-knowledge and experience is placed within the dominant intellectual framework. There are sharply defined images, fitted into an aesthetic of preciseness, economy, the distillation of thought and

feeling into images and mature reflections on personal experience and the modern world.

The poet is afflicted with the sorrows and sufferings of the mankind. He has dedicated his work to the suffering mankind and for world peace. He has done introspection and reflected on some of the weakness of man, which brings in sorrow and pain. Both at personal level, he has attempted to see within himself to find out the root cause of man's failure and also at general level observed humanity's failure to elevate the suffering of mankind. The poet has also not spared nature, which turns unruly and destroys the innocent persons either through floods or earthquake. The poet then questions God, the Merciful, for His unkindly acts in destroying what has been created with love. In the poem "Virtue Weeps" the poet juxtaposes "a dew drop/on a green blades of grass/enthalls the golden light/from the sun/and sends it out/with added sheen of delight/and then comes out with sententious remark "Man on this earth/no less sublime and pure/than the dew drop/but reluctant to catch at/the crystal rays/that descend down/from the seventh/The poet then states that man delights in the Satan's company than with the angel and ends up by musing "Virtue Weeps bitterly/silently sobs dew, Satan smiles/at his success"

In the poem in "A Blind Rose" the poet states The world is a pool/Honest and innocent/sink like the stone/Light and lingering foul/Rise to the surface/Spread like the water waves".

In the poem "Virus" the poet observes about the virus destroying our vital systems and organs and then states:

Man the noble deed of God/Made in His own image/Is rotten,  
A heap of debris/Big mansions erected/on the ground of  
ethics/Fall down like sand dunes in storm.

His first poem "Life – An Enigma" depicts and compares to a map on a table in an observatory and the life has been spanned in the palm of hands. The poet states that:

Before the petals/unfold themselves/one by one/and sprinkle  
smile/on the eyes/the pink welcomes/like the cheerful doorman.

It is here in this poem, the poet has reflected about unfolding of life and the perceptive eyes must be to read the enigma, to drink at the fount of beauty and that is compared to an astronomer who lirts on an endless lake when he peeps through his magical eye. Again in the poem “Life” the poet compares life to an endless tale of/vales, dales and hills/from the black holes/of eternity/a dance set to tune/of Master Divine/Man reels and reels/until the musician decides/to terminate. In the poem “Life and Death” the poet again speaks of heat being life/coldness, death/He draws an image of the death as follows:

Dark capsule closes jaws/In the sea of reality/Dewy hole  
transpires/Truth settles like lead/Shorn of emotions, lie dead.

Speaking again on death in the poem “Dust Unto Dust” as follows:

Death, these days/never knocks at door/comes flying on  
wings/rides the machines racing fast. He depicts bodies and  
souls are severed with a bang to follow their disparate routes  
amidst cries, moans, shrieks, final gaspings. He states: dust unto  
dust/somber hush is born of/the horrendous bang/cork eyes  
bleed/stolid hearts melt/mist envelops all/

The thoughts are somber and the poet has reflected on the way in which death visits us announced and unexpectedly when life is charming. Subtle feeling has been brought forth in this poem. The poet in the poem “Death by Fire” has wondered as to why the death comes by fire. In regular intervals it visits to devour innocent in mela like the one in ‘Mina during Haj pilgrimage at Mecca. The poet sighs by ending the poem,

Man, a hapless mortal/in this drama of despair/The ship out in  
the stormy sea/charred, with little hope of repair’. The same  
feeling and thoughts are put forth again in the poem “Down the  
Drain” under Himalayan/Weight of care and concern/a stump  
sprouts from/the dry, desert dunes/rats nibble at/emerald twigs;  
wolves/dig at the roots/in search of bones/owls hoot;  
vultures/gyrate Mingled/cacophony horrendous/at the dead of  
night.

The poet philosophizes by stating in the poem:

“will ever dark dense/make way, fog disperse/for myriad morn to blush?” After expressing himself on life and death, the poet wonders at the God’s judgment in the poem “I Wonder at His judgment”. The poet has reflected with sorrow “My heart goes to people scattered like logs/I wonder at His judgment in dismay/A cyclone, nay, super-cyclone did stray/Over the homes, the trees, waters and bogs/As I hear crackers fired, see fireworks play/Hot winds and waves rush to land, there to say/All men, animals, plants caught in the smogs/I wonder at His judgment in dismay has truly reflected Dead bodies begin to rot and decay/Feed on them marooned wolves and dogs/As I hear crackers fired, see fireworks plays.

The poet muses on Life and Death and how life is lost “In Broad Day Light”. Similar view has been expressed when ‘For some/queer reason/river loses temper/swells and roars/and runs down/to drown/a lass working in her fields. With imagery as in the poem “A frozen pool” the poet sees the last pale leaf/from the naked tree/in the lap of singed hills, fall/bewailing/for a drop of rain/for the release of hostages/for the restoration of exiled human values/for the glimpse of rose and lily/on autumn faces in streets”/After drawing the image of the life, the poet closes the poem by uttering grief as follows: This dry winter/surpasses all in its antipathy;/everything seems to sink/like lead in a frozen pool/far, far away/from the shores of MANKIND” The same emotion echoes in the poem “Lost among the sands” and also in the poem “A Falcon Freedom”.

The poet has done self-retrospection on various human qualities as in the poem “In Quest of Cheerfulness” He advises to search for a truth, where/Ebullient chill warms/and hatred, strip-teased/Like snake shedding its slough/And love buds forth/Like a white lily/That sprinkles cheerfulness around. A similar view is presented in the poem “Boughs of Heaven” wherein he muses “Ride crane white horses/snap link with chains/of time and space”. He advises to “Fly past the sun/sans care for Cleopatras/And hell bounds/On stygian wings/To farthest heaven”. The poet has shown his understanding and belief that unless a person shuns self-centeredness, he cannot “Drink at the

fount/of Proserpine under/the cosy, evanescent/boughs of heaven". In the poem "Journey's End" he reflects on the manner in which man has journeyed from big bang through cave, stone, iron and bronze age to the present times. "To the present atom/on which I stand/looking right and left/arduous climb/the infamous fall". The poet has understood that in order to reach to higher consciousness one has to control his anger which is a fire within the man. He has brought forth on this aspect in the poem "The jungle of Hyenas". He emphasizes that anger is death/every day I die/a hundred deaths/unlike phoenix". He prays that in this jungle/teeming with hyenas/one cannot expect a sweet note/it is full of moans and cries". In the poem "Desire of Void" he again depicts as to how the "desire ensnares/makes stubborn, self-centered and stupid/yet the spark continues to rise". The poet has realised "the need/to debunk mind/to the centre of void in order to erase debris of delusion". In the poem "Momentous Moments" the poet has realised that in "The hearts of woods deep/Down to the expansive plains" what is required is the wash and vast expanse with the help of sun's golden glimmer. The poet states that "one gleefully gazes/and ear regales/with symphonies of Nature/seized from the halls of heaven/In these moments melt/personal pains/politicians' pranks/man's devilish manoeuvres". The poet by these utterances has reflected on higher moorings and shown his spiritual yearnings.

On the whole, the poetry of D.C. Chambial is a mixture of delight and feelings expressed sensitively with use of imagery drawn from nature, sun, moon, rivers, hills, mountains, seasons, earthquakes etc.; exploring the depth of life and spirit.

### Reference

D.C. Chambial, *Before the Petals Unfold*, Poetcrit Publications, Maranda, 2006.

## Haikus in Golden Horizon of Biplab Majumdar: An Analysis

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Biplab Majumdar, the Editor of *Voice of Kolkata*, needs no introduction to Indians writing English poetry and getting it published in several poetry Journals in India. Bilingual poet, having won several laurels and awards both nationally and internationally. He has several publications to his credit. *Golden Horizon* is a collection of his 'Haikus'. Haiku is a tiny poem of Japanese origin, usually only of three lines long and of a total of seventeen syllables or less, that uses concrete images to create a sensation that one can almost touch, smell and taste. New Zealand poetess and critic Patricia Prime in her article "Secrets Need Words: A Critical Essay on the Haiku and Tanka of R.K. Singh (*Poet*, Sept. 2001) elaborates that "Just as in nature, each poem is made up of a fundamental building blocks that together form a living breathing entity.

The Haiku poem pulsates with the rhythms of nature and follows the elemental themes of earth, air, fire and water. "The true beauty of Haiku lies in its ability to capture an intensely human moment, mood or insight with clarity and poignancy that can be lost in other verse forms".

The master of Haiku is generally considered to be Matsuo Basho (1644-1694). Whenever you read a haiku you have to apply your mind and uncover the meaning. Though simple in form and structure, it has complex meaning. As the great bard uttered "Brevity is the soul of the wit". Haiku has directness immediacy, potency that comes with full impact of experience. It constitutes

true record of a vivid moment. It is an understatement; its simplicity is deceptive for it says much in little. What it omits is as significant as what it includes. A haiku catches, in essence, a glimpse of the nature order. It avoids figure of speech like simile metaphor, eroticism, passion, misdemeanor, and idiosyncrasy. A poem is read aloud, which has rhyme, rhythm, contrivances, alliteration, assonance which a Haiku avoids. It leaves much unsaid and it is for the reader to conclude it is mined every time and on reading on each occasion, its meaning is different. Hence a haiku has profundity and truth, which has an Universal application. Deeper meanings and emotions must be revealed without appointing them out. To make the reader feel what the poet felt without being told what that is. There is no telling, no indication. What's below the surface is the important factor in Haiku. The words float on the surface, the emotions below (M. Fakruddin PI Jan 2003).

Haiku should contain a seasonal word but you do not need to use the names of the actual seasons, such as Spring or Autumn, other, less predictable words may indicate season-Wattle, buds, rapeseed, new life, almond blossom, falling leaves, melting snow. The name of the seasons is used to symbolise birth, life, growing old or death. Symbolic words have deeper meaning. A crow may allude to death; a raven to a message water may suggest an Emotion, or air a spirit (April 2003) Haiku is not didactic poem, nor it philosophises. The human experience, thought and image, which occur in a moment of time, are uttered in a line of seventeen syllables. It should evoke an image. The paradox is a modality to express the truth hidden between two opposite elements. The ability of working with contrasts specifically to the Haiku poet is usually directed to the tune and move.

Each breath of wind  
the butterfly is changing his place  
on the branch (Basho)

The flying of butterfly: a long sequence of moving-resting movements. The branch means stability, the butterfly instability. The



imperceptible force of the wing changes the repose into a spontaneous flying. A single movement repeated again and again becomes an infinite movement.

On the temple's bell  
is resting  
A Butterfly (Bison)

Here, the paradox is more delicately: the bell, from this destiny makes noise; the butterfly fretting. The intuition of the poet conducts to the association of the bell and butterfly into unique and peaceful movement. The butterfly is sleeping on the unmoving bell. But who can say how long the sleep of the butterfly is? Just an instant, enough for a Haiku movement (PI June 2001).

The haiku poet should reach selfless state where the subject chooses the poet, rather than the other way round. A haiku should never be contrived but should focus on a particular subject meditatively. The haiku poet should feel, see and sense spontaneously. Connections should come to the mind in a moment of lucidity. The haiku poet puts inmates together but does not reveal the picture; the images themselves should suggest a deeper truth. At such a Moment, one begins to see things in their "Complex Simplicity". The haiku poet must learn in the words of American Hijin Michael Dylon Welch to make his haiku a "Poetry of the noun – that is, visible, touchable even turnable in one's hands". A haiku should have awareness through the senses. There has to be juxtaposition with another image, and no resonance through internal comparison with another object or setting (Poet Sept. 2002).

Each Haiku should employ present tense of the verb, giving it immediacy and highlighting the moment of insight that inspired the poet. The present tense aids involvement in the things surrounding that moment of inspiring, enhancing, feeling and perceptions that could be lost in the crust of creation. Haiku poets view the world as passing, its transient nature grasped poetically. Compassion, tolerance and warmth for sentiment beings is shared with the reader (Poet Sept 2002).

Viewed from the above requirements of a haiku, most of us fail to capture the elements of haiku. It is only a fortunate few, who can be said to be successful in Haiku presentation like R.K. Singh, M. Fakruddin, P.V. Subramaniam, N.P. Singh, Urmila Kaul, Angelee Deodhar, S.L. Peeran to name a few among a large number of poets.

*Golden Horizon*, a collection of haikus by Biplab Majumdar is an interesting crop of Haikus in seventeen syllables, in some haikus deviating from this pattern. The book has a beautiful cover page with a picture of flying hawk in the background of white clouds and blue sky. Each page has an impressive sketch. It is dedicated to “The innocent Victims of Terrorism all over the World”. There are one hundred and sixteen haikus. In his preface, the poet states:

I think, poetry is an art of words mirrored by the emotional escape of a poet's perceptual deconstruction. In any branch of arts, an artist has the innate inclination to mix up his personal shade of color with the original with a view to give his work a timeless dimension. Each creative person paying due homage to the traditional views, always experiments with his new forms, new ideas, new colors in order to offer the world a magnificent masterpiece.

In my opinion, if anything can be subject matter of poetry and if haiku too is considered as one type of poetry, there should be no bar in choosing subjects of haiku. Because it begets variety. We may find this fusion everywhere because it is very congenial to nature. As we know in human body, before forming an womb, the ‘crossing over’ takes place between two chromosomes in order to create newer and more developed variety of species, in fact, nature demands it.

In brief, I want to say, if the traditional haiku directs us to naturalise ourselves why the poets of rest of the world may not humanise nature in haiku? Especially, when the reader's response say the final verdict.

In this small collection of experimental haiku, I tried to write poems mostly on the subjects of perpetual truth and philosophy.

As per the poet's own confession in his preface extracted above, he had experimented in haiku. I also tried to bring in Sufi element in my haikus but one critic. In his review, pointed out that it can be termed as Senryu. As discussed and analysed supra, the haiku origin is based on Zen element and should satisfy those criteria as delineated. I wonder as to whether the "Haiku Associations' world over will accept any deviations from the haiku point of view. Although we find now millions of haikus having deviated from the strict pattern of composing haiku.

The poet in his collection has composed haikus on the following themes (1) Poetry (2) Poets (3) Poems (4) Women (5) Sensuality, (6) Human Characteristics (7) ON love (8) Old Age, (9) Life (10) Philosophy (11) Time and (12) Mind.

Let us choose haikus from these themes and see its underlying emotions, momentary feelings, and nature images that should be the basis of the haiku.

### **Poetry and Poets**

Indian Poetry  
Springs from nature and ends in  
Deep spirituality.

As pointed out in the beginning, a haiku is not an epigram nor a didactic outpouring not it should be a mere poetic statement. Here, the poet is merely pointing out to the Indian poetry being based on deep spirituality. Basically Indians are religious and their aim is to live as per the customary practices. Precepts, superstitious and not just on the deep spirituality' which the sacred scriptures direct us for self-realisation. I personally feel that in this Haiku, the poet has made a generalised statement and it does not have any felt experience connected to a nature image. So also another Haiku:

Enigma flows on  
from the realism to surrealism  
Poetry becomes a poet.

Isn't it an obscure thought? However, in another haiku, the poet has uttered the universal truth about poets:

Poets are worshippers  
Eternal worshippers of truth  
to enlighten world.

Poetry has indeed considered as a mirror of society and it cleanses the society. All worlds' scriptures are in poetry. The great prophets in deep meditation touch the eternal and the super-consciousness and reach the truth and the utterances are pure truths emanating from purified mind, heart and soul and has universal application. The poet says:

Poets, strange creatures  
their hearts, most sensitive parts  
lie outside their bodies.

Here is a Haiku on a poet, which is contrast to the above statement:

To be a poet  
I tried to be good,  
but it's so difficult.

The title Haiku has the same underlying message of the poets:

Golden horizon  
Speaks eternal duality  
Sunset or sunrise!

The poet has come out with a good Haiku on poetry:

Foamy moon light shivers  
winter whitens even the heart  
poetry gets freezed.

And again:

Poems as night birds  
spread wings at night on the bench  
of silent darkness.

Woman:

A young girl waits  
with her mom: Past, Present, future,

are freezed in frame.  
Here is another haiku:  
Earth too like woman  
gets strangely enigmatic  
at the depth of night.

And this one:

Allurement draws ever  
to her innate womanish depth  
to deviate me.

Again the transience of youth and beauty is brought out in this  
Haiku:

Gone are golden days  
lost dear words are still a love  
in other's young lips"

And in this:

The blue fang of death  
waits patiently, invisible,  
she looks for a chance.

The love melting on rocks is brought out in few Haikus:

Before love knew no  
a separation may cast  
such a huge shadow.

And in,

Black clouds bend on earth  
I am lying on a chair  
is it you my dear?

The beauty in woman is brought forth in these Haikus:

Every flower bears  
fragrance of its own, like each  
woman of this earth.

A vibrating seed  
doubling in golden silence  
within her greatness.

And in this one:

Petaline cleavage  
immortalises life, it  
rejuvenates the world.

Dewdrops on petals  
sentimental as the lips  
of a young lady.

The disappointment of a lover is thus expressed in this Haiku:

I wait for long  
neither you nor spring comes, I  
move towards full moon.

### **Human Characteristic**

A poet has a sharp mind to scan the human characteristics his egocentricities and weaknesses. Our poet has depth to feel the human weakness and bring out in his epigram:

Defeated persons  
of day to day life blown away  
with withered leaves.

Life is transience and it gets blown off no sooner it comes into existence:

It's tragedy  
that a genius sits eve  
behind a man of honor.

Man is a symbol of gratitude. Here is a lovely one:

Every blade of grass  
Gratefully recalls debt of sun  
but a man does not

The effect of man's ill-action is brought out in this one:

We live like the earth  
Being wounded, bloody by dear ones  
Compelled to cry within.

To the poet:

Life is a puzzle  
That remains unsolved ever  
till light transcends.

What are joys? The poet answers:

Joys are like dewdrops  
They fall, evaporate; again  
a long dryness there

On honesty, the poet utters,

Red hanky, pigeon, rose  
One by one from the magic cap  
waiting for honesty.

### **On Love**

Love and affection are the most beautiful flowers in the garden of life. Love is the eternal message of all Prophets, saints and poets:

Affection too flows  
ever downwards like a river  
do you know why so?

The poet shuns mundane love and wants it to be eternal and natural:

Please do not love me  
as man/woman of this earth  
if possible, love as nature

Because:

Dew of love vanishes  
when the sun peep  
in the sky sun of selfishness

in view of the fact:

Sometimes our eyes say  
more than the speech of our lip

In love or in hate.

The poet has this further to say on love:

The violin of heart  
Gets instantly alive with  
Magic touch of love

### **On Old Age**

Life withers with old age:

I am afraid of  
watch and calendar, only  
they make me aged.

And

All come, sit beside  
The sea, and they get aged  
Ageless ripples shine.

And again in:

Fog of memor  
insecurity hugs, old age  
basks in solitude

Man gets told in time  
His childhood kites fly ever  
In the sky of heart.

### **Life**

The lived experience from the turmoil's of life, from the vicissitudes of life makes one to utter profound sayings. The poet utters thus:

Broken smithereens  
of windscreen, rainbow shines, yes  
past were colourful.

What is life for the poet:

Life is puzzle  
That remains unsolved ever  
Till light transcends



The cradle of life swings  
Between two shades of darkness:  
Happiness and Sadness.

For the poet, life is like playing chess

The man playing chess  
Is unaware of wrong moves  
Bystanders watch it.

Ultimately, life has to end:

At last all of us  
Must submit before darkness  
Perhaps before light

The candle was burning  
In the lonely room, within  
Your depth it was I.

Our life ever moves through  
Transparency of words, a fish  
in world of water.

Mosaic life does  
reflect celebration of  
Colour, day and night.

### **Philosophy/Time/Mind**

The poet has stated in his preface that he wishes to philosophies in the Haikus, although Haiku's are seldom used as medium for philosophising. Here are some Haikus on these themes:

Now bird is old  
One after another it sheds  
Feathers of desire.

Endure as a Tree  
Silently, patiently: We  
Live with unknown birds.

Bamiyan Buddhas

Tell us, in all ages Jesus  
Is crucified.

Behind the shadow  
of a Vulture, Satan of greed  
shamelessly winks at.

At last 'The end' comes  
but the fact is there's an end  
after 'the end' ever'.

On Time, the poet utters:

Distance gets shorter  
At every step of moment.  
Yonder the Northstar.

And:

Lonely moonlit night  
Makes the world so Mysterious!  
The flow of time stops.....

On mind the poet has this to say:

Man's mental images  
Tend to actualise in terms  
To its intensity.

And:

The endless rivers  
from the distant dawn of TIME  
Desire, joy and pain.

The poet again says:

Never you will see  
Butterflies sit for minutes;  
Mind is fugitive.

The poet wants to dream and his dream is:

Moderate is craving  
Just to touch the sky overhead  
Is my cherished dream.

The poetry of Biplab Majumdar has been acclaimed and it is hoped that this *Golden Horizon* also reaches greater heights of success.

### **Reference**

Biplab Majumdar, *Golden Horizon*, International Poetry Society of Kolkotta, 2014.

## Vijay Vishal: A Visionary Poet

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Vijay Vishal is an academician and a late bloomer with two widely reviewed and complimented collections to his credit, *Speechless Messages* (Writers Workshop, Kolkata, 1992) and *Parting Wish* (Writers Workshop, Kolkata, 2001). Both these collections have together reappeared in composite second edition in 2014 under the title: *Creation and Evaluation* published by Popular Book Depot, Jaipur. This composite volume comprises of all reviews and articles on these two poetical collections by poets, critics and academicians. Thus, *Creation* constitutes poetry in Part-I and *Evaluation* bears criticism in Part-II.

In his Preface to this work, Vishal rightly writes:

The title this book, *Creation and Evaluation*, is with a purpose of all arts, poetry is the most enduring creative art. So, 'creation' stands for poetry. Real good poetry thrives on appraisal and 'evaluation'. Thus, creation and evaluation are mutually complimentary. They fulfill each other. But decidedly, poetry precedes evaluation. So, creation is primary while criticism is secondary. The poet creates while the critic evaluates. Thus, in a way, the poet is the Brahma, the supreme creator, while a critic is the commentator who evaluates the creator.

Of course, creation reaches fruition after its evaluation by the critic. Even though, poetry is a dazzling beauty but it gains the status of a bright maiden only after it is evaluated by a critic. Quite significantly, it is the critic who deciphers and explicates multi-dimensional interpretations from a pregnant piece of poetry. With his deep insight and an amazing analytical skill, a

critic attempts to give multiple meanings to a given poem even un-thought of by its creator. Thus, a critic enhances the scope of poetry. This imparts creative fulfillment to the poet. As a case in point, it is worth-mentioning that Dr. Karnail Singh, D.Litt. in Modern Criticism, has imparted multiple interpretations of my poems in his critical Introduction to my debut book of poems: *Speechless Messages* (1992).

Vijay Vishal further opines:

All art and literature have an essential social purpose. Poetry has always been employed as a medium for awakening the slumbering conscience of a society. Poets and artists are the conscience keepers of their age. Anything undesirable around makes them react in writing. A poet bleeds into himself and embraces crucifixion in his poetic chamber. He perspires and bleeds to resurrect a Gandhi, a Christ so as to apply balm to the bruised soul of mankind while humanity moves on its way. He burns and sizzles to give an agonised utterance to the silent suffering of humanity. The liquid wealth of poetry drenched in the melted tears of the poet, seeps down the ages as his signature rendered in an indelible ink.

I wish to extract the views of some fellow poets and critics on contemporary Indian Poetry in English.

Gordon Hindley, a British poet, who lived a considerable part of his life in Bangalore, while presenting a paper on poetry at seminar held in Bangalore on 10 March 2001 arranged by *Poets International*, Bangalore said as follows:

I define poetry as that utterance which apparently presents a particular and individual thing or event, in fact, emphasizes the universal experience within which each particular thing or event occurs. True poetry thus leads us beyond the personal towards an even more immediate yet greater awareness: it gives us a glimpse of the whole, and may even tell us just how we can make that greater experience of our own. It brings about an awakening, an enriching of our nature. For me, if it does not do that it is not poetry

Our personal awareness is inherent within ourselves. We do not get it from anywhere. It establishes our identity.

Next, let us look at communication. We communicate in order to stay alive; therefore, what and how we communicate are important. When there is something to express, the thought (which has no language of its own), the feeling (which is common to every living creature) and the sense of being (which is most evident in the wise) will find its words, will find its language and shape it in order to communicate as best it may. The greater the flood, the greater the out-pouring.

(This talk is published in *Garden of Bliss* by S.L. Peeran, March 2011, Bizz Buzz Publication: Bangalore)

Srinivasa Ranga Swamy, poet-critic from Chennai in his Foreword to *In Silent Moments* by S.L. Preean, 2002, published by *The Home of Letters* (India) Bhubaneswar has this to say on poetry:

Poetry is an incantation of the soul, celebration of the abiding varieties of our human existence. It mirrors a perception of the world peculiar to each poet. What invests the present collection with special significance is the exciting fact that it affords us a glimpse of its author's unique, colourful, creature presence. Poetry is not merely putting together some clever lines. It is, like falling in love, a serious and blissful proposition. And Peeran's poetry is born out of the confrontation of his whole being with Reality – with the luminous truths of life as well as its seamier manifestations. As the poet himself says, his poems are born from inner turmoil's, inner sorrows, inner questionings, inner joys, inner frustrations and ecstasie.

S.V. Ramachandra Rao, former Lecturer in English in his Introduction to *Fountains of Hopes* by S.L. Peeran, July 2006, published by Bizz Buzz Publication states:

Poetry cannot survive being just jingle, verbosity, a puzzle of words a circus or jugglery.

The purpose of poetry is to evolve our nature from the animalistic to the Divine. The mind should be entertained and the heart should become content. The senses should achieve an

aesthetic satisfaction and peace. The sensibility for poetic appreciation should be correctly satisfied. Diction and vocabulary should be precise, novel and exact. The correct word in the correct place. Images must be appropriate and as striking as possible. Poetic effects must be created with correct emphasis on meaning and content. The subject matter must be treated poetically, unlike in prose. The stances; roles; voices; masks and so on must be primarily for achieving the basic poetic purpose only. Exaggeration and hyperbole are allowed, as are all figures of speech, not for themselves or their novelty, but for a pre-thought and much considered underlying poetic effect and poetic message”.

Vijay Vishal made his powerful presence on the poetic scene of Indian Poetry in English with his debut collection *Speechless Messages*, 1992 bearing forty six poems of general human interest on subjects of perennial appeal. The poems are artistically woven around variety of themes with freshness of treatment. Befitting use of figures of speech heightens their appeal to the readers.

In his Preface to *Speechless Messages*, Dr. K.C. Malhotra, the then Vice-Chancellor, H.P.U., Shimla, opines:

Vishal calls his offering *Speechless Messages*. These speechless messages obviously relate to their hidden, unstated human content. What is, however, also clear is that the stated messages-ecological, socio-political, familial, philosophical and spiritual-are often most serious and constitute edifying gestures. Vishal has been able to articulate them in a style aesthetically pleasing and at the same time reflective of his compassion. I have every hope that this volume of poems will be of great interest to all those interested in culture and literature.

The striking title of this collection draws an amused attention of a responsive reader. The first poem of the volume carries the title of the book. The poem opens and ends with chaste and novel images from different objects of Nature revealing the unstated but eloquent messages which we, quite often, fail to decipher or understand. Once we ponder over these apparently hidden messages in different objects of Nature, we become alive to them. Awakened

to the book of Nature, we would draw mighty lessons of life and living from the hitherto open but unread book of Nature.

The very first lines of the title poem, *Speechless Messages*, presents a potent message:

A flower exudes  
Flush of fragrance  
When trampled over.

This beautifully suggests that we give our best under the worst circumstances. Then follows the rich image of Mother Earth as a great giver, despite bearing “Assaults/Of the spade, the rake, plough.” The next image is that of the sun sacrificing itself everyday:

The sun pours  
Light and life  
Into all living things  
But suffers self-burning.

Supple trees, soft grass and water teach us the valuable lesson of adaptability for ensuring survival.

A *Biting Question* juxtaposes man’s “faithlessness” with dog’s “faithfulness”.

In *Qualms*, the poet points out a moral truth:

Qualms of conscience  
Piercingly prick  
As pointed needles  
Till all dross  
Oozes out.

*Vishal* deciphers a subtle truth:

Conscience is supreme  
Needs no evidence  
No witnesses  
Reaches transparent truth  
Even in the absence  
Of a professional pardoner!



In the poem *When*, Vishal visualises almost all conceivable tribulations that can confront man. These are presented well in twenty six expressive lines, all beginning with 'When'. The poem concludes with:

The mighty power of the spirit  
Which acts as a crane  
To lift to lines  
The derailed bogey of life  
To run and reach its goal,  
The Bogey and the Goal  
Draw nearer  
To merge into each other.

Opportunism encases a striking metaphor:

A cigarette  
Which he holds  
So softly  
In his lived lips,  
Having been puffed  
Is discarded  
So harshly  
That the cigarette-butt  
Rants and pants  
Under  
The teething toes of the smoker.

What a classic definition of honesty in the poem, *Honesty!*

An honest person is he  
Who keeps clean

Even in the face of  
An opportunity to steal!

Soulless structures lays bare the devaluation of morals in today's society:

Harlot of treachery  
Treading like Maid-of-Honour,  
Knots of filial ties  
Loosening like lies,  
Well of human bonds  
Going dry by inches.

Sinning Son is woven round an age-old story of an ungrateful son who carves out the heart of his widowed poor mother as a precondition for winning the hand of an insincere beloved who rejects him saying so:

Expect me to win  
After losing thy mother  
Who was  
As meek as Mother Mary?

The poem Discipline, presents a beautiful image of discipline besides the poet's minute observation:

The rows of elephants  
And those of ants  
Are pristine pictures  
Of disciplined deeds.

The foetus in An Unborn Female Foetus, narrates its poignant story of repeated murder, and that too, while in conception, by none else than her own parents in league with some "Doctor Uncle" or some "Doctor Aunty". At the end, the blood-soaked foetus implores God:

Won't you grant me  
A little lonely corner  
In your lush lawn?  
Won't you.....?

The truth of time is presented through the metaphor of a "runner":

Time is a great runner  
Prizes those  
Who run with him  
And punishes those  
Who lag behind  
And for those  
Who try to run  
Ahead of him  
Has a sweet soft corner  
In his heart  
Of steel and stone.

Borrowed Beauty is a lively satire on the ever-growing culture of beauty parlours:

Beauty no longer lies  
In the eye of the beholder,  
Nor is it  
Gift of God,  
Sold at parlours  
And that, too  
In street corners  
By varied Venuses at work.

‘Ordeal of Living’ doles out a precious lesson of retaining “milk of human kindness” in us in the face of treachery, falsehood, and double – speak that confronts us quite often, in our dealings with others:

Before leaving my house in the morning  
I prepare a face  
To out-face faces.  
Faces that are fake and false  
Seemingly smiling  
But scorching and sizzling within.

Alchemy encapsulates a mighty speechless message:

When good  
Is answered with evil,  
When godown of goodness  
Goes down,  
When grain grinds  
In millstones,  
When faith  
Lurks precariously  
In imbalanced balance of reason,  
Then,  
Waning goodness  
Needs some  
Socrates to talk to!

The Punjab Trauma brings out the poignant state of Punjab when militancy ruled supreme there. Vishal questions the militants:

Do you call it your militancy  
To kill infants in their infancy?

The Bourgeois presents a speaking picture of class-war which, by its very nature, remains perpetual. The bourgeois always stands for the status-quo in the hope of its elevation to the higher class while the lower class struggles for “change”. When the lower class multitudes, in utter frustration, pull out the ladder of civilisation, “the bourgeois” acts ceaselessly

As the self-appointed  
Protagonist of the  
Status-quo.

Portrait a Politician likens a politician to “a canker”, “a climber”, “a snake”. He is:

A living and licentious example  
Not  
Of service-above – self  
But  
Service-unto-self!

Lady Greatness is a coquette who:

Is hard to woo,  
Harder to win,  
Hardest to retain,

The Corner-stone is a piercing cry of a homeless labourer who builds “skyscrapers” but is probably, destined to live and die homeless. He ironically chides God for His partisan role in favour of the “haves” who have plenty for themselves but hardly anything for the “have-nots”. He wins our unqualified praise for his large-heartedness in life and willful self-sacrifice in death:

“Now, there is  
One and only one dream  
That  
I should become  
Of this mighty complex  
Because

This is my ‘Fate’

And perhaps  
Your 'will', too!"

Apart from *The Sinning Son*, discussed above, there are a couple of poems built on ages-old wisdom, handed down to the succeeding generations which are rich in anecdotal wisdom. A *Rare Realisation* is woven round the story of a worried father who takes his spoilt and extravagant teen-ager son to a gambling house where in the last chamber

The greatest were gambling  
With gravels!

Creativity bears a speechless message that most of us are habitual fault-finders. On the other hand, there is a microscopic minority which have the will to do something original and new. The poet painted a picture and placed it in the market place inviting suggestion(s). Next day, he found it "metamorphosed/Beyond recognition". The following evening, he painted another and invited "improvement(s)". See, what did he see the next noon:

To my surprise,  
The picture remained  
As chaste as Venus!

Vishal is conscious of degrading environment. A *Silent Speech* voices his agonised concern about the growing deforestation. Living under the shadow of the 'axe', he makes the trees speak out their sorrow:

Do we not sleep?  
Do we not weep?  
Do we not breathe?  
Do we not bleed?

The last poem of the volume, *A Deadly Question*, lays bare the heinous acts of terrorism indulged in all around us making us totally insensitive to this ceaseless blood-letting. The poet withdraws into himself musing:

Will there be an end  
Before each end  
Begins a new beginning?

Also there are some light-hearted poems which are written in a lighter vein so as to present a healthy and complete picture of the panorama of life. An Eye-opener, Portrait of a Lover, A Difference, thrive on healthy humour which gives a lively diversion to the readers.

The poet's minute observation of men and manners, matters and beliefs, facts and experiences coupled with his philosophic insights, are reflected well in his short and catchy poems such as Discovery, Kitty Coquettes, Wary Warning, Bruised Buds, Matchless, Cactus, A Day's Hero, Sweet Small, Lady Luck, Lost Son, Doters, Dear! Dear!, Ifs and Buts, A Riddle, The Living God, An Ice-cream Boy, Nymph of Nature, A Handful of Sky, so on and so forth.

Patricia Prime, a poet-critic from New Zealand, in her review of *Speechless Messages* published in *Indian Book Chronicle*: Jaipur, delivers her judgment in these words:

Vishal displays more than enough experience, intuition and taste to create real poems. If he weren't so busy observing, recording and preserving abundant moments in time, he would surely be promoting social change and the communication of his ideas to those in power. (Published in; *Indian Book Chronicle*: Jaipur, January, 2004, p.5)

Vijay Vishal's second collection of poems, *Parting Wish* (2001) is dedicated his late wife, Smt. Vipin Vishal. Like his first volume, the title of the first poem takes after the title of the second volume i.e. *Parting Wish*. Commenting upon the range and variety of the poems in this collection, Patricia Prime writes in her review of *Parting Wish*, published in *Indian Book Chronicle*: Jaipur, September, 2002 and *Poets International*: Chennai, July, 2002, pp.22-23:

The range of the subsequent poems in this collection stretches from social criticism to universalism, female exploitation to male hegemony, gender bias to dual standards, hypocrisy to self-knowledge, childhood to age, personality development to anecdotal wisdom, social barrenness to spiritual awakening, familial relationships to conjugal ties, philosophical puzzles to

environmental imbalances, racial harmony to human dignity and patriotism to humanism.

Dr. Usha Bande<sup>1</sup> in her review of this book published in *Poetcrit*: Maranda, Palampur, (HP), July 2003, Vol.16 (pp.130-132) and *Canopy*: Bareilly (UP), July 2003, (pp.32-34), writes:

Vijay Vishal's *Parting Wish* is at once a personal outburst at the transience of life, a cry of the agonised heart at the shock of his wife's death, a social critique and above all, a literary text containing thirty-six poetic pieces of remarkable sensitivity.

The first poem, *Parting Wish* recounts his last journey with his ailing wife soon before her death, reminds the responsive readers of Robert Browning's *The Last Ride Together*. Vishal, in lines soaked in deep pathos, recalls his deceased wife's intrinsic strength that assumed heroic proportion as she smiled her way to death:

She mocked death  
With her last winsome smile,  
Smiling she lived  
And smilingly  
Faded out of life.

The hangover of the first poem seeps down into the second poem, *Smile Eternalised* wherein the agonised poet attributes this silent suggestion to her wherein she seems to give a *Speechless Message* suggesting:

Smile alive  
And smile out of life?

What is remarkable about these two poems is that it culminates to a heroic departure, with a lively smile, such as hers, makes it worthy of emulation. The poet, subsequently, emerges from the sea of sorrow and tragic wisdom dawns upon him when he learns to say:

Despite all love and liking  
Can one die with the dead?

Vishal deciphers meaningful lessons of life from different objects of Nature. In *Golden Message*, the rolling golden sea-waves in the evening suggest to him:

Touch the topmost tip  
Of all that lies ahead!

The proverbial woodcutter in *Self-search* insists on his lost iron-axe to “axe” his poverty and makes feel small all those who are steeped in corruption from head to toe. *A Luckless Lass* shows our masculine bias against abducted and wronged unfortunate poor country lass for no fault of her own. *Blue Balloon* is a poetic narrative around a village lad flying a gaseous blue balloon in a village fair. A metre-long thread slips from his pulling fingers and the lad exclaims with this wishful cry: “Alas!/I were a balloon blue!/And rose/To dizzy heights/With earthly fellow-beings/Chasing and praising me/To the skies!”

*Walking Shadows* focuses on loneliness amidst mute multitudes in our living-dead mega cities today Vishal comments: Ah!/Man is lost/In concrete jungles/Of steep skyscrapers/Busy broadways/Crazy crowds/Of walking shadows.

*Hubby* exposes a hypocritical modern Hubby who thrives on the monthly pay packet of his earning wife but strictly refuses her any domestic help at home.

*Irking Irony* satirises masculine double-standards in indulging in myriad extra-marital misdeeds. He also enjoys the liberty of remarrying after being widowed. Strangely, he expects his wife to stay single after his destined departure.

*Gender Bias* questions discriminatory attitude of parents against daughters repeating: “Sons are gold/Daughters silver”.

*A Cycle* traces subordination of females at the hands of their brother(s), husband, son(s) all through her life. She suffers and suffers: “Till/Some cold late evening/This battered bird/Takes to its weak wings/And vanishes/Into the cloudy sky/To be born afresh/And suffer afresh!”



Vishal is a keen observer of men and matters, scenes and sights, animals and insects. The poet sights an ant moving around a crumb on the ground. It brings fellow-ants to drag home that crumb for a joint feast. The poet wonders "I thought and thought;/How much I owe/To those tinies/For teaching me/A latent lesson/In diligence/And corporate living".

Riches fabricates the ages-old story of King Midas who had to pray for the repeal of his godly gift of 'golden touch'. The poem is a much-needed comment on lust for money in today's world of Mammon-worshippers lost in rat-race for amassing money.

Holi Hai concludes with a fine-tuned social message: "Grouses and grudges/Rancours and reproaches/Pressed and squeezed out/In hilarious hugs/And lavish embraces/Followed by shouts of joy/'HOLI HAI!' 'HOLI HAI!'/Rending the skies."

Speechless Message is built around a smiling rose under the shadows of thorns. Fulfillment defines universal brother hood: "Man is man alone/Neither European/Nor Asian/Or African." Self-Conquest: "Needs no battalions,/A little bit/Of love, compassion, fellow-feeling/Coupled with/Justice, equality, fair-dealing/Are stuff enough/For self-conquest".

To Kargil Heroes offers a glowing tribute to the martyrs and victors of the Kargil War. The commanding heights occupied by the enemy seemed impossible to regain: "But the heights have yielded/To your marvellous might/Courage grit and guts/With the tri-colour hoisted high/On Tiger Top"!

Wonder of Wonders satirises our insensitivity indulged in even while accompanying a funeral. Even while sitting in the burial ground, we do not stop talking loosely about petty worldly concerns: "We talk of things mundane/Blissfully forgetting the fact/The very next departure/May be/Of any one of us". Limit is a fine poem satirising hunger for money beyond a certain limit: "Money is honey/Whose sweetness/Bears the after-taste/Of diabetes/. A moneyed man/Marries worries/And divorces happiness". Reversal aims at the growing tendency of Old Age

Homes or Senior Citizens' Homes. Vishal builds up a valid argument when he says that these were un-thought of in macro-families of the past. Strangely these Old Age Homes are springing up fast in today's micro-families. Feel the ironic barb: "Those who fathered/Macro families/Never enjoyed the privilege/Of enjoying/An Old Age Home/Or/Senior Citizens' Home/If you so like".

Belated Awakening is an anecdotal poem which suggests that the aging head of the family should not lose hold on the family, otherwise, he is very likely to become irrelevant which will be unbearable for him. Too Late, Fair Encounter, New Millennium are other interesting poems which provide food for thought.

Rectification and Love's Labour Lost are two light-hearted poems which balance out the otherwise serious poems in this collection. In the second poem, Love's Labour Lost, the roles of the former lover and former beloved undergo complete change after marriage to the disappointment of both. See how the beloved "Longs to see/Husband in her lover/And lover/Yearns to see/Wife in his beloved/. Marriage bells/Followed by honeymoon/Transform roles/Beyond redemption."

Dev Bhardhwaj, Chief Editor *Kafla Inter-continental*: Chandigarh, January-April, 2002.pp. 31-34 in his review of *Parting Wish* – Poetry with Positive Message concludes:

Vishal's panorama is kaleidoscopic and subject treatment has a depth which sways the reader so as to enjoy the poems while reading and re-reading. His metaphors are chaste and similes novel. The barbs of his irony correspond well with the subject and situation in hand. The thematic design of this lovely collection completes its circular structure, starting with personal loss to ending in optimistic and humanistic dimensions. The first poem which forms the title of this collection of poems, rises from the personal to the universal plain lending a rare beauty to a horrible phenomenon which we call death.

Dr. Usha Bande<sup>1</sup> is a former College Principal and Fellow at Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla.

## References

1. Usha Bande, *Speechless Messages*, Writers Workshop, Kolkatta 1992.
2. Usha Bande, *Parting Wishes*, Writers Workshop. Kolkotta 2001.
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Part II

Poetry of S.L. Peeran: A Study  
by  
Mashirque Jahan



## Introduction

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The present situation of contemporary Indian English poets is under dark clouds, the growth of the Indian English Poetry has been marred by lack of recognition by local reader, media as well as academic. Researches are still being done on the well-known poets like Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das, Jayant Mahapatra and A.K. Ramanujan.

There is no initiative to bring out the less known poets, it is not that these poets lack creativity and poetic sensibility. They are simply being subject of politics of rejection.

The present study is a sincere effort to bring to light those contemporary poets who have not been explored by renowned critics and S.L. Peeran is one such poet.

Before exploring S.L.Peeran as a poet, this chapter presents a review of Indians English Poets.

Indian English poetry has a grand tradition as it can boast of a history, which is of nearly two hundred years.

It's beginning is often associated with Henry Derozio's first collection in verse entitled *Poems* (1827), though a number of poets were simultaneously active articulating verses on different issues echoing British romanticism.

The second half of the nineteenth century was richer and more productive than the first half. The Dutt family dominated the scene in whole Bengal and made themselves well known all over India. Among the Dutt family, Toru Dutt has outstanding poetic quality.

Most of the poets of later half of nineteenth century and first half of twentieth century dealt with a variety of themes like Nature, Man, God, Indian Myth, Metaphysics, Devotion, Mysticism and Spirituality which includes poets like Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo Ghose.

After independence a number of poets tried their hand in writing poetry in English and in this race Nissam Ezekiel perhaps is the first.

The following poets are discussed in this review A.K. Ramanujan, R. Parthasarathy, I.K. Sharma, Pritish Nandy, K.N. Daruwalla, Jayanta Mahapatra, Shiv K. Kumar, Gieve Patel, Kamala Das, Krishna Srinivas, O.P. Bhatnagar, Arun Kolatkar, Niranjana Mohany, R.K. Singh, R.R. Menon, P.C.K. Prem, P. Raja, Syed Ameeruddin, Hazara Singh, Asha Viswas and Y.S. Rajan.

Nissam Ezekiel is one of the eminent poet of the post-independent Indian English writing. He is a versatile poet and deals with various themes. His poems are mostly urban centered, so he is better known as city poet. One can find a cluster of themes in his poems like – Personal relationship, love, spiritual values, modern urban life, environmental pollution, poverty, social ethos and Indian culture. Some of his important works include: *A Time to Change* (1952) *Sixty Poems* (1953) *The Third* (1954) and *Later Day Psalms* (1982), which won him the Sahitya Academic Award.

The most outstanding poet of 1960's is A.K. Ramanujan, his poetry is evidenced by the fact that there are strikingly divergent responses to it. Though almost all the critics are quick to notice the accuracy of observation, the telling precision of imagery and such other aspects of the 'surface' structure of Ramanujan's poems, their response to the 'deep' structure of his poetry are disturbingly subjective. His volume of poetry includes *The Strider Relations* (1971), which won him a poetry Book Society recommendation. Other volumes are *Selected Poems* (1970), *Second Sight* (1986), *Uncollected Poems and Prose* (2000).



Ramanujan is essentially a modernist committed to an antihistorical, depoliticised, transnational consciousness and to stylistic experimentalism like Imagism and Expressionism.

C.N. Srinath says “the poet employs irony, wit, understatement and achieves a nut like texture and grit in poem after poem like an Augustan Poet”<sup>1</sup>. Ramanujan’s poetic style is polished and refined. His images are precise, accurate, real and highly suggestive.

Then comes R. Parthasarathy on the scene of Indian English poetry with the appearance of his first collection *The First Step: Poems* (1956-66). His second volume *Rough Passage* is a long poem in three parts written over a period of 15 years. The first section is called Exile, the second Trial and the third Homecoming.

With a keen sense of art, Parthasarathy is an extremely scrupulous poet. Roger Iredale says, ‘the remarkable thing about Parthasarathy’s poetry...is the powerful blend of a highly emotional quality of thought and feeling with an iron discipline of language and intellect’<sup>2</sup>

Prithvi Nandy published about ten volumes of verse namely: *Of Gods and Olives* (1968), *On Either Side of Arrogance* (1970), *Masks To Be Interpreted* (1970), *Madness is the Second Stroke* (1971), *Collected Poems* (1973), *Dhristarashtra Down Town Zero* (1974), *A Stranger Called I* (1976), *In Secret Anarchy* (1976), *Lonesome Street* (1976), and *Nowhere Man* (1977).

He is a prolific poet and mainly a poet of love. He has presented love in all its shades and colours from love at first sight to the enjoyment of sex and from pinching to its brutal aspect.

Keki. N Daruwalla belongs to the first rank of modern Indian English poets. He has five collections of poems to his name. They are: *Under Poems* (1970), *Apparition in April* (1971), *Crossing of Rivers* (1976), *Winter Poems* (1982), and *Landscapes* (1987). In his poetry he has dealt with anti-social elements, sale of women, rituals, poverty, disease, pseudo-priest and politicians, black marketing, religious rites. According to Bijay Kumar Das, “Social satire, an awareness of

the contemporary situations, the illusion about myths seem to be favourite themes of Daruwalla”<sup>3</sup>. It could be easily said that Daruwalla has taken up the burning problem of his day and dwelt on human existence.

Among the contemporary poets Jayanta Mahapatra is a close observer of men and things. His poetry has been assessed by critics and reviewers from various angles emphasizing among other thing, ‘the wide spectrum of his themes the ‘Indianness’ of his sensibility, the exploration of myth and its conjunction with symbols, his sense of time and timelessness, his sense of ‘renewal of life’, the evocative quality of his verse and his sharp sense of the poet’s craft-which are clearly recognisable aspect of the achievement as an Indian poets writing in English.

Shiv. K. Kumar, who arrives on the poetic scene in 1970, is one of the major poets of Indian English poetry. His five collection of poems are: *Articulate Silence* (1970), *Cobwebs in the Sun* (1974), *Subterfuges* (1976), *Woodpeckers* (1979) and *Trapfalls in the Sky* (1987) for which he also received Sahitya Academy Awards.

The range of his themes is very wide and his treatment of subjects is original. To quote B. K. Das, “He takes a simple incident or situation and stretches it with the breath of his imagination till it acquires a new meaning. There lies his strength and originality”<sup>4</sup>. He is a gifted poetic artist and his poetic style is ‘scholarly, lucid and precise’. On the whole Shiv. K. Kumar is one of the most outstanding poet of the post-independence era of Indian English Poetry.

Gieve Patel is one of the Indian English poets, who brought out his volumes of verse *Poems* (1966) and *How Do You Withstand Body* (1976) which took him as a poet with nagging social conscience, who tried to balance his deep compassion for the underdog by both a clinical detachment and a deflating irony.

And his favourite technical strategy seemed to be the situational mode in which a real life situation triggered off a poetic response. To quote Satish Kumar, “Patel is a poet of promise and

potentiality rather than achievement. He hints at the social problem of the day but refrains from providing the solution”<sup>5</sup>.

Kamala Das is one of India’s most outstanding women poets, who writes in English. Her volumes of poems include – *Summer in Calcutta* (1965), *The Descendants* (1967), *The Old Play House and Other Poems* (1973), and *Strange Time* (1977).

Kamala Das is predominantly a poet of love, sex, lust, pain, nervousness, melancholy, frustration, and dissatisfaction. She is confessional and autobiographical poet who reveals in bold and candid expressions. Love and lust dominate all the volumes of her verse. According to Mohan Lal Sharma, “Like W. B. Yeats, Kamala Das does not make much distinction between body and soul”<sup>6</sup>.

Other women poets who come into recognitions are Gauri Deshpande, Sunita Jain, Monika Verma, Indu Nair, Jelena Narayan and many more. Then comes Krishna Srinivas, who has published a number of volumes of poems. He is a mystical and philosophic poet with vision of the beyond. His works are: *Magic Pearls* (1953), *The Buds and Blossoms* (1954), *He Walks the Earth* (1975) *Dance of Dust* (1975), *Everest* (1975), *River* (1978), and *Five Element* (1981).

He is also a cosmic, mystical and metaphysical poet. To quote Syed Ameeruddin, “His poetry is replete with mystical grandeur metaphysical flashes and enchanting visions of cosmic beauty”<sup>7</sup>. Krishna’s images are always powerful and striking, through his images he expresses his epical themes, which are ancient and traditional but at the same time immersed in the immediate present and its perennial problems of seeking mankind.

I. K. Sharma is also a well-known contemporary poet. His collections include: *The Shifting Sanddunes* (1976), *The Native Embers* (1986), *Dharamsala and Other Poems* (1993), *Camel, Cockroach and Captains* (2001), *My Lady Broom and Other Poems* (2004), and *End To End* (2008) I. K. Sharma is a poet of humour and irony. He is artistic, suggestive, and satirical in many of his poems. As his birth place is Jaipur, he vividly paints the landscape of Rajasthan.

An important aspect of Sharma's poetry is his boldness. For instance, *The Shifting Sand-dunes* was printed and published during the horrid days of emergency. It was during this period that he composed his renowned poem in Hindi, *Gandhi Chauraha*, which he himself later translated into English under the title: *Gandhi at a Cross Road*. The poems have a bitter satire on the prowling powers, which earned the displeasure of the ruling authority. According to R. K. Singh, "Sharma not only exhibits his art at handling a variety of situation, moods and stances, but also his ability to assimilate Christian and Hindu symbols into a poetic way with success"<sup>8</sup>.

O.P. Bhatnagar is a great poet of contemporary Indian English poetry. He has published five volume of poetry: *Thought Poems* (1976), *Feeling Fossile* (1977), *Angles of Retreat* (1970), *Oneric Vision* (1980), and *Shadow in Foodlight* (1984).

His poetry is characterised by simplicity, variety and freshness and he always presents expressions for multifarious social and the present day life. He sincerely restores the balance between man and nature. His main concern is man and many sides' problems surrounding him. Being essentially a realist, Bhatnagar, accepts things as they are with patience.

Irony is O. P. Bhatnagar's main weapon. He handles irony with effectiveness and immediacy. His poetry is not without a sense of humour. As H.S. Bhatia says, "With the preceding period"<sup>9</sup>.

Arun Kolatkar is a bilingual poet, who writes both in Marathi and English. His first book of poem is *Jejuri* (1976). Jejuri is the pilgrim centre to the South-East of Poona. Kolatkar describes a visit of Jejuri, reaching it by bus and returning by train. During the interval, the poet goes round, sees priests, men, animals and rodents. Jejuri is the record of his impression. S.K.Desai says, "the protagonist goes to Jejuri not as a seeker...nor as a pilgrim...He is a kind of traveller...a tourist"<sup>10</sup>. Niranjan Mohanty, the well-known Indian English poet from Orissa was a contravention to this new age wisdom. In making poetry as naturally as a silk worm made silk, he soared above the sterile academic contest between making and birthing. He is humble and believer in the simple virtue of life. He

writes with understanding and music in his heart. His poems, therefore, breathe the artistic unassumption and natural sincerity. His work includes: *Silencing the Words* (1977), *Oh This Bloody Game* (1988), *Life Line* (1999), *Poetry To Lord Jagannath* (1994), *Krishna: A Long poem* (2003), *A House At Rains* (2008), and *Tiger and Other Poems*. His poetry, at its best, was a filtration of his humanity, his home...bound vision of God Jagannath, which is related to his native place Orissa.

R. K. Singh occupies an important place among the Indian English Poets of 1980s and 1990s. He as a citizen artist is acutely aware of the painful realities of Indian society. His collection of volumes includes: *My Silence* (1985), *Flight of Phoenix* (1988), *Memories Unmemoried* (1988), *Music Must Sound* (1990), *I do not Question* (1994), *My Silence and Other Selected Poems* (1996), *Above the Earth Green* (1997), *The River Returns* (2006) and *Sexless Solitude* (2008). Publishing poetry for so many years and in the process, developed a style, which is characteristic within the orbit of the influences that have shaped his muses. Singh uses Indian lexicon to enrich his writing and also to provide Indianness to his writing.

Woman, love, sex is the core of his writing. Each part of a woman's body speaks out a different language convey a fresh meaning. The poet makes it clear that woman possesses a wonderful quality of head and heart. She is only a gift of God to prove His supremacy. Singh's poem of love and sex can be compared with those of Kamala Das for both of them have a highly personal voice and obsession for sex. But Kamala Das hardly rises above her personal life, whereas R. K. Singh is wide enough to focus on life in its totality. As Satish Kumar says, "Singh is a connoisseur of finished feminine beauty. His appreciation of the hypnotic and enticing feminine beauty has superb aesthetic excellence"<sup>11</sup>

R. R. Menon is a bilingual poet who writes in Malayalam and English. He has won many poetry awards and earned international recognition. Menon writes on various themes like love, corruption, social consciousness, family relationship, and so on. The tone of his

poetry is very sarcastic and ironic, which makes him different from others. His collections include *Parted Love and Other Poems* (1958), *Dasavatara and Other Poems* (1967), *Seventy Seven* (1971), *Straws in the Wind* (1973), *Shadow in the Sun* (1976), *Grass in the Garden and Heart on a Shoe String* (1978), *Pebbles on the Shore* (1981), *Poems (1985-86)*, and *Sound of Silence* (1993).

P. C. K. Prem, is an author of several books. He has been regularly writing in Pahari, Hindi and English and also contributes to various magazines, newspaper and anthologies. He is also associated with various social, literary and cultural activities.

His publications include *Among the Shadows* (1989), *Enigmas of an Identity* (1990), *Contemporary Indian English Poetry from Himachal* (1992), *Those Distant Horizons* (1993), *The Bermuda Triangles* (1996), and *Oracles of the Last Decade* (1998).

P. Raja is a poet of excellent fancy, imagination and reflection. He has an amazing sensitivity to the sound and size of English words and his lines are attuned to the rhythm of his concepts. P. Raja's *From Zero to Infinity* is a mixture of compassion and humour. His *To The Lonely Grey Hair* contains light hearted poetry, but there is an undercurrent of pathos also in the poems. Many of his poems deal with common subjects concerning everyday life.

Syed Ameeruddin is one of the contemporary poets in Indian Writing in English. He writes on different themes such as contemporary social and religious issues, reality of God, man-woman relationship and world peace. He has published six collections of poems: *What the Himalaya Said and Other Poems* (1972), *The Dreadful Doom to Come* (1974), *A Lover and Wanderer* (1980), *Petallic Love Times* (1988), *Visioned Summits* (1995), and *Visioned of Deliverance* (2006).

Hazara Singh's role as a poet, philosopher, linguist and critic is nationally acclaimed. He has been contributing to Indian English writing since the last three decades and has published four volumes of poetry entitled: *Aspirations* (1980), *Yearnings* (1987), *Expectations* (1999), and *Destination* (2007).

A patriot by nature, Hazara Singh looks at life as an idealist. The thematic variety of his verse holds a mirror to his deep and wide experience of life as a freedom fighter, social activist and academic. His poetry ranges from personal to the universal and from past to the present.

Asha Viswas is one of the contemporary Indian English women poet, who along with being a poet, is a critic and reviewer. She has two volumes of poetry entitled: *Melting Memories* (1996) and *Mortgaged Moorings* (2001).

Her poetry is honest and original with genuine human emotions urging from a feminine sensibility that is hypersensitivity. Human emotions which are common to the life experiences of everybody, such as love, sharing, loneliness, longing, anguish, fear, pain and pleasure are effectively brought out in her short lyrics.

Y. S. Rajan is a bilingual poet writing both in English and Tamil, is a scientist by profession. He has written three volumes of poetry in English: *Agony and Harmony* (2002), *Jumping Genes* (2006) and *Ode to an Earth Warm* (2008) and *One Collection of Poetry* he has translated from Tamil to English is *Blossom of the Hearts* (2002). In his poetry he gives emphasis on national consciousness, social awareness, family relationship, science and technology, peace and violence. The poets who are not discussed in this review are: Dom Mores, K. Raghavendra Rao, Leela Dharamaraj, Pradip Sen, G.S. Sharat Chandra, Monika Verma, Krishna Gorowara, Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, Gauri Deshpande, Mahanand Sharma, D.C. Chambial, Hemant Kulkarni, R.N. Sinha and I.H. Razvi.

The poets whose writings show spiritual consciousness are as follows: Swami Vivekanand, Manmohan Ghose, Sri Aurobindo Ghose, Rabindranath Tagore, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, Sri Paramhansa Yoganand, Brajendra Nath Seal, Nolini Kanta Gupta, Nirodbaran, K.D. Sethna, Krishna Srinivas and S.L. Peeran.

The discussion of spiritual poets begins with Swami Vivekananda, who is a great saint poet, whose poetry is marked by

spirituality and mysticism. He translated poems from Sanskrit and Bengali, but he has some original poems also to his name, some of them are: An Interesting Correspondence, Thou Blessed Dream, The Living God, To an Early Violet, Kali – The Mother, To The Awakened India and The Song of Sanyasin. Vivekananda's poems are full of pure spiritual wisdom. He stressed on the need for religion, but he was careful to add that it should be a “man making religion”<sup>12</sup>.

Then comes Manmohan Ghose, the elder brother of Sri Aurobindo Ghose, has an impressive poetic equipment, first displayed in his lyrics in *Primavera* (1890) in collaboration. Manmohan Ghose was a romantic, lyrical, elegiac and meditative poet.

His delight in nature and his passion for beauty are intense. His independent volumes of poetry include: *Love Songs and Elegies* (1898), *Nal and Damayanti* (1916) *Adam Alarmed in Paradise* (1918), and *Songs of Love and Death* (1926).

Rabindranath Tagore, the only Indian English poet to win the Nobel Prize for literature. *Gitanjali* (1912), Tagore's finest work, is firmly rooted in the ancient tradition of Indian saint poetry and yet reveals a highly personal quest for the divine, characterised by a great variety of moods and approaches, ranging from ecstasy to the depth of despair. S.Z.H Abidi says, “*Gitanjali* is a collection of lyric on god, man and nature unified by his romantic longing for a merger with the divine....”<sup>13</sup>.

Sri Aurobindo Ghose, brother of Manmohan Ghose is one of the greatest Indian English poets. To many of his contemporaries, Sri Aurobindo is a power ‘out of the ordinary’, a star that dwelt apart. Sri Aurobindo Ghose's poems are full of majestic fire. His works in poetry include: *Songs of Myrtilla and Other Poems* (1895), *Urvashi* (1950), *Ahana and Other Poems* (1915), *Love and Death* (1921), *Dill Prabhu* (1922), *Six Poems* (1934), *Poems Past and Present* (1946), *Savitri a Legend and a Symbol (1950-51)*, and *Ilion* (1957) Sri Aurobindo was a yogi, seer philosopher, majestic, revolutionary patriot,



intellectual, a man of letter and a poet of distinction. The range of his poetry varies from sensual love to spiritual illumination.

Aurobindo's fame as an Indian English poet mainly rests on his monumental work, *Savitri*, an epic of great prophetic vision and supreme poetic achievement. Sri Aurobindo himself described *Savitri* as "a sort of poetic philosophy of the spirit and of life"<sup>14</sup>.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, is a prolific poet. Although born in a Brahmin family, his childhood and boyhood days were spent in Hyderabad with its composite culture – Hindu Vedantic and Islamic Sufi, made a mark on him. Harindranath has a number of volumes of poem to his credit: *The Feast of Youth* (1918), *Coloured Garden* (1919), *The Magic Tree* (1922), *Perfume on Earth* (1922), *The Son of Adam* (1946), *Edge Ways and The Saints* (1946), *The Divine Vagabond* (1950), *Spring in Winter* (1955), *Masks and Farewells* (1961), and *Virgin and Vineyard* (1967).

Like Vivekananda, Harindranath too feels overwhelmed by the majestic vision of the 'dance of doom'. For Vivekananda it is Kali and for Harindranath it is Shiva Sri Paramhansa Yoganand is a mystic poet who has failed to win favour with the critics. His first volume, *Whisper from Eternity* (1935) is a collection of prose poems. He had the glimpse of God in his guru, Sriyukteswar, and he sings of the everlasting glory of the Almighty. He has written poems on various themes, but all his poems are full of devotion, mysticism, spiritualism, and Vedantic monism. His other volumes are: *Songs of The Soul and Cosmic Chants*. Satish Kumar writes about his writing "his writing was to realise the inherent Divinity of man, as each of is the child of god. Man can realise God – consciousness through practicing truth, love, harmony, service and universal brotherhood"<sup>15</sup>.

Brajendra Nath Seal is an important poet of the first half of the twentieth century, who in his *The Quest Eternal* (1936), makes an ambitious attempt to 'transcribe basic philosophical ideas in the forms of pure poetry'. The poems in the collection are reflective, philosophical and mystical, and highlight the importance of spirituality in human existence. Noline Kanta Gupta, who was an

ardent follower of Sri Aurobindo and has authoritatively expounded Sri Aurobindo's thought in Bengali as well as English, is remembered for his mystic and spiritual poetry. His poems are collected in a single volume, *To the Heights* (1944). There are nearly fifty pieces in the book, and one can trace in them a study growth in aspiration and realisation, to quote K. R. Srinivasa Iyenger, "This is the poetry of meditative thought, and it mingles the qualities of dryness and strength; but now and then a light leaps up and all is transfigured"<sup>16</sup>.

Nirodbaran is a mystical poet and his *Sun Blossom*, a collection of 99 lyrics, published in 1947. He is a pantheist, who believed that the whole creation is the sublime expression of God. In the word of Satish Kumar, "Nirodbaran felt that the malaise of the spirit can only be cured when the soul – bird diverts its weary and unstirred flight from the 'cage of night' towards his luminous light"<sup>17</sup>.

Another poet in this stream is K. D. Sethna, who flourished Indian writing in English Poetry with his philosophical and Sufi poetry. He is a more accomplished craftsman and more prolific poet, was deeply influenced by the poetry and overhead philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. His famous collection of poems are *Artist Love* (1925), *The Secret Splendour* (1941) and *The Adventure of Apocalypse* (1949). Sethna uses transparent and suggestive symbols and images drawn from nature Krishna Srinivas has published a number of volumes of poems which includes mini-epics on religious heads of main religions and Hindu philosophers and saint. He covers past, present and future in his poetry and it is full of historical sense. He is not only a great poet but also a mystic philosopher, visionary dreamer and preacher. According to I.H.Rizvi, "His longer poem is undoubtedly modern epics, because their themes are grand and sublime, the main figure are universal, they are magically forceful in the treatment"<sup>18</sup>.

Amanuddin brought out nine volumes of verse in all, but four of them are prominent, they are: *The Children of Hiroshima*, *The Age of Female Eunuchs*, *Gems and Germs*, and *Adventures of*

Atman. Amanuddin writes on variety of themes like love, light, life, death, destruction, men, women, suffering humanity, philosophy, religion and social condition. He is a poet with a vision and can be ranked with the most outstanding modern Indian English Poets.

K. R. Srinivas Iyengar, the famous critics of Indian English Literature, brought out three volumes of verse. His poetry is philosophical, mystical and metaphysical. He is primarily concerned with Eternity. Krishna Khullar's *Ashes of Immortality* is a small collection of 12 poems, which interpret the paradoxical involvement of man in search of immortality. The poet explores the meaning of soul – search on the margin of an alien world. The poems reveal the poet's religious beliefs and metaphysical conceptions. His other collections are *Sarawali* and *Other poems*, and *Wings of Poesy*.

S.L. Peeran is also a Sufi and Spiritual poet like the above mentioned poets, no doubt he emphasizes the need for religion, but he is careful to add that it should be a man making religion.

Critics have appreciated him for his, “reflective, idealistic, and spiritual poetry”<sup>19</sup>, which is hoped to transform the very character of man his follies, vices and attachment with materialism.

S. L. Peeran is an important figure in the contemporary Indian English Poetry, is a bilingual poet, writing both in English and Urdu. Although a late bloomer, who started writing poetry at the of 48, yet he has surprised the poetry world during the last ten years by presenting eleven noteworthy volumes of poetry: *In Golden Times* (2000), *In Golden Moments* (2002), *A Search From Within* (2002), *A Ray of light* (2002), *In Silent Moment* (2002), *A Call from Unknown* (2003), *New Frontiers* (2005), *Fountains of Hopes* (2006), *In Rare Moments* (2007), *In Sacred Moments* (2008) and *Glittering Love* (2009), *Garden of Bliss* (2011) and *Eternal Quest* (2014). All these collections are published from Bizz Buzz publications and Authorspress, New Delhi has brought three of his Selection of Poems *Evergreen Pastures* (2016), *Perfumed Garden of Love* (2017) and *Scattered Gems* (2018). He writes on various themes which include: nature, humanity, love for God, love for human being, family relationship, hope, sympathy,

corruption and current issues. Being a legal practitioner by profession his socio-political awareness is well reflected in his poems and as a result, his tone is moralistic, compassionate, consoling and solicitous.

Peeran stand as a torch bearer amidst the contemporary poets, “as none of the recent contemporary writers is writings on Islamic belief, other than Krishna Srinivas, *Muhammed: A Long poem on Islam* (1983)”<sup>20</sup>. Peeran is steeped in Islamic belief and is completely submissive to the Almighty, Most Merciful and Benevolent.

‘Love for human being’ and ‘Love for God’ are the dominant themes of his poetry and almost in every collection he has presented this themes. Like Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Peeran also stressed on universal brotherhood and unity of mankind as the religion of world. One finds in his poetry an assimilation of diverse religions and cultural ideals and notions that manifest his tolerant mind.

Yes, I do have a religion  
I do practice it,  
Say my Namaz  
But my rites, my symbols  
Are act of love  
To foster oneness...<sup>21</sup>

Love for God is the most controlling theme in his poems. He humbles himself before God seeking His manifold blessing and mercies like the metaphysical poets of the 17<sup>th</sup> century such as John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell and others, Peeran too seeks the benevolent blessing of God in the time of perils and pains, and at the times of joy:

Blow my sail, push my boat of life.  
My rudder of faith is firm, I hold fast.  
Neither storms, nor thunder, nor lightning can shake me.  
I am not on a slippery path. I have my “Khizr.”<sup>22</sup>

Peeran’s style is his own. He uses simple but impressive words of day-to-day life like: ‘pickle and honey with Ragi-balls’, ‘Music of life waning into silence’. Like O.P.Bhatnagar, Peeran shows no

hesitation in employing innovation in his poetry to suit Indian ethos and sensibility.

S.L. Peeran is a modern poet in his treatment of both the content and form. In a confessional and essentially ironic mode he tears off the hypocrisy of the present society and reveals personal as well as social life with an authentic touch of his Indian sensibility. To quote Krishna Srinivas, "Peeran has gained many distinction and he is the right man to regain what we have all lost. He cries down the crimes and injustice that prevail everywhere today"<sup>23</sup>.

Peeran is a poet who plays in the cradle of spiritualism and entertains the faith that the world undoubtedly be a second heaven if there is religious tolerance; he condemns factions and groups of all religion or classes. He advocates comradeship, companionship and fellowship among his fellow being. Enriches his poetry through his Sufi ideas and thought, which gives a new dimension to Indian English Writing. R.K.Singh says, about his Sufi belief and religious tolerance that "He is a firm believer in God, family and humanity. He stands for values like humanity, tolerance, love, truth, faith charity, respect, justice, freedom, peace, harmony, unity of God and mankind, promotion of education and culture and love of nature"<sup>24</sup>

According to Peeran, if man surrenders himself wholeheartedly before God, the eternal light certainly helps him in reducing the self. He considers the religion of humanity as the supreme religion of the cosmos and demolishes the barriers of religious orthodoxy by bringing out the message of God from all religions.

In the poem "A Cry of a Victim for Peace", from the collection *In Silent Moments*, he lamented at the inhuman treatment of man, destruction of the nation and growing crop of double talk, hypocrisy and falsehood, he gives the message of Ahimsa and Dharma:

Shun thy enmity and illumine thy heart  
 With lofty ideas of "Ahimsa" and "Dharma",  
 To recreate a paradise on earth, here, here!....<sup>25</sup>

So, the study of his poetry would provide a new dimension to the contemporary Indian English Writing. In his poetry one can trace the spiritual consciousness besides political and social consciousness. His poetry hopes to create awareness in man about his responsibility and an enlightenment through his spiritual thinking, which helps to make a journey towards God.

The study is oriented to investigate S.L. Peeran's poetic composition – spiritual consciousness with particular attention to the influence of Islam and Sufism over his poetry and thereby to acknowledge him as a remarkable contributor to the tradition of Indian English Writing. This work would help to draw the attention of the critics for authentic criticism.

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## Humanity and Human Values in the Poetry of S.L. Peeran

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S.L. Peeran is an artistic poet, who believes in God and His creation. Being a Sufi – writer, his poems show a state of Spiritual journey towards God. A well-known Sufi Maxim is “*dar duniya bash, bare-e-duniya man bash*”<sup>1</sup>, live in the world, but not for the world. Peeran accordingly, combines his Sufi thought and personal experiences in his poetry. So, he is equally alive and responsive to the present situation of the world. One can trace a variety of themes in his poetry related to human concern like Nature: God’s precious gift, love for human being, love for God, family relationship, Hope for future and socio-political condition. Theme related to Nature.

Nature is part and parcel of man’s existence and almost in every century poets found pleasure in enjoying and spiritualising nature. Poet Peeran is also attracted by nature and one could trace the glimpse of nature in his poems. He enjoys personifying nature and makes it a silent spectator or active participant in human actions, as in the poem “Nature’s Ways” from the volume

*In Rare Moments*, the poet shows how grief’s melt away as time passes leaving a scar in the memory. The wheel of life turns and turns grinding every painful act to refine and make the whole life of man. It is nature’s way to mix seed in dust and help it to sprout. Similarly, nature devises means and ways to relieve pain.

The grinding wheel moves and moves  
Powdering the grains to a fine flour,



To make tasty bread, biscuits and bun.  
The jeweller pounds gold sheets of fine jewellery  
The seed mingles in dust to sprout again  
Nature devises its own ways to relieve pain<sup>2</sup>

Like Wordsworth, poet Peeran is having faith in nature and its healing effect. Every little object in nature inspires Peeran to give out a world of thought.

Peeran is most concerned about preserving ecology and balancing nature and according to him wastage of life sustaining elements is a sin. In the poem 'Changing Fate' from the collection *In Silent Moments*, he warns against slow mode of self-destruction.

But man in order to achieve supremacy  
Destroys nature and spreads wretchedness  
And renders himself unfit to live on globe  
Are weak born to live without hope?<sup>3</sup>

Stanza given above, ends with a question, it shows poet's concerns for nature. He is worried at the rapid destruction of nature by human being for their own supremacy. In the poem the poet has shown concern not only for nature but also for weaker people, through nature he has lamented over the condition of weaker people and put a question to answer in front of us – 'Are weak born to live without hope?'.  
The music and melody of several birds including cacophony have become silent, the sounds and horns of screeching vehicles have halted. The varied sounds of lamentations, lathes and firing of guns become silent every night revealing the temporary stoppage of hectic activities, perhaps signifying the deadly silence. Peeran is so

In the poem 'Oh, Deadly Silence' from the collection *In Rare Moments*, the pervading silence in nature is portrayed by the poet.

"The cooing of the cuckoos  
The shrill cry and cacophony  
Of several birds rending the air  
Have all fallen silent  
On darkness enveloping.  
On total withdrawal of illumination."<sup>4</sup>

The music and melody of several birds including cacophony have become silent, the sounds and horns of screeching vehicles have halted. The varied sounds of lamentations, lathes and firing of guns become silent every night revealing the temporary stoppage of hectic activities, perhaps signifying the deadly silence. Peeran is so

concerned and depressed about the regular cutting of the tree or deforestation that he himself becomes the mouth piece of a tree and tells a woodcutter, why he should not cut a tree in the poem “Lament of a Shady Tree” from the collection *New Frontiers*.

O you tyrant! stop your merciless strikes  
 Stop hitting and wounding me with your axe  
 Don't cut me down and maul me  
 For my Lord has breathed life in me.  
 O heartless tyrant know you and understand  
 My love has enlightened dear souls  
 My every being and every cell bears love  
 My leaves have magical remedies  
 To cure, enliven, cherish sick bodies  
 My dried leaves bear elixir for diseases,  
 My bark, my gum, my resins  
 All are beneficial to the mankind  
 Now by cutting me down  
 You are destroying universal peace<sup>5</sup>

### **Love for Human Being**

Another theme which is dominant in Peeran's poem is love for human being. One finds in him an assimilation of diverse religions and cultural ideals and notions that manifest his tolerant mind for example in the poem “My Religion” from the collection *A Call from the Unknown*.

Yes, I do have a religion  
 I do practice it  
 Say my Namaz'  
 But my rites, my symbols  
 Are act of love  
 To foster oneness.....<sup>6</sup>

As a devout Muslim, Peeran's emphasis is on the inner experience, inner life, and inner realisations.

In the poem “Birth of Prophet Mohammad” from the same collection, the poet has presented the full span of life of Mohammad, as his birth is the symbol of enlightenment and unity of mankind is the mission of Prophet Mohammad:

To take humanity to zenith of peace.  
To open the floodgates of knowledge  
To unite man and man in a single bond.  
To liberate the destitute, infirm oppressed.<sup>7</sup>

In another poem “Our Dogmatic Brothers” from the collection *In Rare Moments*, the poet presents the faction among men, division among men is the common factor in modern India. Mostly man forms groups because of religion. The poet feels that killing, dissenting, grouping in the name of religious faith shuns the path of knowledge which leads to the missing of the goal. The poet describes,

White cap, a symbol of purity, now hides black soul  
Our brethren, shunning path of knowledge missing the goal.<sup>8</sup>

In another poem ‘Why all this?’ from the collection *In Silent Moment* maltreatment, torment, harassment persecution, and destitution of man anywhere on earth upsets the mood of the poet:

Poverty smells obnoxiously,  
Stinks putrefying, decaying  
An environmental threat  
A cause for grief for Mankind.  
Opulence splendor, wealthy rich  
Wrecks the mind, consciousness and soul  
Corrupting values, customs, themes  
Creating nuclear weapons for destructions  
And fashion shows with bare bottoms  
Chill penury bares all for all to see  
Ah! Hiroshima, Bosnia, Sudan  
On all, dare deviltry, a test for endurance.  
Look. Look O Merciful! Why all this  
Sorry state when you are known  
To be just, kind, compassion?  
Beneficent and Merciful!<sup>9</sup>

### **Love for God**

Love for God is the most controlling theme in Peeran’s poems. He humbles himself before God seeking His manifold blessing and mercies seeks the benevolent blessing of God at times of perils and

pains and also times of joy for example, in the poem “Grace” from the collection *In Rare Moments*.

Blow my sails, push my boat of life  
 My rudder of faith is firm, I hold fast  
 Neither storms, nor thunder, nor lightning can shake me  
 I am not on a slippery path. I have my khizr  
 A friend in need is joy for ever  
 An ever slave is a pleasure forever.<sup>10</sup>

All religious faiths centre on God. No doubt poet Peeran also looks upon God (Allah) for His Mercies and Miracles. Many of his poems witness the firm faith of the poet on God. The poem “All Round Welfare” from the same collection embraces all religious faiths and reveals the fact that though there are little variations in the form of worship, all prostrate at the feet of God to be blessed by Him. In the poem “Allah’s Bounty” he directly invokes God (Allah) and seeks his blessings, as his bounty is limitless. He completely surrenders before God, his use of word like – O Lord, ‘O Master and Divine Mercy shows closeness to Almighty for example:

O Master, can I have your glimpse  
 To lift my sagging spirits an enlighten soul<sup>11</sup>

His firm belief in Almighty is also evident in these lines –

When I lost hopes form all  
 A divine voice gave strength and guided me.<sup>12</sup>

### **Family Relationship**

A good person or poet is one who fairly maintains balance between his family and his professional life and thinks about his society, country as well as his well-wishers and Peeran is one among the few, who always stands behind his family and this could be proved through his poems.

In the poem “To my little daughter” from the collection *In Golden Times* presents a context in which a father is giving advice to his eldest daughter. The language used in the poem is very soft which shows that the relationship of a father to a daughter is full of love and concern. Father advises his daughter to be gentle and brave

in any circumstance. Father asks his daughter to make friendship with nature and seek the blessing of Almighty, who is above all.

For company, look to the sun,  
Stars and moon,  
May they shower on you friendship's boon,  
With sweet flowery eyes lit with love  
My dearest, seek benign blessing from Him above<sup>13</sup>

Another example from the collection "*A Search from Within*" is "My Mother", the poem portraying a picture of a mother shows mother's sacrifices everything for the sake of her children. She takes all the troubles to make her loved ones live long,

Prayed and prayed for grace  
And love to befall me  
My Mother sucked away  
All the poison from my  
Decaying body, so that I  
Can live in peace and happiness<sup>14</sup>

In the poem "Death of close ones" and "To a lost-son", poet Peeran has presented the personal experience of his close relative. The melancholic tone of the poem gives the essence of his depressed heart. But some critic has misinterpreted his poem and took the poem for his own son,

Someone is waiting for you distraught  
With tears in eyes, pain in heart  
With absent smiles, worried face  
Wrinkles on forehead, dishevelled hair.<sup>15</sup>

In the poem "Death of Close Ones" the speaker of the poem compares himself with a huge tree and its branches are his loved ones with fall of every branches, tree is left only with trunk, no shades and chirping of the bird is seen any more, life becomes dull and bare:

A huge tree with branches many and a canopy  
With full of branches, tree is left with bare trunk  
A bare vase without decoration of flowers  
Sand dunes in a parching desert without shade.<sup>16</sup>

Peeran opens his heart unreservedly to his wife in a couple of poems. In the poem “Intense love” Peeran mentions that how his wife had helped him in his miserable day, when he was hospitalised and also on many occasions,

When I broke my arm  
 When diabetics was tackled  
 I remembered you  
 You were my succor, my redeemer<sup>17</sup>

### Hope for Future

Peeran is a poet of positive attitude and hope, and his poetry is a celebration of life in its myriad mood of joy, sorrow, sordidness, happiness wonder, wisdom, boost, and gratification, his poems are spontaneous, yet he is fairly consistent. Peeran himself in his preface of *Silent Moment* says, “I have not put any extra effort or strain. They have come to me spontaneously in a flash of moment and have assumed the form of my personal poetry”.<sup>18</sup>

His one collection *Fountains of Hopes* is full of hope and enthusiasm towards life, as in the poem ‘let’s give a break’ from the collection:

Let’s give a break’  
 To his unending chain of blues  
 Which crop up like a wild grass  
 With thorns and weeds around.<sup>19</sup>

Here poet appeals to the reader to take a break from all the unending problems of life and start life with a fresh turn.

The positivity of the poet is effectively and clearly brought out in the poem on the motherland “Mera Bharat Mahan” from the same collection.

O ‘Bharat Mahan’  
 Thou have lived from antiquity  
 Thou shall live for eternity  
 Let me speak  
 of our unity in diversity  
 of our spiritual values, diverse literature

of our religious tolerance  
of our spicy food, films, music and dance  
of our colourful dresses headgears<sup>20</sup>

Peeran shows his patriotic feeling in a different way; he is not talking about the disaster, terrorism or corruption. He is not talking about the past glory of India or the Modern Indian development in the field of infrastructure, economy and agriculture too. But his patriotism shows his concerns for unity in diversity, literature, arts, music, food, and dresses.

Another example is “A Ray of Hope”. In this poem, the context is of an old man on the brim of death, and his dreams are shattered. At this hour the illumined soul looks up to the Lord and prays.

I look, my succor,  
My candle is now to burn out  
Yet I hope, I look up  
To the horizons beyond  
Where darkness fades  
And light flashes its rays.  
I look up now for fresh dreams  
To pass on the legacy (to) a new<sup>21</sup>

In “Transformation”, the poet’s ‘heart’ is enveloped with ‘blanket of pathos’. The terrible happenings of the world make the poet cry out, but the poet has complete hope for positive and corrective transformation.

My heart is enveloped with blanket of pathos  
Blood curdling life experiences mingled with pain  
Has choked my voice, clouded my thinking  
Hidden in my bosom are bleeding dreams.  
Let’s weave hearts with virtues of love  
Transform rivers of blood to milk of human kindness<sup>22</sup>

### **Theme related to Socio-Political Condition**

Before talking about this theme, first of all I would like to quote Krishna Srinivas, “Peeran has gained many distinctions and he is

the right man to regain what we have all lost. He cries down the crimes and injustice that prevail everywhere today”<sup>23</sup>.

Peeran is benign soul, so he laments at the socio-political condition prevailing in the society and his profession helps him to understand the problems, and ultimately he comes with a solution. According to him, all human beings are born free and are equal in dignity and right, so must be treated alike. In the poem ‘O Taliban’ from the collection *Fountains of Hopes* Peeran is very much upset due to the dual nature of the Taliban Society towards men and women:

Brotherhood, a parochial term, you practice  
For your own selfish needs as a tactic  
Woman you marry to divorce to remarry  
To chain, enslave and make her carry  
Woes, keep in seclusion, pardah forever<sup>24</sup>

The poem, itself is the testimony of the corrupt Socio-political condition prevailing in Taliban. Talibanion leader themselves decide punishment for the wrong doers and in doing so, they withered human kindness on earth.

You cut hands, stone a sinner to death  
Whither love for humanity on this earth?  
Soul rending music does not stir you.  
O’ Taliban’ shun violence, acquire world view<sup>25</sup>

The last line of the poem shows poet’s concern for peace in every part of the world. In another poem ‘Politicians’ from the collection *In Golden Times*, the poet presents the various faces of political leader, and how they act, react and change according to the circumstances like a cremation:

Words of politicians are like changing sand dunes,  
Slippery and swift like a speeding trans  
Always-restless creating melodrama  
And making promises hallow and vague.  
Deceptive are their faces, like a mirage,  
Hiding the trait of diabolic figures  
With eyes trained to spat prey like eagles,  
They wear whiles to cover black souls within<sup>26</sup>



In the poem, the images like 'sand dunes', 'speeding train', 'mirage' 'eagles' and 'black soul' impart a perfect image of today's leader and reveal their true nature, their selfishness for personal gain. They show lots of promises in their election manifesto, but after election, all their promises turn into ashes. In the poem 'Senseless leader' from the collection *In Sacred Moments*, the poet in the first stanza starts with a positive note and ends in a question:

When peace has prevailed  
Enemies have shaken hands  
Dark clouds have all waned  
Now, where is the need for fighter planes?<sup>27</sup>

Peeran shows his distress, why to spend money on things related to destruction, while it is worthless rather he suggest the money to be used in favour of farmer to build the nation, as agriculture is the base of Indian Civilisation as well as economy. In the poem "Toil and Soil" from the collection *In Golden Times*, the poet has built a context, about the present daycondition of a middle class father, who wants his daughter to be happily married. So he saves every rupee for the final day, that is, the day of marriage, But alas! All his savings go in vain as he is unable to fulfill the rising demand of groom and ultimately dies.

He toiled from morn till late in the night  
Without any rest, day after day,  
The wedding place on a fine day  
Of the dowry were arranged in fine array,  
Each was met in every way,  
The groom had more and more to say  
Calling on the gods to help his daughter,  
Down he fell and lifeless lay,  
Ended, thus, his lifelong toil  
Enabling the groom to bury him in the soil<sup>28</sup>

In fact, the problem of dowry is not restricted only to middle class. It is more severe in high-class society, in high class dowry becomes a kind of show business. Whether, it be a lower, middle or high class, it is the bridal side who suffers and are suppressed, only the outlook is different and the poem very well reveals today's social condition of a father, who has a daughter.

The poem “A Modern Youth” from the collection “*A Search from Within*” reveals the condition of present day youth, their digression from the set norms, loss of social values, rise of corruption in them, and has also become opportunities seeker. Analysing modern condition in which misery, hunger and destruction of the environment prevail in many parts of the world, Peeran finds that it is due to the after effect of greed for money, greed for power and ignorance of natural resources of today’s youth and their inclination towards alcohol and smoking.

Greed for money, ever looking for opportunities  
 Scant respect for elders, nor concern for the youth  
 Drinks like a fish, smoke like a chimney  
 With dashing speed in vehicles to crash to death<sup>29</sup>

To sum up, I would like to say that Peeran’s poems are “highly readable. They deepen our perception, they delight us and they inspire us”<sup>30</sup>. His poems are “Spontaneous, uninhibited outpouring from his heart, a prism reflecting the many hues of his core personality”<sup>31</sup>. But he is not utopian. He knows life is a picture of light and shadow where love and hatred, joy and grief, growth and decay, wealth and poverty, honesty and corruption co-exist, but still there exist piety and humility, and poet is very much hopeful of future.

The poet is very optimistic in his expression and has full of hope. According to him, it is through hope and dream that our civilisation has grown in richness. It is through dreams that great ideas turn into visions before being concretised in life; it is hope, which sustains us through life’s crises.

Poetry cannot survive being just a jiggle, verbosity, a puzzle of words. The content or subject matter gives the poetry its life. In this regard Peeran’s poems are utterly present in the world, in the sense that he writes about the issue of society with his social vision active in the world as an agent of transformation. In short, it can be said that Peeran’s poetry explores several areas of human concern and consternation and he writes with such dexterity, sincerity and

devotion that his poetry becomes vibrant; his expression becomes candid, because he is not afraid of speaking the truth.

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## Style of Expression

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### Formal Style

Style is nothing but formal constituents of poetry such as language, rhythm, diction, its sentence structure and syntax, the density and types of its figurative language and its rhetorical aims and devices. According to M.H. Abram, “Style is the manner of linguistic expression in prose and verse-it is how a speaker or writer says whatever he says”<sup>1</sup>. In other words, it could also be said that the language, rhythm, thought, imagery, mood and attitude that a poet chooses, determine the style of his poem. But this choice itself is determined by the nature and quality of his genius and that of vision of reality, which has moved him to compose the poem, is the work of an art in question.

Form is also a part of style, it implies some kind of definiteness or coherence, and shape of some kind. Form could be of two types – physical form and mental form. The physical form is the appearance on paper and, much more important, the sound of poetry. It may be either the sound when poetry is read to us, or the sound we mentally hear when we read it to ourselves. It includes: rhythm, rhyme, intonation and various kinds of echo and repetition. Mental form might be described as content in the usual sense of the word when applied to literature, it includes grammatical structure, logical sequence, the pattern of associations, the use of dominant image. All these things combine to give a good poem and its power over our imagination.

Peeran has carved out a style for himself. His expressions are very simple but powerful. The usage of syntax and rhyme scheme creates an impact on the mind of the readers, though he does not follow any set pattern regarding rhyme scheme. So, naturally, he gives more importance to the content than the structural form while expressing his thought. About his style Barnard Jackson writes, “A delightful collection by a writer who combines sincerity with craftsman ship a fine command of English”<sup>2</sup>

Most of his poems are written in free verse, which is a common trend in contemporary Indian writing. Sometimes he also follows stanza pattern, basically or sonnet like structure, it can also be called sonnet, but he has maintained only one feature of sonnet that is three quatrains and a couplet. He rarely maintains a rhyme scheme in his poems for example:

Not an iota of knowledge yet gained  
The vastness of cosmos is stupendous  
Splendid and spectacular in dimension  
Heaven's miracles are for eyes to behold.

But man in order to achieve supremacy  
Destroys Nature and spreads wretchedness  
And renders himself unfit to live on globe.  
Are weak born to live without hope?

Man needs to conquer passions and desires  
Through lofty thoughts and simple living  
Then, can achieve for himself splendour  
And by conscious efforts, greater grandeur  
Meandering thoughts and dialectic debates  
And empty dreams can't change fate.<sup>3</sup>

Peeran's poetry rules out the universal use of meter. It has variegation of verse movement. He sometimes begins with a metrical plan and soon dissuades from the metrical norms. As he has no formal rhyme scheme, his poems become monotonous, but the thematic strength of the poems is able to grab the attention as well as the interest of the reader:

It is neither the meat nor the chops  
That pleases the God, but only love  
For this creation and his creatures  
And act of compassion that pleases Him<sup>4</sup>

The theme of human love in his poems is built so perfectly that it convey directly to the reader. He is erratically a poet of faith, love, compassion and inner wisdom.

### **Diction**

The diction of a poem decides the selection of words in a work of literature. And on the basis of diction, it can be analysed whether the poets' writing is abstract or concrete, technical or common, lateral or figurative. About the order of words in a poem, Coleridge said, "it is an order based or choice, choice that is guided by the strangeness, the evocativeness, the commonness or the freshness of words. This is an order, which co-operates generally with the grammatical order of the words"<sup>5</sup>.

The poetry of almost all ages has been written in a special language, a poetic diction, which includes words, phrases, a stylized syntax and types of figures current in the ordinary conversation of the time, Adjectives used as complement and modifiers.

Peeran most of the time uses adjective, verb, pronoun, and hyphenated compound words in abundant. He uses adjectives both as modifier and complement as in the poem "Humility and Submission"

He is truthful, simple in manner  
He is gentle to the care  
He is never harsh to the less fortunate  
He is courteous to his parents  
He is pleasing to all to when he addresses<sup>6</sup>

Adjectives like 'truthful', 'simple', 'gentle', 'harsh', 'courteous', 'pleasing' are complimentary of humble man.

Adjectives like 'venomous snake', 'sharp', 'intelligence', 'dark soul', 'mute monuments' 'jealous dog', 'gloomy night', 'crusty' and

so on are used as a modifier. The use of adjectives in Peeran's poetry produces a concrete picture rather more imagination. For example:

Discordant notes emerging from dark souls  
Mute monuments being witness to calamities.<sup>7</sup>

The jealous dog barks at the lonely silent  
And the owl disturbs the peace with its hooting.<sup>8</sup>

The above lines show the use of adjectives as modifier, but the interesting to be noted in these lines is that the lines give a concrete picture about the situation in readers mind, rather imagination.

### **Verbs used as Modifiers**

Apart from using adjectives as a modifier Peeran uses present participles and past participles forms of the verb as modifiers to create a mental picture in the mind of the readers.

Verbs like 'Shining', 'glistening', 'changing', 'chattering', 'cheering', 'draping' and so on are used a modifier – for example:

My body is of shining glass  
And heart a glistening mirror<sup>9</sup>

Here in the above lines, poet describe about a glass house and gives its feature by using present participle form of the Verb. The Verb also shows a kinetic image as it has lot of action. Some example of past participles:

I was passing through deserted cities  
Where people defecate in open fields."<sup>10</sup>

O sweet honeyed love  
From milk of kindness  
From the mother's breast  
To suckle sweet love.<sup>11</sup>



## Verb

Peeran's poetry is well supplied with infinite Verb, which shows that the mental power of the poet is not limited to any particular action, it shows timelessness or condition applied to all the time or it can be said that the action continues to zenith. For examples:

To burst out, to assume demonic form  
Love withers away never to return  
To turn human heart to stones.<sup>12</sup>

In these lines, the poet says that poison in the heart, which is implicit is now get explicit and up to which level it will rise nobody knows. The use of infinite endows the poet a correct way of expression. For examples:

To shine like diamonds  
To twinkle like stars in dark sties.<sup>13</sup>

Another verb he most commonly uses in 'let' for example:

Let hopes and dreams realise in light  
Let life sail smoothly and bright  
Let four seasons pass in tranquility  
Let love and peace ring till eternity<sup>14</sup>

Let the inner images, ideal, thought  
Memories get reflected in the mirror"<sup>15</sup>

Let the opportunities fly by  
Merge in mirth and pleasure<sup>16</sup>

'Let' is generally used to show togetherness in a work, as it is impossible for a single person to complete large amount of work alone, Peeran also invokes people to make a combine effort to change certain phenomena.

## Pronoun

Peeran uses personal pronoun for all the three person – first Person, second Person and third Persons in singular as well as plural form. Most of the time the speaker is involved in the poem or

conversation sometimes Peeran is suggestive and sometimes he simply uses pronoun, for examples:

You need to go miles and miles  
 You need to reach destinations in time,  
 But the paths are marshy, weather foul  
 Your companions weary, sans transport.<sup>17</sup>

My burning love, my zeal, my hopes  
 My dreams, my yearnings will not fail me  
 Than shall guide me for ever and ever  
 To reach the shores of ecstasy and bliss<sup>18</sup>

### Compound Hyphenated Words

Peeran also make ample use of compound hyphenated words like – jet-black, Ragi-balls, Moon-eyed hoories, sole-enemy, beauty-parlor, Khadi-cap, mid-night, frozen-ice, school-girl, wedding-day, silk-achken, ill-luck and soon. These hyphenated words helps the poets to create a link or make a co-ordination with the other words in the poem.

The trumpets have gained strength day-by – day  
 Blowing full-throat, elephant also joining.<sup>19</sup>

Peeran's poem is also full of Arabic and Urdu words like 'Allah', 'Saitan', 'Moulvi', 'Tazia', 'Panjhas', 'Fakirs', 'Mannat', 'Khulus', 'Muklis', 'Maqbeeras', 'Tasbee' and many more to create the originality and authenticity of the context.

Carrying silver "Panjhas" bedecked with flowers  
 Fakirs exhibiting bravado by walking on burning coal<sup>20</sup>  
 Peeran mostly uses onomatopoeia simile,  
 metaphor and personification.

### Onomatopoeia

Rhythm helps a great deal in supporting the meaning of the words of a poem, but sometimes the sound of the words also gives great support to the sense. Onomatopoeia is very common in poetry, but is difficult to know whether a poet is using it as a deliberate artistic effect or by accident, for so many English words are onomatopoeic

that, if the poet chooses the right word in meaning, he is likely to choose the onomatopoeic word.

Peeran uses onomatopoeic, to give his poem a lyrical pattern or musicality to his poems.

The cooing of the cuckoos  
The shrill cry and cacophony  
The Zooming sound of the vehicles  
The screeching noise of the halting tyres  
The bellowing horns, the shouting rage  
The barking dogs, all now in silent zone.<sup>21</sup>

At times, a feeling of revolt and tumults in the chest  
With fiery eyes and throbbing heart  
Blood moving like lightening in the veins  
Head brushing with shots from torpedoes<sup>22</sup>

The buzzing sound piercing your ears  
Feelings of butter flies in your stomach<sup>23</sup>

### Simile

In a simile a comparison between two distantly different things is indicated by the word 'like' or 'as' As Peeran writes in free verse, so to give his poem music and rhythm, he uses excessive of simile – for examples:

Give me a chance, I will show what I am  
A common phrase heard from all  
When the time comes and gives a call.  
They vanish, disappear like a golf ball  
Men of day only bray like asses  
Vanity makes them fly like kite and balloon.<sup>24</sup>

Like thunder lightning on a stormy night  
Like song of robin blue, nightingale<sup>25</sup>

I am free like a bird, I can fly  
I am fee like a fish, I can swim  
I am fee like a gypsy, I can roam.<sup>26</sup>

To shine like diamonds  
To twinkle like stars in dark skies<sup>27</sup>

The dead past with haunting memories  
Like a steam engine, shunting up and down<sup>28</sup>

Day in and day out being dogmatic  
Holding on to the profanity and ill feelings  
Like a housefly aimlessly moving around<sup>29</sup>

Our buddies bring back good old memories  
Invigorating like tea and coffee<sup>30</sup>

Peeran has adopted his own style in using simile. He most of the time uses nature for comparison as shown in the above examples.

### **Metaphors**

In a metaphors a word which in standard usage denotes one kind of thing, quality or action is applied to another, in the form of a statement of identity instead of comparison.

In the poem "Mothers Tears" the poet has presented the picture of a mother with holiness, compassion, love and care. The poet has compared mother's tears with real pearls and gems. Words used gives true essence of the feeling of a mother when she losses her dear ones.

These tears are real, pearls and gems  
She from the bottom of the heart  
Saved from the womb and crystallised from blood  
Milky tears are cloud burst of pathos and grief<sup>31</sup>

Pious men are beacon of light  
A lighthouse of knowledge and will power  
To dispel doubt and darkness  
To lead men to solace and peace<sup>32</sup>

The poet has remarked pious man as 'beacon of light' and 'lighthouse of knowledge' and 'will power'. As lighthouse alone serve the purpose to show a path in darkness of sea/ocean, just like

pious man in also endowed with such knowledge that he can change the world with his benign thought some other example of metaphors are –

The sole enemy of the day is money  
The bull in the market is currency<sup>33</sup>

The shiny magnetic sun gives a shrill cry  
The burning stomach is a black furnace<sup>34</sup>

### **Personification**

Personification is a figure of speech, in which either an inanimate object or an abstract concept is spoken of as though it were endowed with like or with human attributes or feelings. As Peeran is a poet of compassion and appreciate God for everything, so he uses personification very well in his poems, he always experiments with nature and impart human feeling to it.

In the poem “Beauty in nature”, the poet has presented a mesmerising picture of nature and imparted nature, human feeling for example:

“Mind and heart admire nature’s beauty  
Ears, ears to marvel its sound and music  
Night and day dance hand in hand in gaiety  
Time spreads its arms, turns the clock to click”<sup>35</sup>

Here, in the above lines, night and day and time are endowed with human feelings. Night and day are happy in union, ‘Time spreads its arms’, the poet has personified time and showed its universal phenomena which is changing in nature, as time passes, nature also provides us with beautiful season.

In another poem “Melting heart”, the poet has personified dew with human feeling and stated the story of ‘dew’ that what pain it undergoes and lastly melts with the soil:

When the morning gloss  
Kissed the night’s pathos  
Tears of love filled  
The greenery and grass

With gleaning gems  
Pearls tiny and small  
On each leaf's barks  
To share its sorrow  
And to spread its music  
With birds of all hues  
Chirping and singing  
When beams of light  
Enfold its shine  
The dew's heart melts  
And mingles with the soil<sup>36</sup>

The story is so well presented that we feel the sacrifice of dew, who melts and then mingles with the soil to make it fertile to work for human welfare, In most of his poems Peeran shows that Almighty has created nature for human use, so we must appreciate the creator for His creation.

### **Sentence Structure**

Sentence structure in Peeran's poetry is standard, most of the time he follows the pattern of subject verb – object but sometimes it diverts also. For examples:

My home is an open landscape  
He would smile and smile,  
laugh and laugh with me<sup>37</sup>

She was there standing at my door  
My dream girl, at last, on my floor<sup>38</sup>

In some of his poems, Peeran does not complete his meaning in a single line. Meaning continues to run from one line to another and also his sentences are complimentary to one another in a stanza–

A banyan tree hidden in a seed  
A rose in the bud  
Love hidden in the heart  
Oozes out as milk of human kindness<sup>39</sup>

In the above stanza, last line justifies all the four lines that if there is optimistic thinking, then it will certainly come out with goodness and positive result.

Another example is the poem “Timeless Age”, the importance or the essence of the poem could only be felt, if we go through whole poem, a single line or double will only confuse a bit more:

Millions of years of life,  
On planet Earth evolving  
From Amoeba to man  
A process repeated in the womb  
A replica of a story of evolution  
Enacted in nine months  
Life lived for any length,  
Is momentary on Earth, a speak  
Timeless immeasurable,  
A lived moment in realisation  
Enlightenment surpasses Time <sup>40</sup>

Another example:

My guru does not  
Show tricks and magic  
Does not call himself as an avatar  
But is a simple, humble person <sup>41</sup>

The first three lines give the complete picture of the Guru and last line adds information and justifies the first three lines. This is the way in which Peeran binds his reader and makes meaning out of his sentences.

### **Use of Punctuation**

Peeran uses very less punctuation marks in his poems. Some of the punctuation marks he uses are coma, fullstop, question mark, exclamation mark and use of capital letters.

### Comma

Comma are used after a line to have a pause and then continue, poet Peeran also uses coma for some purpose like in the lines –

Give me the love, that isn't selfish <sup>42</sup>  
Mercy, a celestial gift is for those soft hearts  
Who see, hear and are in ever submission. <sup>43</sup>

Peeran uses comma to pause a little and let the reader to think over it, in the above examples, the second phrase is complimentary of the first. The speaker wants love which is not selfish, and in the other example, the poet describes mercy after comma.

### Full Stop

Peeran uses full stop very adroitly, it shows the importance of the idea which he wants to convey as in the lines.

The fingers play on flute.  
On sitar, guitar.  
On drums.  
On creating scintillating music. <sup>44</sup>

The poet has used full stop in each line, which creates the importance of finger, musical instrument as well as scintillating music. If he has used full stop at the end of the stanza, it would have created impact only on scintillating music, not on finger and musical instrument.

In another poem, the poet has used full shot, comma and question mark in the same stanza and is also justified

When peace has prevailed.  
Enemies have shaken hands.  
Dark clouds have all waned.  
Now, where is the need for fighter planes? <sup>45</sup>

The first three lines are complete in itself but still the lines increases curiosity of the reader to move further, and the coma in last line after 'now' compel the reader to think of first three lines and questing mark at the end of the stanza challenges the idea expressed in the above three lines.



Another punctuation mark he commonly uses is question mark. He asks questions but never gives a reply or expects an answer. All the questions are suggestive and the poet deliberately leaves them to be answered by the readers. For examples:

Are hopes and dreams mere mirages?  
When will the closed door open?  
Where else can I find paradise? <sup>46</sup>

Following the pattern of modern American and Canadian poets, Peeran too makes good use of capitals in his poems to stress importance of abstract nouns such as TRUTH, LOVE, MERCY, which is symbolic of Almighty. Like Sri Aurobindo, Peeran also uses capital letters for almighty.

The above discussion on Peeran's style shows that he does not use any set pattern, he sometimes writes in stanza pattern, sometimes in couplet and most commonly in free verse. There is an ease and poise in his style and with simple ordinary words he creates powerful words. The use of adjective gives a concrete picture, and his use of infinite verb shows timelessness and which is applicable for all the time. He uses words like Allah, Divine, Mercy, O Master, O Lord, which is complete in itself and shows his inclination towards Almighty. This use of onomatopoeia simile, metaphor and personification provides music and lyric to his poems.

### **Imagery**

Imagery is the use of vivid description usually rich in sensory word to create pictures or images in the readers mind. It could also be understood from C. Day Lewis statement about the image in his book *Poetic Image* (1948, pp-17-18) that an image "is a picture made out of words", and that "a poem may itself be an image composed from a multiplicity of images"<sup>47</sup> Imagery is used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in the poems, whether by literal description or by allusion, or in the analogues used in its simile and metaphors.

The term ‘image’ itself implies the “picture made of our words”. It is an essential form of art in the poetic creation that presents a poet’s emotion with great intensity. It plays a significant role in the making of poetry, as it unravels the poet’s area of concern, demonstrates his ability to produce various figurative language, which serves as an ornamentation in the creation of poetry. Images that can be classified according to sense perception are:

- a) Visual Image (Sight)
- b) Auditory Image (Hearing and sound)
- c) Kinesthetic Image (Sensation of move)
- d) Olfactory Image (Smell)
- e) Tactile (Touch)

But, here in this chapter, the study is concerned with the nature of images found in the poetry of S.L. Peeran. The work is full of plain truths and simple observations. His images are more functional rather than decorative.

S.L. Peeran’s poetry is full of images. On the one hand, he depicts the sociopolitical picture symbolic of corruption and on the other hand, he also speaks about “nature images” which present innocence and purity. Through the images related to Islam and Sufism, he presents his spiritual consciousness.

### **Socio-political Images**

The images of socio-political corruption has been presented with stark realities in Peeran’s poetry Poems like – ‘Politicians’, ‘Lawyers’, ‘Leader’, A Corrupt Person, A Close-door Meeting, ‘Toil and Soil’, ‘Ah Gujarat’, ‘Public Officers’ ‘Perils and Dangers’, ‘A Modern Youth’ and ‘O Taliban’ are important where we find description of the Socio-Political corruption and degradation in human beings.

As quasi-judicial officer Peeran is very much aware of the sheer realities of the socio-political corruption prevailing in the society as in the poem 'Leader' he uses image like 'sand dunes', 'speeding train', 'mirage', 'eagle' and 'black soul'.

All the images are inconsistency and negative in itself and say the stories of today's leader

Words of politicians are like,  
Changing sand dunes,  
Slippery and swift like a speeding train.  
Deceptive are their faces, like a mirage,  
Hiding the traits of diabolic figures.  
With eyes trained to spot prey, like eagles,  
They wear whites to cover black soul within <sup>48</sup>

The poem portrays a correct image of politicians, as 'sand dunes' give the image of temporaries, just like politicians, as they change time to time. 'Speeding train' gives the image of 'slipperiness' or inconsistency, so do politician, as they never mean what they declare in election manifesto. They are like 'eagle', which think for his prey only, just like eagle, politician main concerns lies only in vote-bank. Black and white shows their cunningness, from outside they look clean but deceptive by nature.

In the poem 'Lawyers', the poet presents the image of today's court and lawyers, how the things has changed, how money has taken place for moral values (ethics). 'My Lord', 'Your Honour' has become only a word to prove their own point. The tone of the poem is also very sarcastic, which also creates a picture in reader's mind about poet's intentions.

There's more sound than sense in what they argue  
Fumbling with 'My Lord', 'Your Honour' at every breath  
Twisting words forcefully, but awrily, with stealth  
They bore the judges with their long tongues. <sup>49</sup>

In the poem 'Public Officers' the poet presents a general image of every boss and the pathetic condition of a simple employee under him.

To harass, let down, bully, simple men  
Isn't this a common phenomenon?  
A tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye"  
Is the bane of our administration <sup>50</sup>

The phrase 'a tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye' presents the picture of present day scenario, how boss harass let down, bully a simple man under him.

The poem 'Perils and Dangers' is full of death and urban images like 'uncovered drains', 'speeding reckless red buses', 'dangerous', 'rabies', 'AIDS', 'Adulterated liquor', 'cyclones' and 'nuclear weapon'.

Death is round the corner,  
With naked live wires lying on roads  
With open uncovered drains and manhole.  
"With speeding reckless red buses  
With dangerous rabies effected street dogs  
With AIDS spreading like wild fire  
With nuclear weapons acquired by every nation"<sup>51</sup>

By presenting all these death and urban images the poet has stated today's social degradation in metro cities. People have very little concern for humanity.

Another poem 'Currency-sole enemy' is also full of images of day-to-day life 'fifty-fifty' shows loop-holes in present day administrative system. Every officer is busy in setting his or her own buildings.

My wedding suit is not spared by the laundry  
Say 'Namaz' at Mandapam then fleece him  
Then Tirupathi "Ladoo" as "Prasad" is also squeezed.  
The net is widening with shark like teeth. <sup>52</sup>

Tirupathi 'Ladoo' is very popular Prasad and stands for purity, but it has also been squeezed, time has changed, and everything is cutting its size. The poet has also used a simile – "The net is widening with shark like teeth", the condition of the society is very critical it seems monster has opened his mouth and will soon engulf

everyone. The last two lines of the poem also present the image of inconsistency in the market.

The sole enemy of the day is money  
The bull in the market is currency<sup>53</sup>

The image of 'bull' stand for power and strength, but the poet has used 'bull' very sarcastically, though currency is like bull, strength and power but the bull will run in which direction no bodies knows.

### **Nature Imagery**

The poem 'Pious Man' is full of nature imagery like 'bird', 'trees', 'thunder', 'lightning', 'sky', 'seasons', and 'darkness'. The Poem has visual, auditory and kinesthetic images as in the lines:

Have you seen bird even stopping in mid flight  
Trees moving around, star coming down  
Ghosts appearing in broad day Night  
Thunder and lightning occurring on a clean sky<sup>54</sup>.

The lines also give the characteristic features of a pious Man – The image of 'bird' shows continuity, sincerity and devotion, 'trees' stands for stability of mind. 'Thunder and lightning' show strength and power and sometime also miraculous power. The difference is that all human beings are an equal but when they speak. The poet also uses rainbow, which is a nature imagery, which stands for hope. He compares rainbow with the virtuous men, saints, prophets who are signs of hope in the age of turmoil's, chaos and wars –

Suddenly virtuous men, saints prophets appear.  
In an age full of turmoil's, chaos and wars  
like rainbows on dark clouds of pathos  
To cheer men and clear minds from grief. <sup>55</sup>

Again in the poem 'Early Morning Dawns' he uses nature imagery like 'black crow', 'koel', 'sweet jasmine', 'rose', 'champak', 'gulmohar', 'the grasshopper', 'cricket', 'the ants' and 'honey bees'. 'Black crow' is the symbol of the end of the night and 'koel' is the symbol of beginning of the day. Sound of koel is sweet:

You know the black crow the wretched bird  
 Without any beauty of colours or a pleasing note  
 But it is the first to give a call to wake you up  
 The 'Koel' joins in and lets out a shrill cry.<sup>56</sup>

The title of the poem is itself an image of morning. The poet by presenting all these positive images of early dawn wants to convey a message that life is full of hope. For every night there is a day, for every sorrow, there is delight.

The poem "Beauty in Nature" has variety of images like tactile, olfactory, visual, for example, the 'wintry chill freezes', 'scented flowers', 'rainbows', to present the different moods of nature and changing season. The poet has also personified night, day and time with human feeling as in the lines:

Night and day dance hand in hand in gaiety  
 Time spreads its arms.<sup>57</sup>

The poet says that the world is changing place and it will keep changing for this the poet has used celestial images like 'Sun', 'Moon' and 'Stars'. And in last line season's flight gives the image of changing season:

Sun, moon and Stars throw luminous light  
 Earth moves round and round for season's flight.<sup>58</sup>

In another poem 'Melting Heart' gives an image of sorrow. Peeran very dexterously gives nature, a human touch. Here in this poem 'dew' has been personified with human feeling and called 'tears of love' which emerges from – when the morning's gloss/kissed the night's pathos. It present the tactile image of dew. The sorrow of the dew is – with the rise of the sun, it mingles with the soil.

The dew's heart melts  
 And mingles with the soil.<sup>59</sup>

The Poem "When chill winds Blow" again presents a picture:

Lo, Life, when dull and drab  
 cold icy frozen season with fading misty light  
 with gusty feeling receding

With eyes losing their twinkle  
And cheeks their dimple  
With chill flowing winds  
Biting and causing wounds  
With hearts covered with numbness  
Then love is crippled and dimmed.<sup>60</sup>

The poet by showing negative images of the nature that is 'winter', presents how life becomes boring when there is no action. 'Icy frozen' creates shows an image of solid water, that means there is no flaw in it, which shows lifelessness. 'Mist Fading' gives the image of darkness. 'Gusty feeling' shows the pain, sadness, and sorrow. 'Cheeks lost their dimple' also shows darkness and dull life. Last two lines show absolute hopelessness.

Though often written off as decoration or illustration, imagery lies at the heart of a poem. Peeran uses imagery as a content of thought where attention is directed to sensory qualities mental images and embodiments of non-dissuasive truth. Most of the times he uses similar kind of nature imagery, which becomes symbol in his poems.

### **Islamic Imagery**

As a devout Muslim Peeran, is very much aware of the realities and principles of a good Muslim. He is not rigid to the adherence of any law and principle. He sees all the rules for the benefit of human being.

In his poems one could easily trace the Islamic Personage like Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) stands for peace and harmony, for liberation from darkness, idolatry and tyranny. Prophet Moses stands for hope, freedom, enlightenment, grace of God, truth, Nature's miracle. Prophet Jesus stand for love and brotherhood, fairness, he is also known as 'Rohulla', which means Jesus to make dead people alive.

The whole poem "Meraj-Ascend to the Throne" itself is an image of Allah's grace, gift, and bounty. The poem starts with the day of twenty – sixth 'Rajab', which is the 7th Islamic Lunar

month, which has its own importance in Islam. The day symbolises love of God toward Mohammad as Almighty Allah has summoned him to his presence and it has also been referred in Quran everywhere.

‘Buraq’ a white shinning horse symbolises lightning speed which has been sent from heaven to Mohammad (PBUH) to bring him in a quick span of time.

Gabriel descended from heaven with Buraq  
 A shinning white horse, with lightning speed  
 Woke up prophet, wrapped in the mantle  
 Saluted him and conveyed Lord’s greeting <sup>61</sup>

Another symbol or image in the poem is ‘Rock of Jerusalem’ which stands for purity, unity and enlightenment. It is the place where Mohammad met all the Prophets from Adam to Jesus the place has its own significance for all the three leading religions Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Gabriel took Prophet to the Rock of Jerusalem,  
 The holiest of holy place on the earth  
 W here a grand reception was held  
 Prophets from Adam stood behind him in reverence. <sup>62</sup>

Another image ‘Ab-e-kuwsar’ which is a heavenly river, the purest of pure water and as sweet as honey. Every Muslim wishes to go to Jannat to drink ab-e-kuwsar and it gives eternal life to the drinker. For getting this opportunity they have to be Momin that means a true Muslim.

Again in the whole poem ‘Lady Fathima is an image of a pure lady, Lady Fathima, daughter of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) who is considered as pious woman and ideal for all.

In the line ‘Angelic with wings of love’, ‘wings of love’ symbolise endless love, which she spread with open hands. She has also been compared with ‘colourful roses with fragrance’. ‘Rose’ is a symbol of love, purity, freshness, so do as lady Fathima.

Colour roses emitting fragrance  
 Sweetness spreading in the air



Our lovely lady's is benign smile  
Charming features display eminence<sup>63</sup>

In another poem 'Divine well': Zam-Zam the sub title itself is an image of life existence and purity. Zam-Zam is an Arabic word, which gives the picture of Arab, image like 'Oasis', 'mute ship' (Camel), 'Bedouin of yore', who are the tribal people of Arab. And in such deserted place Zam-Zam appears, so it is considered as God's grace and as it is the only source of water and life in Arab and because of Zam-Zam population also increases there.

### **Sufi Images**

Being a Sufi poet, Peeran's images mostly deal with human kindness and praise of God. In the poem 'All Round Welfare' poet Peeran has used various images like 'darga', 'temple', 'priest', 'godman', 'Talisman', 'candle', 'diya', 'prasad' 'mannat', 'crows', 'monkeys', 'fishes', 'dog', 'rats' and 'beggars'. All images gives a complete picture of religious tolerance, as the images used are from different religious sect.

There is an economy  
Subsisting, surviving  
Around a darga, a temple  
A priest, a Godman  
"All emanating from an idea  
That God is all embracing  
Caring to devotees, who offer  
Submission on the alter  
of love, seek blessings  
By sharing both sorrows  
And joys by giving  
As much as taking  
Each for all, all for each  
Bless and be blessed.<sup>64</sup>

By presenting all these images, Peeran wants to say that Almighty takes care of his devotees in one way or the other. As near a temple or darga, many hawkers sell their goods, which add to their economy thus becomes a source for their livelihood.

Another poem 'Man Arafa Naf Sahu' is a poem expressing Sufism. As a religious and pious man, the poet expresses his meticulously designed exterior and interior of man with harmony and precision. The more one reflects on God, one is tempted to utter more praises to God. The whole poem in itself is an image of complete submission to the will of God.

More we reflect on oneself and on Allah  
the more praises is uttered  
By tongue and breath <sup>65</sup>

In the poem "What is Khulus?" the poet has presented the picture of a humble man. He points out the virtue of humbleness, proving the dictum "humbleness in godliness" "Humility is praiseworthy and according to all Holy Scriptures God is merciful to the humble. A humble person is adorned with simplicity, softness, gentleness, and kindness. His speech is 'honeyed tongue' and 'he is gentle to the core'.

He walks, with softness, his speech  
Is honeyed tongue.  
He has no roughness.  
He is gentle to the core.  
He is forgiving and does not mind  
Taunts, criticism and humiliations <sup>66</sup>

In another poem "Attain Piety" the poet has presented a way of leading a pious life and how to attain it, he has also cited various examples of historical figures, who have metamorphosed their life after a turmoil, and served humanity, therefore, every historical figure referred is in itself an image

Remember Ashoka shunning war with Kalinga  
Siddharth attained moksha on detachment  
Mohammad united mankind with brotherhood  
Gandhi achieved truth by struggle. <sup>67</sup>

Ashoka the brave king, who earlier believed in bloodshed and victory lead a spiritual life after the Kalinga war. This war was a turning point in his life because in this war he realised that war is nothing but hollow sham and only bring futile glory. Siddharth

attained moksha only after the detachment from his family and then he came to be known as Mahatma Buddha. Prophet Mohammad (PBHU) was born to enlighten the world and unite man with man. Gandhi achieved truth and freedom by fighting against all odds and violence. The poet by mentioning all these figure wants to convey that it is not too late for a man to attain piety, only one needs to repent his earlier deeds and lead a life of 'ahimsa' and 'truth'. This pious life of 'ahimsa' and truth will lead to solution that is the state of being saved from sin.

To sum up, I would like to say that the poet Peeran is dexterous in his use of images. Common, ordinary and insignificant objects become powerful images with the master stroke of the literacy artist and making them apt in their context. His spiritual consciousness is reflected through the images and allusions in his poetry. He sometimes tend to be didactic in his approach as he ask one to attain piety by:

Repent and turn a new leaf again  
Vow to lead a life of Ahimsha and Truth  
Sacrifice pleasure and live in humility  
Piety is a sure way to attain salvation<sup>68</sup>

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## **Influence of Faith**

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### **Sufism and Islam**

F.A.D. Tholuck, the German theologian coined the term 'Sufism' for 'Tasawwuf' in 1821 and the term has gained universal currency in western writing. Sufism is not just a doctrine but its concern is with experiential reality, and it determines the practitioner's reality, and it determines the practitioner's mental attitude. Therefore, it has been defined differently according to the exponent's individual temperament. According to Swiss scholar F. Schnon, "Sufism is the kernel of Islam, and for it there is no reality to check save the reality"<sup>1</sup> and its essential feature is "Sincerity of faith"<sup>2</sup>. Sayyed Hussain Nasar defined Sufism as the devotee's quest of absorption with the Deity. "The aim of all Sufism is union with the Divine which comes as a result of the love created in man for Divine Beauty"<sup>3</sup>. The renowned Sufi saint, Abul Khair held the services of mankind as the service of God and counseled his disciples. "Seek God in the hearts of afflicted men... to bring joy to a single heart is better than to build shrines for worship"<sup>4</sup>.

The substance of Sufism is the true and the meaning of Sufism the selfless experiencing and actualisation of the truth. The practice of Sufism is the intension to go towards the truth by means of love and devotion. This is called the 'Tariqat', the spiritual path or way towards God.

Several great religions have similar teachings and all aim at reaching the truth through various methods. Sufism or Irfan or Tasawwuff has totally arisen from Holy Quran, precepts of Prophet

Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihai Wasallam and from the life of his companions. In the modern world due to advent of materialism, conflicts of cultures and disarray, there is need for the man to return to spirituality and it is the need of the hour. Sufism or Tasawwuf or Irfan teaches man to live a perfect and ideal life sans tensions and free from hatred, greed, hypocrisy and other human weaknesses without giving up the rigmarole of life.

Sufism or Tasawwuf or Irfan teaches humanism, love, brotherhood and oneness and believes in creating a world citizenship through Tauheed (monotheism). Sufism or Irfan is a way of life to achieve perfection in manners, to cultivate and culture the mind and heart with purity of thought and good behavior through possession of all virtues and negation of all vices by a process of self-annihilation, self-realisation, self-sacrifice and surrender of will before the Supreme Will of Almighty Allah. Sufism is absolutely peaceful and totally non-violent movement to awaken the soul to greater grandeur through simple living and practicing lofty ideas through meditation, *Zikr* (incantation), *Sama* (singing of holy hymns) and other Sufi practices, by accepting the *Risalah* (prophet hood) of Holy Prophet Mohammed Sallallahu Alaihai Wasallam strengthening of faith, servitude (*Yaqaen*) by protecting the precepts of Holy Prophet. Performance of daily Namaz (prayers) act and deeds of righteousness, seeking and observing '*Taqwa*' (awe of Allah), '*Taubah*' (repentance), '*Tawakkal*' (fully surrender and trust in Allah), '*Ikhlas*' (sincerity), '*Sabar*' (patience), '*Shukr*' (gratitude, thankfulness), *Zikr* (remembrance), '*Istiqamat*' (uprightness) a state in which Allah's grace comes perpetual for it implies the perfect performance of Allah's service. Human beings are dominated with selfish desires and fears.

Those who are ensnared in these habitual impulses are out of harmony with the Divine nature, and thus are ill. As a result of this illness, feeling becomes disturbed and accordingly, thought and perceptions becomes unsound. Thus, one's faith as well as one's knowledge of the truth shy from what is real.

In order to follow the way of perfection, one must first rectify these in correct thought process and transmute one's desires and fears. This can only be accomplished by coming into harmony with the Divine Nature. This way of harmony (The spiritual Path) consists of spiritual poverty, devotion and the continuous selfless remembrance of God. In this way one comes to believe the truth as it really is.

### **Sufi-Tradition**

“Sufism itself is not a religion, nor even a cult with a distinct or defined doctrine. No better explanation of Sufism can be given than by saying that a person who has a knowledge of both outer and inner life is a Sufi...The Sufi message gives to the world the religion of the day and that is to make one's life religious and to turn one's occupation into a religion, to turn one's ideal of a religious ideal”<sup>5</sup>

### **Sufi Saints of India**

India is the land of spiritualism. Some of the major religions of the world have been started over here. Sufism has also spread in India since a long time and even today we find a number of Sufi followers here. Some of the popular Sufi saints of India have been discussed below –

#### ***Khwaja Moinuddin Chisty***

Khwaja Moinuddin Chisty was one of the most famous Sufi in India. He is founder of the Chisty order in India. He was born in Persia and is said to be a direct descendent of Prophet Mohammad. He settled in Ajmer in India from where he preached the principles of Sufism to all. He had a massive following and even today, people irrespective of other religions are adopting his principles of Sufism.

#### ***Hazrat-Nizam-ud-Din***

Another famous Sufi-saint of the Chisti order in India was Hazrat-Khwaja Nizam-ud-Din. His real name was Muhammad and at the age of 20, he became the student of Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar. He



was revered saint who was supposed to have been the master of Amir Khusro.

### ***Bulleh Shah***

Baba Bulleh Shah was a revered Sufi Saint of India whose real name was Abdullah Shah. He preached his teaching and principle in Punjab. During the time he was at his peak there was much unrest between Muslims and Sikhs. He preached nothing but the truth and his words of wisdom pacified those affected by the constant tiffs between Muslims and Sikhs.

The true Sufi is basically a God – loving man fully involved in the normal activities of life. He stays amongst the people and eats and sleeps with them and sells in the market, and marries and take part in social gathering, and never forgets God for a single moment. Peeran fits the above statement as also a Persian Sufi axiom aptly sums up the attitude – “*Dardunya bash, az dunya mabash*”<sup>6</sup> (Be in the world, but not of the world).

This Sufi tradition can be seen in S.L. Peeran’s poetry.

Peeran views Sufism as a secular attempt for eternal quest of the soul for its direct experience of the ultimate Super power. One can easily glance his purified thought in his poems. In the poem “Humility and Submission” from the collection *The Sacred Moment* like a true Sufi he express his view. He mentions about three things, pride, anger and ego, which are the root of all crime, and one, can win over these morasses only if he submits with humility at the feet of Lord.

Only those who submit with humility to the Lord  
Will free themselves from pride, anger and ego.

The Satan has promise not to trouble the humble.<sup>7</sup>

The poet has related here the story-when Almighty Allah kicked Satan out of heaven, he promised that he will degrade His follower from their path except humble man. In the same poem the poet mentions the characters of a humble man as truthful, simple, gentle, courteous to his parent, never complains, thankful, pleasing

to all, self-control, patient, and performs his duties without complaints.

He is truthful, simple in manners talks and dress.  
 He is gentle to the core in his speech and gait.  
 He is courteous to his parent, relatives, friends.  
 He walks with softness with eyes on the ground.  
 He never complains of his misfortune and woes.  
 He is always thankful for the Bounties received.  
 He is pleasing to all to whom he addresses.  
 He is full of self-control with twinkle in his eyes.  
 He is patient and exerts himself to maintain it.  
 He recognises the good done to him by one and all.  
 He performs his duties cheerfully without complaints<sup>8</sup>.

The Sufi follows the path towards God primarily by means of Love. For the Sufi who is enraptured with the love of God (who is the source of all existence), all of existence is extra ordinary beautiful. As in the poem “What is Khulus”? Peeran points out the virtue of humbleness, proving the dictums “humbleness is godliness”. Humility is praiseworthy and according to Holy Scripture God is merciful to the humble.

I want to know from you as to what is “Khulus” and who is  
 “Muklis”?  
 Satan is afraid of “Mukliseens”.  
 Those are most humble, God – fearing  
 And most simple ones.  
 Is simplicity, sincerity profound? In it humility resides and  
 Divinity descends.  
 A sincere person is a most humble person,  
 is without ostentation without pride, prejudice.  
 He does not put but on airs  
 he is never arrogant and haughty.  
 He walks with softness.  
 His speech is honeyed tongue.  
 He has no roughness.  
 He is gentle to the core.  
 He is forgiving and does not mind  
 taunts, criticism and humiliations.  
 He suffers pain, agony with light – hearted humor.  
 He is not angry  
 But jolly and extremely good,  
 good and good full of love.<sup>9</sup>

A humble person is adorned with simplicity, softness gentleness and kindness. His speech is ‘honeyed tongue’ and he is gentle to the core and extremely refine and full of love. In the poem “Bliss Amidst-Poverty” from the collection *A Call from the Unknown* the poet shows his concern for poor and says spirituality can vitalise the wretched one because God does not differentiate between rich and poor. The presence of divine light is the universal remedy of ills that make man indifferent to all the hurdles and obstacles of life. In the poem *Peeran* shows the satisfaction of the poor

Ah! We are impoverished  
Poor wretched souls  
With dwellings which  
Despise the rich  
A divine light dwells  
In our hearts  
To console, give solace  
To be at peace and in bliss<sup>10</sup>

In the poem *Peeran* puts his Sufi thought and finds that man should not spend his life in trifles of worldly desires and grieve in pain on not finding the cherished dreams, but he must surrender himself before the Almighty.

In another poem “Ego to Zero” from the collection *New Frontiers*, *Peeran* discards ego and says there is no place for ego in the universal brotherhood, it only leads to nothing, as also essence of Sufism is there in the poems of the *Peeran*. So, Sufism is that you should not possess anything nor should anything possess you. The difficulties in following the path or obstacles of getting closer to God drive primarily from one’s self or ego. In other words, it can be said that if one is not recognising or experiencing God’s “Closeness” or presence, the responsibility for this condition lies with one’s oneself:

He can never understand,  
The sweetness of the smile.  
Remaining calm with patience,  
With a glow on a radiating face.

To thrill the heart million times,  
With yearning love of the universe  
To charm oneself with the beauty of Nature  
To feel one and merge with the ocean.

Ah ego! You make everyone a big Zero  
You need to be subdued, to see the light within.<sup>11</sup>

Some of the gross efforts of the dominance of the 'ego' are that one may become overwhelmed by the need to gratify desires such as anger, lust, and the many addictions that afflicts. Other gross effect are that one may become dominated by state of consciousness such as anxiety, boredom, regret, depression, and self-pity-so that one feels like a powerless victims or prisoner tortured within one's own mind. Poet Peeran not only discards ego, but also suggests that best way to subdue ego is to control over self from acting but one's anger or gratifying addictions and to remember God at every inch of moment.

The Sufi follows the path towards God primarily by means of love. For the Sufi who is enraptured with the love of God, all of existence is extra ordinarily beautiful. Peeran also after suppressing anger and subduing ego talks about love and 'sharing love with other' in the poem "Sharing Love" from the collection In Silent Moment.

Love is sacrifice and sacrifice is to die  
A sincere attempt to give up every lie  
The inner being gets effaced for the Beloved  
Immersed in thoughts, drunk in His breath.<sup>12</sup>

Sacrifice is the foremost criteria for love, the secret of success and the secret of true, happiness, is to manifest in one's own behavior all that one would like to receive from other. If one-wants smiles and kind looks, should offer smiles and kind looks to others:

Where love lets lovely springs to flow  
In its bottom lies dormant sorrow  
To creep up and let streams of tears  
On sad thoughts, for love to share.<sup>13</sup>

If one wants an Angel, a Heavenly Being to come and instruct and guide, should find someone who has had less opportunity to learn, and start by sharing light with him. Your action will be reflected immediately in the Invisible world and spirits of light will be drawn to help you in the way.

R.K. Singh says, “Peeran as a seeker of Truth, understands that the divine Avatars on earth have been the true education of human kind. Without their guidance the human race could not have raised itself above the level of the animal.”<sup>14</sup>

In the three long poem “Birth Of Moses”, “Birth Of Jesus” and “Birth Of Prophet Mohammed” from the collection *A Call From The Unknown*, elevated to the point of spirituality through his Sufi idea that whenever people practice human virtues as taught by Divine soul always lay the foundation of love, equality, justice, humanity, universal brotherhood, unity of mankind, peace and harmony.

Moses called upon them to a life of righteousness,  
To shun sins and fulfill the covenants  
Sacrifice their being with lofty ideals  
To purify mind and heart for brightness.<sup>15</sup>  
Sell your possessions  
And give to poor.  
Then you will have riches  
In the heavenly paradise.<sup>16</sup>

Srinivasa Rangaswami opines about Peeran that, “Peeran sees the infinity Mercy of the Lord and the fulfillment of his promise to manifest himself, as occasions arise, to restore order in society and redeem mankind.”<sup>17</sup>

United poor and rich, master and servant,  
A new social life, a new gait  
A new learning, of excellence  
Opulence and mirth surrendered.<sup>18</sup>

Peeran does not set any doctrine rather he is didactic, outpouring in verse set out to proclaim a divine purpose in life and a global sense of spiritual realisation which need to be readdressed

by people of all religions for the common good of the family of Man.

### **Islam**

Islam is a monotheistic religion originated with the teachings of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) a 7<sup>th</sup> century religious and political figure. The word Islam means “submission”, or the total surrender of oneself to God, (Allah).

Islamic theology says that God’s all messengers since Adam preached the message of Islam – submission to the will of God. Islam is described in the Quran as “the primordial nature upon which God created mankind”<sup>19</sup>.

Peeran very well in poetry co-relates the reference of Quranic verse and relates story in his poetry, giving a touch to his Sufi idea.

‘The Birth of Prophet Muhammad,’ is a long, biographical poem from the collection ‘A Call From The Unknown’, begins with “darkest hour” of pre-Islamic Arabia, which has also been mentioned in Quran. Against this back ground of ignorance and savagely Peeran highlights the teaching of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh)-

To not wage war or create strife  
 To compound and compromise  
 To be charitable and compassionate  
 To be always just and truthful<sup>20</sup>

As a devout Muslim, Peeran’s emphasis is on the inner life. He wants to change the world through the teaching of Islam and spread brotherhood in the world. As in the poem, he sketch as the reason for the birth of Muhammad (PBUH)

A star was born, a light shone.  
 A manifestation of the ultimate Truth.  
 Purity in shining dress dawning,  
 To cleanse and illumine the universe.<sup>21</sup>  
 To take humanity to Zenith of peace.  
 To open the floodgates of knowledge.  
 To unite man and man in a single bond.  
 To liberate the destitute, infirm, oppressed.<sup>22</sup>

In the poem, Peeran dexterously presented the whole span of prophet's life, mentioning about Quresh, situation of Mecca, Gabriel the angel, his wife Khatija, how 'Quran' emerged and five pillars of Islam-Pray five times a day, observe fast, give charity, and Haj.

In the poem "The Day Of Judgment", the poet candidly reveals that when a human being reaches the other world, he comes before an assembly of highly evolved spirits who remain with him while he watches the projection of the film of his life on earth. The film is not shown for their benefits. They already know the degree of evolution he has reached, his sins as well as his good deeds; it is the man himself, poor creature, who needs to see the film, for he is so ignorant that he does not know himself.

In the beginning was His name.  
The holy of the Holiest name.  
To remain for eternally as one.  
The sole ruler, Creator,  
The Destructor.  
To withdraw with a command.  
When the mothers would throw away their suckling.  
When one will not care for the other.  
When the sun would come down.  
When the stars would be thrown us under,  
When the mountains would melt and scatter.  
When a shrill cry will end humanity.  
When all would be called for judgment.  
When the great book would be opened.  
When all the action recorded are read.  
When the scales are weighed and justice done.  
When everyone would get their due share.  
When the virtuous would cross the bridge.  
When the bridge would be thinner than a hair.  
And sharper then the shining sword.  
When God fearing would pass like lightning.  
When the evil doers would fall in the abyss.  
When they would be given hot boiling water to drink.  
When the hell fire will engulf the corrupt.  
When surely the day of reckoning would dawn.<sup>23</sup>

Same description of hell is also revealed in Quran about the Day of Judgment or Qiyaamat. (Verse 40 section-2).

Peeran in order to awake the wrong doer presents the description of hell and alerts them that if they do not obey or submit to the will of God, must be ready for worst. The poem is very direct and the poet depends little on conventional tropes and embellishment.

The poem “Black Stone” from the same collection also reveals the Islamic faith. The Stone which is kept in Kaaba, the House of God (Allah) at Mecca, Arabia by the Holy Prophet Abraham. The pilgrims from all over the world presses their lips on that Black Stone, on which Prophet Muhammad planted his lips with kisses.

Let me kiss the Blackstone  
The stone that has stood from time  
Immemorial, from antiquity <sup>23(a)</sup>

In another poem “Zenith of Inner Peace” from the collection. In Sacred Moments, the poet shows that the path of wisdom is never easy; it is always full of obstacles. The word venomous creatures, snakes shows the height of difficulty in the way of wisdom in the poem.

While trying to retrace old  
Ancient path of wisdom.  
You find on the way, deadly  
Venomous creatures, snakes.  
To obstruct your path.  
To distract your mind.  
To destroy your tranquility.  
To disable your efforts.<sup>24</sup>

The truth which is revealed through the poem is always same from ancient times, so through the poem, Peeran also narrates the story of Prophet Abraham, his difficulty and how he conquers over it, which has been mentioned in Quran also.

The story is –when Allah asked Prophet Abraham to sacrifice is dearest possession, he become ready to sacrifice his son, Ismail as his son is his greatest possession. While taking his son to sacrifice



on the path of Allah, he meets Satan who tries to distract him from his path, not only this, Satan also went to his wife to create confusion and again went to him to create problem and difficulty on his way, but yet unable to distract him from his goal. Almighty Allah is so glad to see his firm determination that the place where Satan tried to distract Abraham, became a holy place and pilgrims at the time of 'Haj' use to throw Stones to show the victory of truth over evil. The poem also narrates the same thing that if one is focused on his goals with single minded devotion, he will certainly achieve his ultimate goal:

You need to concentrate on your  
Goals with single minded devotion.  
When you overcome all your hurdles,  
You reach the zenith of inner peace.<sup>25</sup>

Another poem 'Moharram Tazias" from the collection *In Rare Moments* bears a religious tone in its description of the religious procession with people drumming and dancing and calling 'Ya Hussain' 'Ya Hussain', youngsters beating their chest, boys with green turbans carrying silver "panjhas" and fakir walking on burning coal.

Fakirs exhibiting bravado by walking on burning coal  
Good Samaritans sprinkling rose water on all.<sup>26</sup>

In the poem, the poet also mentions about the tailor Raju and his Mannat for the health of his son and groom for his daughter.

A mannat for the health of his son,  
And for a groom for his cheeky daughter<sup>27</sup>

By mentioning all these, Peeran shows the importance of the day in Islamic calendar. The poet has used many Urdu words like 'Maulvi', 'tazia', 'panjhas', 'fakirs', 'mannat' and 'fateha' to impart it with the feeling of the occasion.

In the poem "Lord Ever Merciful Beneficent" from the collection *A Ray Of Light* describes the story of how Satan is banished from heaven (which has a reference, in Quran also)-When Allah asked Satan to submit before Adam, Satan disobeys Him

saying that man is made from clay and he is a part of light, so he is more powerful and will never submit before man, as a result Allah punished him and discarded him from heaven and from that day Satan become the sole enemy of man.

To ever remain as an arch enemy of man  
 To tempt, lure, lead him to commit sin,  
 To indulge in sinful, mirth joy and pleasure  
 To make man to hate man for destruction<sup>28</sup>

To sum up Peeran's Sufism and Islamic believes, I would like to say that the core of Sufism is to leave the ordinary life, in order to close down the distance to God and by reducing the distance between man and God, man also gets closer to truth and knowledge. The soul is seen upon as an element that can stretch out from the kernel body and pass through the divine spheres. C. L. Khatri quotes about Peeran's Sufi view that – "For the poet the goal of life is to be one in solitude and to free forever shackles of every kind and he partakes into the glory of a teacher saints and prophet"<sup>29</sup>

Peeran's religious belief as a religious and pious man expresses his praise to the great Creator, who has meticulously designed the exterior and interior of man with harmony.

Peeran looks upon God for his mercies and miracle. Many of his poems witness the firm faith of the poet on God and reveal the fact that though there is little variation in the form of worship, all prostrate at the feet of God to be blessed by Him.

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## **The Process of Spiritual Transformation in S. L. Peeran's Poetry**

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The process of spiritual transformation is very complex and involves a development of a new way of knowing and relating. It involves profound change in self-identity and understanding of "the meaning of life". In religious context, it means a new revelation and relation to the sacred.

Spiritual transformation is perhaps best likened to a change in one's level of consciousness. It is an experience one undergoes which is transformation of one's personality and one's perspective. One sees in a different way than one saw before the transformation. It is not so much a change in a particular belief or view point as it is a change which takes one beyond all viewpoints....<sup>1</sup>

Spiritual transformation does not depend upon the belief in any system of putative truths. It does not require faith in a specific form of religion or adherence to any set of religious practices. It does not imply a Supreme Being or worship in any prescribed form nor does it point to the authority of any particular revealed scripture...<sup>2</sup>

... Spiritual transformation is unlike mystical transformation, because, there is no sense of becoming one with the cosmos. One does not lose one's identity in same kind of undifferentiated with the all...<sup>3</sup>

...Spiritual transformation is also unlike mystical transformation because there is no special secret knowledge which one must

learn or to which only a special and select group of initiates is  
privy...<sup>4</sup>

Peeran's poetry is not mystic but spiritual. Apparently, the poems look like mystical transformation, but the poet describes in the poem mercy and compassion that whenever a person becomes hopeless from the earthly sources or the people around him, he seeks help from the God and God helps all His creations.

When I was in dreary condition  
Having lost all hopes and in disillusion  
Despondency gripping me all over  
Cast away from doors of friends and foes

A voice from beyond reached my ears  
Awake, arise, my doors are open  
Reach me with your loving heart  
I shall receive you with open arms

A shattered being with million wounds  
Grief's plenty with stricken heart  
Soul dipped in desolation, pathos  
Now sparkled with joys and there I stood  
To receive the grace from the Merciful  
Whose compassion envelopes a dear soul.<sup>5</sup>

In the poem, the poet is not showing the secluded relationship of human beings with the God, but he is trying to convey that the God reaches to every human being in the form of human.

"Peeran is a poet with a mission having unshakable faith in God, he believes that darkness will disappear, sorrows will vanish and goodness will shine forever"<sup>6</sup>. The poet believes that it is worthless searching God in mosques, temple, churches and gurudwaras, one can easily find Him within oneself. The poem "Faith" from the collection *New Frontiers* exhibits his faith, in almighty, the omnipresent—

Where do you find faith?  
In mosques, in temples  
In mausoleums, in churches  
In synagogue, in gurudwaras

In name, frame, success  
 In giving up world  
 And pleasures and attachments  
 In silence, in meditations  
 In prayers, in acts of charity  
 Isn't faith, a mere belief? In the unknown  
 In the supernatural  
 That is pure, and sublime  
 That is truthful and just  
 It is that which sees and judges  
 That who loves and cares  
 That omnipresent but invisible  
 The one who kindles the heart  
 Look within yourselves and find – Him.<sup>7</sup>

Peeran believes in Sufism and Spirituality and this belief makes him a poet of faith and hope, a poet with a healing touch and a reminder to man of his duty towards himself, life, world, faith and his poetry is all about human being and all-embracing shades of life.

Each one of us have  
 Our own galaxies  
 They are satellites  
 With our sun.  
 They reflect the splendour  
 Of the everlasting light.  
 When the darkness descends  
 The cold moon without habitation  
 Moves round and round it master  
 Waxes and wanes again and again  
 To create time, a path to tread  
 Both the master and the servant  
 Work in unison and in harmony  
 To create unlimited and unseen seasons  
 For man to reflect and ponder upon<sup>8</sup>

Peeran's poems are very reflective, meditative, descriptive in which substantiate human nature by throwing light on human nature and growth.

“... Spiritual transformation is unlike philosophical explanation because it is not a deduction from a previously accepted premise.

In this sense, because it is not a logical deduction, it may be said not to be an intellectual act. It is noetic but it is not intellectual. But it is perhaps best likened to the experience of sudden insight, the “aha” experience in which we suddenly understand something which we previously fathom. In this case, however, the ‘aha’ experience is not an understanding of how one’s whole thinking process had been misdirected. In philosophical language it is an awakening from one’s dogmatic slumbers.”<sup>9</sup>

Peeran also followed the tradition that spiritual transformation is not the philosophical transformation. He is not guided by any intellectual or any other doctrine intellectual talk in poems. He does not criticise other religion or faith in his poems rather he shows the positive side of other religion without deviating from his own faith as a Muslim rather he broadens the Muslim Faith by highlighting best features in the light of its other faiths, for example the poem “My Good Old Friend”

Once in a deep sleep, I dreamt  
Being in a mosque, flooded with lights  
A bearded turbaned moulvi  
Leading prayers and piteously seeking grace

I later walked out and passed through  
A temple full of worshippers  
The same moulvi, now I found him  
As a poojari, placing artees  
In a moment, I found myself  
In a church, the padri dressed

In long whites, placing candles  
On the altar and doing service  
In a flash, I recognised him  
So did he. He smiled and  
Waved his hand in familiarity  
Adorning different dresses and manners  
Muttering in different tongue the same name.<sup>10</sup>

The poem stresses on the fact that only the name and shape and way of worship changes according to the belief of the people as in the above poem he finds the same man everywhere only the

dressess and manners are changed though different person but the same name.

Peeran's philosophy is not imaginative but a real life situation:

Nature does not betray those:  
Who are loyal and true  
Who are trustworthy  
Who are humble and honest  
Who are kind and affectionate  
Who keep their words and promises  
Who are grateful and contended  
Who are patient and tolerant  
Who thankful and merciful  
Who are loving and sweet  
Who obey, perform duty as sacrifice.<sup>11</sup>

In the poem Peeran, presents his philosophy about nature, which is not imaginative. Nature always helps them who keep their words and promises, if one breaks social code then he can escape from it, but if one breaks nature law and rule, he cannot escape from it because nature has its own way to punish.

Spiritual transformation is unlike psychological insight because it is at ones broader than an exclusive of psychological insight the feeling of freedom from what had been previously burdening one. It differs from psychological insight in that it does not refer to any particular piece of self-knowledge which has been constricting ones vision. Rather, it refers to the mind's freedom from any and also mental blocks. In addition, spiritual transformation differs from psychological insight in that it doesn't simply remove emotional blocks, which owe their origins to emotional conflicts, but removes on entire mental block, much as a writer might suddenly become free from a writer block".<sup>12</sup>

Poet Peeran also stresses in his poems to get rid of psychological and emotional transformation directly, rather through emotion, he creates an environment for to get into the deep nerve of spirituality as in the poem "To My Little Daughter"



The poem starts with the advice of a father to his daughter, it arouses emotions as well as it puts an impact on the psychology of the reader also-

O my little daughter, look up and smile!  
Our journey measures but just another smile  
Sweet are those who always look for love;  
Speak softly can be gentle like a dove.<sup>13</sup>

But the poet's intention is not to show an emotional bond between a father and a daughter, but through them the poet presents the level of spirituality, where the father wants his daughter to see. The father asks his daughter to make friendship with celestial objects, so that she can never be hurt, as nature hardly betrays his companion and also asks her to submit herself at the feet of Almighty who only can shower His blessings selfishlessly –

With absolute Truth,  
Heaven can be sought,  
Of fruits of disharmony, partake not,  
For company, look to the sun, stars and moon,  
May they shower on you friendship's boon  
With sweet flowery eyes it with love,  
My dearest, seek benign blessings from HIM above.<sup>14</sup>

In another poem "Keep Check on Mind and Heart" the poet directly evokes that man should not take any decision in haste or in emotional flow, it only creates further problems without any solution, which sometimes also affects destiny: –

In a flash, in a moment  
A change of heart and mind  
A decision of far reaching consequences.  
Determines the future course of destiny.<sup>15</sup>

So, the poet strictly advises to keep check on mind and heart, he gives no space to emotional transformation. He further gives the example of uncontrolled mind and mad winds, which creates destruction and devastation: –

An unbridled, uncontrolled mind  
With thoughts let loose and free  
Swinging to the wild, mad winds

Without any anchor or sails.  
 Insure to lose its straight ways  
 Insure to get drowned sans life boat  
 In misery, in pathos and grief, it merges  
 So do the unchecked passions of heart.<sup>16</sup>

S.L. Peeran is a devout Muslim and practices all Islamic rituals but he is not a rigid Muslim. He is very tolerating towards other faiths. He looks at religion from a spiritual point of view rather than religious practices. He broadens Muslim faith by tolerating other faiths without loosing his own identity as a pure Muslim. According to him human problems are not simple, they are very complex. To understand them requires patience and insight and one can only solve them if he submits completely to the will of God. Peeran also stresses that to search God it is not necessary to go to mosque, temple or church, one can find God within oneself. Peeran's spiritualism emerges from Sufism and his relationship with God is through human being. He sees God everywhere and in everything. His spiritual edifice based on five pillars:

- a) Piety;
- b) Doing a good deed for the sake of God
- c) Trust in God;
- d) Steadfastness, patience and fortitude, and
- e) Sense of thankfulness a gratitude to God.

If we take a gist of Peeran's poetries, then it could be expressed in one word that would be 'piety'. "Piety is a state of conscience which imbued with a living sense of the omnipresence of God strengthens the discernment of right and wrong, stimulates the doing of Good deeds and in habits man from doing evil deeds. This conscience is ingrained in the heart of man along with its baser urges and it should be man's endeavor to promote and strengthen it and not a let it diminish and die out."<sup>17</sup>

For example the poem “Attain Piety”. The poem start with a natural phenomenon of a birth of a child from the womb of a mother and then turn to general question: –

Do you know whence you come?  
Do you remember your early years”  
Weren't you innocent with all childish act?  
Before you could decipher what was right and wrong?<sup>18</sup>

The poet by raising these question wants to convey that life is not easy to be understood through easy formulas or slogans, nor can they be solved at their own level by specialists working along a particular line, which only leads to further confusion and misery. Our problems could be understood and resolved only when we are aware of ourselves including others problem.

The poet further raises questions: –  
Can a corrupt soul attain piety?  
Can hand with blood be cleaned?  
Can gluttony be shunned for purity?  
Can desire for wealth and show be given up?<sup>19</sup>

And answers in next stanza by citing examples from historical figures, he says for a change, one must be answer of one's relationship, not only with people but also with property, with ideas and with nature to bring about a true revolution in human relationship, which is the basic of all society. To show this change the poet has cited the examples of Ashoka, Siddhartha, Mohammad and Gandhi.

Remember Ashoka shunning war with Kalinga Siddarth attained Morcha on detachment Mohammad united mankind with brotherhood Gandhi achieved truth by struggle.<sup>20</sup>

Violence can bring wealth and power but to mental peace, it could only be achieve by sharing love and piety. The attainment of piety is the object of all worship and the goal of human endeavor.

Repent and turn a new leaf again  
Vow to lead a life of Ahimsa and truth  
Sacrifice pleasures and live in humility  
Piety is a sure way to attain salvation<sup>21</sup>

Attending salvation is not that tough task but a single sleep is needed in right direction. As also quoted in Al-Quran “O men, worship your lord who created you and those who have gone before you so that you may attain piety” (Q.2”237)<sup>22</sup>

In the poem ‘Magnetic Attraction’, the title itself suggest that the poet is presenting the magnetic attraction of God by calling HIM faceless, Nameless, Formless, but here is this poem, the poet has also generalise human being who helps other without revealing his identity –

I know that, I don't remember,  
Your name, my memory fails me,  
But, the very thought of yours  
Bring a million fold of joy in me,  
I know you are  
Unfathomable inconceivable  
Yet I know you, yet I know you  
Yet I feel your love, your grace.<sup>23</sup>

The poet wants to thank God for creating such a creation, in which one can see the glimpse of God and also insist other to follow the same path as humble man fallows. According to the poet nothing is more important for a man than to love His creator and creator’s creation. Nothing is comparable. Because of this love everything falls into place, problems resolve themselves, life becomes harmonious and even if we fail to get visible result in this incarnation, it does not matter, for entities from on high watch over us and when he sees that we are making an intelligent effort show his approval by sending us all kinds of blessings.

The poem “Enlighten Soul” depicts Peeran’s belief and love for master, he says whatever he is now, is blessing of lord. The poet says “The sun in my heart”, “The moon in my mind”, “The stars in my eyes” and “the cool breezes from all side”, have enlightened soul. Unflinching faith brings nearer to God and keeps fire of hell away.

Life which was measureless and dull  
Has now enlivened and found pace

The shadows are waning away  
Love is now a perfumed garden<sup>24</sup>

The poet says by appreciating the creator and his creation, that the life which was once measureless and dull is now lighted, darkness is fading, love has stretched its arm like a perfumed garden and in this light, he wishes to see a glimpse of almighty –

O Master, can I have your glimpse  
To lift my sagging spirit, enlighten soul<sup>25</sup>.

The poet, in this poem presented his gentle thought and complete surrender because as long as the mind allows itself to be dominated and controlled by the desire for its own security, there can be no release from the self and its problems, and that in the only reason behind that there is no release from the self through dogma and organised belief.

Peeran is so much imbedded with the praise of God that in most of his poem he uses ‘Celestial imagery’ to express his gratitude and to glorify HIM.

“Every action will be judged by the motive behind it”<sup>26</sup>

Every good action should be motivated by a desire to obey God and to seek His Good pleasure and not for any worldly gains or rewards, show, ostentation or personal aggrandisement. Peeran is a visionary poet. He finds that to clear the mind and free the soul from darkness is a daunting task as the people are living in a cocoon and in a web of religious and ritualistic life and years to look at the cosmos without knowledge. ‘Golden Heart’ is such a poem

We have blurred our visions,  
Coloured our thought with  
Quixotic ideas,  
Now we want  
To give a fight like Arjuna  
To reach an imaginary goal,  
Closing our minds and eyes,  
And crying at the dense darkness  
Oblivious of march of time to a new era.  
The great one's have said God can't be found

In hills, mountains, plains an in temples  
 Mosque, churches, gurudwaras and synagogues,  
 But only in sublime, purified golden hears <sup>27</sup>

“Golden Heart” is a criticism of the behavior and attitude of the so-called religious people who indulge themselves in the construction and demolition of the temple or mosque. They do not know ‘Where does God reside? The poet make people believe that God cannot be found in hills, mountains, plains, temples, mosques, churches and gurudwaras why the people are illusionary? Because they have blurred their visions and coloured their thoughts. The poet has used the word ‘sublime’ and ‘purified’ are sufficient to solve every conflict of ideas if someone wants to see or have God first of all make their thought sublime and purify souls to this Quran enjoins.

So worship Allah purely for Him,  
 Surely pure worship is for Allah only <sup>28</sup>

As said earlier Peeran’s spirituality emerges from Sufism and Islam so he emphasized on – Worship or obedience to God, in all its ramification is not to be alloyed with baser motives, for that would be tantamount to ideal worshipping. In support of Peeran’s spiritualism I would like to quote prophet Mohammad (PBUH) “Beware your deeds should always be for the sake of God only, deeds which are done merely out of vanity or to catch the public eye will eventually bring harm to the doer”<sup>29</sup>. The poem “Stay away from places of strife” has a moralistic tone, the poet suggest here to stay away from all the strife because God is watching every deeds and every action is being also recorded. So one has to be careful about his deeds:

But they wish to deface the Lord’s face  
 For Lord is faceless, but is the sightless?  
 Every action is accounted and recorded  
 Does God reside in a house of sand and stones?  
 Broken heart can seldom be mended  
 On ruins of temples, a curse lies  
 For the Lord’s name had been defiled  
 Angels fear to tread such a ground

A place of strife sans divine love  
Sans sound hearts with grace.<sup>30</sup>

The poem also shows the poets disturbed state of mind due to the conflict prevailing everywhere. God has created human beings but Muslim, Hindu, Christians and Jews are the creation of land. Evils or virtues, rich a poor sensible or senseless and criminal or saviour are the ingredients of all religions. So it is very necessary for the people to save them from all these odds of life and submit to will of God, it will only provide a sound and peaceful life.

In the poem “Man of Nature” the poet refers to the dawn of Islam its message, the sense of unity and show the courage against all odds. He believes that truth and falsehood stand on opposite poles and lying holds the sway in most cases but it cannot vanish the glory of truth In the poem the poet has portrayed the effulgence of Prophet Mohammad (Pbuh) as a torch bearer.

Such were the Arabs infused with a new light  
Disciplined by the Great prophet of the age  
With a changed heart and mind, with brotherhood  
Charity and compassion, submitting to will of Allah.  
Those Arabs of that famed seventh Century  
Descended on all civilised world with a new spirit  
United all mankind, with a rule of law  
Made everyone learn alphabet and turned them godly.<sup>31</sup>

Peeran also put his spotlight on the fact that the best form of devotion to God is to seek knowledge. It enables the possessor to distinguish right from wrong. It is a weapon against enemies and an ornament among friends.

In the Poem “Let us Worship”, the poet preaches the feelings of universal brotherhood. Iftikar Husain Rizvi says about Peeran that “he thinks everyone should instill a filial feeling of oneness of bliss among the people”<sup>32</sup>

For worship or for awe and reverence  
Somebody should preside on a high pedestal  
Let him be a judge in a black robe  
Or a speaker in a house of elected men  
Let it be an idol of stone or clay

Or a house of God a Kaaba or church  
 Let him be an illumined being, a guru  
 Or a swami or a sadhu or a peer”  
 Let him be a humble teacher, strict  
 Or a priest – Simple, with a smile  
 Let them all remain of journey beyond  
 Of destiny, of God, bad and of peace  
 A feeding of Oneness, of bliss.<sup>33</sup>

Peeran in the poem again invites all the human being for prayer in whatever condition or whatever form they adore. He wants men to come close for an offering of goodwill towards others, which is indeed an offering of prayer to God. In delineating all this the ultimate aim of the poet is to reach absolute peace, supreme bliss, ecstasy and tranquility; by polishing the inner consciousness to highest degree of purity of thought and action.

Peeran has firm faith in God and his poems witness it clearly. Trust in God is the quality of highest orders which only a person of great moral fiber can attain. It does not sanction lethargy or inaction nor does it curb freedom in the exercise of the intellect nor does it engender any pessimism or passive acceptance. On the contrary, it builds up hope when everything around one may be dark and foreboding and rescues one from frustration when one sees one's effects perishing. It requires one to undertake a task with all the determination, effort and enterprise one is capable of and with the belief that, if the objection is good and the effort in the right direction, God will assist. In the poem “Sustain Life”, the poet says the secret of sustaining life is only by loving God and prostrating at the feet of Master, Life has its crashes and hurdles, still the love of God soothes and eases the burden of life: –

A joy ride may end in a crash  
 A soaring kite may dash to the ground  
 But the love for the Master sustains  
 And eases the burden of life.<sup>34</sup>

Peeran believes in constant struggle and strenuous endeavors of indomitable will refusing to be frustrated, and of complete faith



buttressed by utmost exertion to fulfill his mission that is everything which employs in attaining success, is a gift of God.

In “Trust in God” the emphasis is on personal efforts, hope and confidence in his mercy. Not only in personal effort compatible with trust in God but it is its prerequisite. Steadfastness, patience and fortitude are another trail of person’s spirituality, but many should not misinterpret it. It does not mean helplessness, pessimism or pitiful surrender, on the contrary, it means steadfastness of purpose, constancy of effort, control of passions, buoyancy of purpose and patience and fortitude in the event of failure and disaster as the poet says in the poem “Beacon of Light”.

Even prophets had to struggle in their lives  
Face mob attacks, jeers, humiliations  
Privations, hunger poverty and strife  
Some laid down their lives in their heavenly cause.  
Patience had been their main virtue.  
They would gulp down their anger and wrath  
Withstand tortures, pain caused to them  
Incarceration, banishment from people  
After years of struggle against all odds<sup>35</sup>

It requires that one should not get too impatient or excited that one should be thrown into gloom but should bear up trials and adversity with fortitude, should take lightly the difficulties, dangers and division in the path of God and endure afflictions caused by enemies and forgive them. In the poem “Forgive Them for They Know Not” the poet has very adroitly explained the reader that patience and forgiveness is a great virtue. He also asks to show valour and steadfastness in fighting against heavy odds:

Sometimes you may have to even gulp down  
Your anger at insults and humiliations  
Forgiving those who are their cause,  
For they know not what they do<sup>36</sup>

The tone of the poem is very suggestive. The poet conveys the message through his poem that if a person, who is treated unjustly bears injustice for the sake of God and declines to retaliate, then

God honours him by way of recompense in this and in the life to come.

You should maintain your cool with dignity,  
With silence and calmness as golden aids,  
Like time, forgiveness is a great 'healer'  
A balm to soothe pain and to heat wounds<sup>37</sup>.

The poet has used 'balm' in the last line, as balm is used to give relief from pain and in the same way 'forgiveness' also acts like balm for both the person that is one who forgives and one who is forgiven, both of them achieves mental peace.

Again in the poem "Hopes and Dreams", the poet talks about 'hope', 'dream', 'courage' and 'serenity' and through these objectives he reaches to his spirituality. The poet stresses upon the need of being hopeful, because it is hope that helps us to overcome all kinds of adverse circumstances:

We need hopes to overcome failures,  
Desolate feelings and to turn our blues.  
To overcome the bitter taste of defeat,  
To maintain the garden of virtues.<sup>38</sup>

Again, the poet conveys the importance of dream that can lead us to a harmonious and joyful tomorrow. 'Courage' is another quality that is significant to face all the challenges like:

We need to dream of rainbows  
To retain happiness and harmony  
We need to have courage of conviction  
Where mirages mislead, the way wards<sup>39</sup>

All these qualities lead to serenity of mind, patience and moral strength which help one to be peaceful, even at the most unfavourable situation. This is something which provides ultimate peace and harmony:

We need to have serenity of mind,  
Patience and moral strength to withstand  
The turbulent storms in the sea,  
To set the sails safely to the shore<sup>40</sup>.

Sense of thankfulness and gratitude to God is the bounden duty of man that he should be thankful to God for this benevolence, mercy, grace and loving care. Peeran repeatedly stresses that man should develop the talent of thankfulness. Its antonym is ingratitude which, in relation to God, means refusal to admit his bounties and to be grateful for them by showing obedience and submission to him.

As thankfulness to God engenders His love and reverences, it is the foundation of faith, the core of religion and the basis of worship. If a man believes in God and is sincerely thankful to Him, he had indeed attains success and attracts even more mercy and grace of God. This thankfulness is to be expressed in various ways by realising and admitting from the depth of one's heart by reciting his praises, by using one's faculties in His path, by showing kindness to his creatures and by submitting to his laws. In the poem 'His Grace' the poet praises the Almighty and presents his thanks:

With his Grace I could have a glance  
At His effulgence, which left me in a trance.  
His face radiates his divine glory,  
His beneficence, his might and mercy  
My being is enveloped with his compassion,  
Every particular in me is his creation.<sup>41</sup>

The poet is very thankful to Almighty, as he has bestowed his grace on him, which helps him to feel his effulgence. In the poem "Allah's Bounty", the poet directly invokes Allah and seeks His blessings as His bounty is limitless:

Allah's bounty is limitless.  
It is his Mercy and benevolence  
that such a Great Being should bestow  
His Grace on such insignificant creature like us.<sup>42</sup>

Poet Peeran through his poems chases away ignorance and darkness of the people at large. His poems clear the cobwebs in the mind and enable to develop faith in God.

In the poem "Summer Blues" the poet has portrayed the picture of summer with its wickedness as well as Allah's bounty in the form of 'lemon water', 'water melons, and 'cucumber':

Lands parching throats yearning for chilly lemon water. This summer, water-melons, bumper-crop of cucumber. Is a pleasant substitute for water-shortage.<sup>43</sup>

When in scorching sun, people feel quench for water, these fruits fulfil their thirst and people thank God for His blessing. Almighty has created so many Gifts for men, which provide comfort to human beings, but it is up to human beings how they present their gratitude toward God.

In the poem “Grant Thy Grace”, the poet wishes to let the reflection of the master shine in the mirror of his heart, so that he could present his appreciation to God (Allah):

Let me present million supplications.  
For your single grace and glance  
Goodness, if any earned in mortal life  
I present thee humbly for acceptance<sup>44</sup>.

Consciousness is the state of dynamic awareness; the awareness may be at different levels such as spiritual, intellectual, and emotional. Awareness at spiritual level is super – consciousness, awareness at intellectual level is self-consciousness, and awareness at emotional level may be called unconsciousness. Both intellectual transformation and emotional treatment could create disparity as intellectual treatment arises from idea and also it denies objective reality of the world. Psychological transformation arises from love and feeling, which sometimes create confusion and ultimately one cannot feel or have that essence or result, as in spiritual transformation because spiritual transformation is free consciousness, where there is no bondage of emotion, intellect and religion. Man merge in tolerance, universal brotherhood and total submission at the feet of God.

In Peeran’s poetry one can find only spiritual transformation. For him religion is mostly a personal experience and not limited to logical argument or perceptions of the senses. According to Peeran creative love, or the urge to rejoin the spirit to divinity, is the goal towards which everything moves. The dignity of life in particular to human life is important. Peeran’s spiritualism is very much similar

to that of Kabir Das and Amir Khusro as Kabir's and Khusro's spirituality emerges from Sufism. Peeran's spirituality also emerges from Sufism. In fact they present a mixture of Sufism and spirituality. This mixture of Sufism and spirituality in their poetry presents a kind of religious tolerance.

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## Conclusion

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The present scenario of contemporary Indian English poetry is under the shadow of gloominess. The growth of Indian English poetry has cut down to its knee length due to the insufficient acknowledgement of new poets by the readers, scholars, critics, media and publication houses. Researchers still wants to work on well-established poets to make their thesis valuable and easily recognizable.

Poets like Nissin Ezekiel, P. Lal, Kamala Das, A.K. Ramanujan, Jayanta Mahapatra, Shiv. K. Kumar and others contributed a lot to make Indian English poetry respectable. Several other poets from 1980s to 2000 have added to the diversity and innovativeness to the genre. In an interview published in Times of India, Ranchi, April 22, 2009, Sunil Gangopadhyay, President of the Sahitya Akademi, throws light on the future of literature in India” it is unfortunate that the electronic media does not contribute towards nourishing our taste for good literature and there is precious little to be found worthy after surfing the many channels. Therefore, one has to turn to literature”<sup>1</sup>.

S.L. Peeran among the contemporary Indian English poets stands amidst for his Sufi and Spiritual writing which provides a new dimension to Indian English poetry. It would be fair to quote Srinivas Rangaswami on his Sufi idea, “When we approach Peeran’s poetry, we are on holy ground. With a pilgrim of deep piety, utter humility and sincerity, infused with pure love and compassion for all the mankind joyous in the certainty of faith that goodness and trust will ultimately prevail over darkness and evil,

and ever blissful with a heart brimming over with yearning for union with universal soul”<sup>2</sup>

A poet like S.L. Peeran enjoys the distinction of being the only Indo-Anglican poet consistently producing Sufi verse of considerable merit. He not only sings the praise of God and humanity at large but also talks about existential issues and social environment, the richness of his experiences and range of his ideas, imagery, style, metaphor, personification all assimilate to Sufism; almost all of his collections provide a Sufi perspective.

My study shows that S.L. Peeran, an Indian English poet is steeped in Sufi ideology, which is nothing but a selfless service to mankind and sincere love of humanity at large. Peeran is a poet who plays in the cradle of spiritualism and entertains the faith that the world undoubtedly be a second heaven if there is religious tolerance; he condemns faction and group of all religion or class. He advocates comradeship, companionship and fellowship among his fellow being.

Peeran believes in Sufism and spirituality and this belief makes him a poet of faith and hope, a poet with a healing touch and a reminder to man towards himself, life, world, faith and his poetry is all about human being and all-embracing shades of life. Peeran's poem are very reflective, intuitive, descriptive, which substantiate human nature by throwing light on human nature and growth.

The different chapters of my dissertation, therefore, highlights the one or the other aspect of spiritual consciousness at different level for example-themes, imagery, style, Sufism and Islam.

The first chapter introduces the Indian English Poetry especially S.L. Peeran. It also introduces the study and states the objectives of the study.

The second chapter of my dissertation is based on the themes of S.L. Peeran's poetry. Peeran is an artistic poet, who believes in God and His creation. Being a Sufi poet, his poems show a state of spiritual journey towards God. Peeran combines his Sufi thought and personal experience in his poetry so, he is equally alive and



responsive to the present situation of the world as a well-known Sufi maxim is, “*dar duniya bash, bare-e-duniya ma bash*”<sup>3</sup>, live in the world but not for the world.

Therefore, one can trace a variety of themes in his poetry related to human concern like – nature; God’s precious gift, love for human being, humanity, love for God, family relationship, hope for future and socio-political condition.

The third chapter of the dissertation presents his style of expression, which includes formal style, diction, figurative language, sentence structure, use of punctuation’ and imagery. He uses words like Allah, divine, mercy, O’ Master, O’ Lord, which are complete in itself and show his inclination towards Almighty. His use of onomatopoeia, simile, metaphor and personification provides music and lyric to his poems. To quote Bernard M. Jackson about Peeran’s imagery, “the poet is not merely speaking of the beauties of Nature; the imagery clearly reflects God’s greater design for Humanity itself”<sup>4</sup>

The forth chapter is ‘The Influence of Faith; Sufism and Islam’. About Peeran’s faith Srinivasa Rangaswami says, “poet Peeran is a fascinating combination of the pious, mature, compassionate soul and a sensitive aesthetic being who sets great store by the abiding values of life...is God consciousness and a total belief in the virtue of universal love, the true humility and a spirit of servitude and complete surrender to the supreme power”<sup>5</sup>

The fifth chapter of the dissertation is ‘The Process of Spiritual Transformation in S.L. Peeran’s Poetry’, Peeran’s spirituality emerges from his Sufism. His relationship with God is through human being. He sees God everywhere and in everything. Aurobindo can be quoted to understand his spirituality, “... when the consciousness meets the supreme Reality or the spiritual reality of things and beings and has a contractual union with it, than the spark, the flash or the blaze of intimate truth perception is lit in its depths”<sup>6</sup>

His spiritual edifice rests on five pillars – piety, doing good deeds for the sake of God, trust in God, steadfastness, patience and fortitude and sense of thankfulness or gratitude to God.

Peeran does not believe in mystic transformation, philosophical transformation and emotional transformation. He believes only in spiritual transformation. For him religion is mostly a personal experience and not limited to logical argument or perceptions of the senses. S.L. Peeran achieves the artistic nourishment as he exhibits his spiritual ideology to create a way to God.

Thus, the poet emerges strongly as spiritually conscious of ‘tradition’ and ‘individuality’. His merit as an artist lies in his use of startling imagery, figurative language, his knowledge of Holy Scripture, tradition and culture of India and socio-political awareness.

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**Part III**  
**What they Say on the Poetry of S.L. Peeran**



## S.L Peeran: A Poet of Inner Vibrancy

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I have been reading S.L. Peeran's poems in various small poetry magazines that support new voices both at home and abroad. As the Octogenarian Founder President of World Poetry Society Intercontinental and Editor-in-Chief of Poet, Dr. Krishna Srinivas notes, "the Muse in Peeran has blossomed into" many-splendoured exuberance" in his seven collections of poems, namely, *In Golden Times* (2000), *In Golden Moments* (2001), *A Search from Within* (2002), *A Ray of Light* (2002), *In Silent Moments* (2002), *A Call from the Unknown* (2003) and *New Frontiers* (2005).

The poet, a late-bloomer, who started writing at the age of 48, is critical, philosophical, reflective, and interpretative of his milieu and influences. *In Golden Times* (2000), like other collections, offers an overview of the contemporary society besides a view of Peeran's own idealist temper. These reveal the depth and complexity in the poet's vision and literary techniques over the last few years. He appeals to me as one of the few form-conscious Indian English poets with a strong sense of rhythm. And, as a pursuer of Truth and Reality of Life, he is socially conscious as well:

How can I keep silence  
When my mind is tortured with bitterness  
On watching throttling of good sense;  
And Man slipping into utter darkness?

(‘Silence’)

And

Voices of the meek ones are suppressed;  
They are hardly allowed to take a fresh breath.  
Those that dare are cruelly oppressed  
On the altar of the Ever Living  
To protect the weak and meek,  
That's 'Life' for a human being.

And ruthlessly dealt a painful death.

The role of law should be 'Right,' not 'Might.'  
For Right has its balance of Equity,  
Overweighed by Goodness, Evil takes flight  
And Mercy emerges with equanimity."('Might and Right')

As a seasoned bureaucrat himself (he has been a Judicial Member of Customs, Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal at Chennai and Bangalore), Peeran is one with the general perception about politicians:

Deceptive are their faces, like a mirage,  
Hiding the traits of diabolic figures.  
With eyes trained to spot prey, like eagles,  
They wear whites to cover black souls within. ('Politicians')

He is critical of lawyers, too, who "in black flowing gowns" frequently disappoint their clients:

There's more sound than sense in what they argue –  
Fumbling with 'My Lord,' 'Your Honour' at every breath!  
Twisting words forcefully, but awrily, with stealth,  
They bore the judges with their long tongues! ('Lawyers')

He is aware of the egoist rich, who personify "an ugly/Demon, showing itself through a/Pretty face, to scare and ensnare/Everyone with its atrocious/Behaviour, to cause annoyance,/Give pain and wound soft hearts" (To a Stony Heart).

He shares his realisation:

Time alone will show that,  
With joy and grief, love and hate,  
Everyone's life is sweet and sour. ("Sweet and Sour")

and

Life is for supreme sacrifice  
On the altar of the Ever Living  
To protect the weak and meek  
That's 'Life' foe human being ("Human Life")

With his personal experiences of life's "snares and enigmas,"  
Peeran turns philosophical:

I now learnt to tune my mind  
To sun and shade, rain and storms,  
Struggles and strife's of every kind  
I realised life in its multiple forms." ("Trials and Tribulations")

With a sense of commitment, he portrays people and narrates incidents that provide insights into contemporary life and values. He is vocal about corruption ('A Corrupt Person') just as he is ironical about 'closed-door' meetings:

Files marked 'Secret' or Top Secret'  
Make their way into the Corridors,  
And information therein is exchanged for a fortune!  
(“A Closed-door Meeting”)

The disturbing trends in the country's management and norms of 'right' and 'wrong' make him yearn for the bygone days "when our lives were tuned to harmonious chimes/when no news was flashed of dowry deaths/...When milk and honey flowed in society" ('Golden Times').

There is compassion in his vision when he says "You must accept people as they are,/...To create and maintain healthy relations." Despite bitterness and anger, he advises us: "You should maintain your cool with dignity,/With silence and calmness as Golden aids,/Like Time, Forgiveness is a great 'healer'-/A balm to soothe pain and to heal wounds" ('Forgive Them for They Know Not'). He recognises differences among people and asks us to accept them retaining our "personality and individuality."

He is a firm believer in God, family and humanity. He stands for values like humility tolerance, love, truth, faith charity, respect, justice, freedom, peace, harmony, unity of God and mankind, promotion of education and culture and love of Nature. His *A Call from the Unknown* (2003) is replete with deeper spiritual realisations. He exhorts everyone: “Generate good will/For heaven’s sake save your souls/Save from destruction” (‘Haiku’).

Peeran has the “concrete immensity of the far beyond” to “burn the candle/of my life, at His feet in total surrender/I have no complains, demands, compulsions,/No grievances, grief, or pain./Undoubtedly, I am captured by HIM” (Total Surrender). His narratives of praise and thanksgiving-Test of Love,’ ‘Birth of Moses,’ ‘Birth of Jesus’ and ‘Birth of Prophet Muhammad’-fill up a gap in Indian English poetry. We have long poem son mythical/religious figures of Hindus but none on Muslim faith, except perhaps one by Krishna Srinivas, Muhammad: A Long Poem on Islam (1983). Peeran seeks to show the essential continuity in the religions of Moses, Christ and Muhammad and fulfilment of God’s promise and prophesy about his manifestations at different intervals. In fact, the poems on Moses and Christ serve as a perspective to the poem on Muhammad, “a manifestation of ultimate truth,” who appeared to lay the foundation for love, equality, justice, humanity, and compassion, preaching unity of mankind, universal brotherhood, universal love, peace and harmony.

Peeran, as a seeker of Truth, understands that the divine Avatars on earth have been the true educators of humankind. Without their guidance the human race could not have raised itself above the level of the animal. And if we forget the teachings of Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Moses, Christ, or Muhammad, we will simply descend to the laws of the jungle.

Our past history is full of instances to prove this point.

Whenever people practised love, justice, truthfulness and other human virtues as taught by Divine Souls, they have not only found personal peace and happiness but have been able to live in harmony



with others, achieving both spiritual and material progress. As soon as these essential qualities have been forsaken, prejudice, greed, and selfishness have taken hold of people's heart, and the inevitable consequence has been war, poverty, and downfall of the society as a whole.

Peeran, like Krishna Srinivas, reminds us that Prophets like Moses, Christ and Muhammad have been the mediums of God's infinite love, mercy, and grace for humankind. They all appeared at different times in different parts of the world to teach the same eternal truths. They are one. Prophet Muhammad reveals in the Quran: "I am all the Prophets." They are, in reality, one and the same because each is a pure channel through which grace of God has reached humankind.

The poet also understands that spiritual laws, such as love for God and service to one's fellowman, trust and hope in God and obedience to His commands, truthfulness, honesty, sincerity and humility are bedrocks of Dharma, the very foundation upon which depends the progress of our soul on its journey towards our Creator. They cannot change.

Hence Peeran's appreciative search for Buddha's middle path, Mahavira's ahimsa, love and grace, Ashoka's charity, Rama's valour, Krishna's truthfulness, Nanak's brotherhood, and Muhammad's grace, "to see the shining Truth" and to redeem himself.

As a devout Muslim, Peeran's emphasis is on the inner experience, inner life, inner realisation. His meditative mind scans memory, with a sense of gratitude for the constancy with which love asserts itself again and again and in moments of trial and crisis (cf. Test of Love/'Intense Love,' etc.). He rediscovers himself through the redeemer's touch just as he synthesises past experiences in the present. Apparently he may seem to give an expose of the truth of Ultimate Reality, or World, but what is significant is the way he raises certain questions of social relevance and poetically makes out his answers. For example, read his poem 'My Religion':

Yes, I do have a religion  
I do practise it  
Say my 'Namaz'  
Turn towards 'Kaaba' Recite 'Kalima'  
Do 'Zikr'  
Observe fasting  
Give Titra,' 'zakat'  
Yearn for circumambulation  
Around the Holy 'Kaaba.'

But my rites, my symbols  
Are acts of love  
To foster oneness  
To increase my yearnings

To look upon mankind  
As children of Adam and Eve  
Not for creating apathy  
Discernment and Distraction  
For cataclysmic schism  
For disharmony and strife.

Peeran composes his poems in "slow measured rhythmic tones," conveying the eternal message of Allah, the lone Creator, Guide, Giver, Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Ever Compassionate and Merciful, who, through His Prophet, reveals, the Holy Book to purify the soul and teach civility, as also regulates social and community life of His followers.

But the poet also appears as a Sufi, who is at home in all religions; he is in the world and yet not of it, free from ambitions, greed, intellectual pride and prejudice. Like a mystic poet, he devotes himself to understanding and reflecting the central mystery, with trust in simple wisdom; like a spiritual poet he conjoins thought and meditation, work and play, action and inaction, and seeks affinity with the mystical current so that he could be transformed by it. In his poems, every thought has an action, and understanding comes through love and faith in the divine, with trust in His Grace. His consciousness rises to the highest he is capable of and he tries to experience the divinity in himself.

The moralist in Peeran warns people not to be 'left out,' 'wasted out' or 'lose opportunities' but learn Truth, seek peace within, enliven their spirit. He expresses his concern about the rising nuclear threat, people's refusal to be humble and kind, and readily yielding to ego, power, vanity, haughtiness, treachery, and "becoming a victim of their own cage." In one of his reflections he pleads: "Let us fight back/Our selfish indifferences/And extend help/To men in distress." He also sounds critical of the widespread hypocrisy and insincerity, the "glib and oily art/To please and displease persons," and pleads for simplicity, courage of conviction, and earning "respect through character."

Most people need to recognise the enemy within, the taboos, superstitions, prejudices, jealousies, desires, hates, and all those egocentric behavioural "shackles and chains" that burn life "like a candle from both ends." Like a sage musician poet, Peeran sounds the 'Death's Trumpet' and warns: "Alas, alas, the time is lost/The White dove with stalk of peace/Now engaged with wings dipped/The road of peace lies drowned in sea of turmoil." The poet is moved by the misery and suffering of millions of destitute just as he is aware of life's paradoxes. His humanity revolts to notice:

"Man has braved for space odyssey  
To land on moon, mars and journey beyond  
But failed to catch Veerappan, the dreaded bandit  
End rigging, horse trading, scams, water shortage." ('Dare Me')

His everyday experiences of encounters with vain glorious civil servants, exploiters of the poor and needy, polluters of nature's beauty, disrupters of communal harmony, betrayers of love and all those who deny "our humble citizens (for) a peaceful living" make him realise: "Silence is a means of salvation/An alternative to sure devastation."

Though he may at times sound rhetorical, he is simple, articulate, learned and deft, singing "Glory to the Divine Self" and meditating "Like a hermit in a cage." The poems in *A Call from the Unknown* reflect a burst of the divine, a deeper personal experience

of divinity from the Unknown, through struggles for fulfilment of various desires, ambitions and enterprises, and realisation inside that it is only in love that one can find fulfilment. It is ultimately the all-encompassing Love that emerges “like a full moon shining white” and one tastes “the manna, dew and honey.” The poet evinces “inner vibrancy” and “passionate naturalness” in all that he writes, be it theme-based regular poems in different metrical forms, quatrains, haiku, tanka, or other short verses.

Now, a few comments on his haiku and tanka. Since Peeran is basically a spiritual poet with a strong socio-cultural awareness and liberal humanism, one finds in him an assimilation of diverse religious and cultural ideals and notions that manifest his tolerant mind. Needless to say, these are also reflected in his poems in the Japanese form (which progressively improve in each new volume) just as he echoes Persian and Urdu poetic devices, here and there:

“Oh my Beloved  
I wish I was never born  
thrown afar from You.”

“Your false claim of love  
Oh Peeran, where is justice  
Satan is in you.”

“Turn Thy face in love  
Or Peeran you shall face wrath  
And be forsaken.”

“Song, wine and women  
perfumes and scents for pleasure  
Drown yourself in pelf.”

Yet, he has some fine haiku, too: “Flow of tranquil stream/calmness begets mental peace/A Living Buddha”; “Champak's sweet fragrance/Reminder of eternal love/Mother Teresa”; “A roaming lion/Threatening peace of jungle/to make a grand feast”; “A pregnant woman/Crushed under road transport bus/Lawyers feel the glee!” “The clock on the wall/Ticking away to glory/My precious hours”; etc.

Peeran writes haiku about humans and human activities by way of spiritual reflection. He captures in his haiku form what he has experienced or wanted to realise. He uses the form to be brief, creating his own haiku-like image and rhythm in 5-7-5 syllables pattern. There may or may not be any reference to nature image (nor does haiku in English today insist on using one). Even if he may at times sound humorous or ironical (“University/Rogue students flirting about/Teachers blowing smoke” and “Lovers in gardens/Used condoms thrown everywhere/A wonderful sight!”) or senryu-hike, to be precise, there is no need to differentiate between haiku and senryu because the boundary between the boundary between the two has merged.

Peeran creates his own text in haiku or tanka with romantic, sentimental, intellectual, moral, and didactic expressions (“Seek sincerity/Approach wisdom, with goodness/To feel divine joys”). He offers a poetic, literary, or philosophical viewpoint, ending up with sublime poetry, creating the ‘form’ rather than adhering to the essential haiku spirit, or self-expression rather than perception experience. He is reality-oriented in his own way, communicating the reality of the inner truth, or recovering a sense of spiritual understanding and humanity.

Peeran uses the tanka form as lyric poetry, which it is, emotionally expanding the thoughts of haiku, so to say. If he appears fragmented or disjointed, it is normal just as the tanka form suits him well to record the sudden flash of intense emotion or perception: “Holed up like a rat/like a hermit in a cage/In meditation/To reach pinnacle of peace/A great man in the making”; “Great men seldom weep/Like tigers they show their strength/Standing like statues/On the pedestal of love/To conquer the hearts of men”; “A recluse mystic/Has neither will nor desire/To fill his clean mind/To seek the worldly fortunes/And luxury of the life”; “Holy cross at Rome/Holy Pope with a sceptre/Guides the hearts of men/where Christ dwells in humble hearts/To purify mind and soul”; and “Spring time is play time/Fragrance emitting in air/To cheer frozen hearts/Roses, roses everywhere/Delight the heart of lovers,” etc.

In his haiku and tanka, as in numerous other poems, long or short, Peeran demonstrates pure ecstasy with lyrical simplicity, emotional curiosity with self-reflection, and poetic sincerity with genuine feelings. His verbal articulation of various experiences with spiritual insights make him a significant poet of our time.

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## The Sanctified Muse of S.L. Peeran

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S.L. Peeran is a late but prolific bloomer. During the last eight years, he has produced ten fairly noteworthy collections of English poems. He is a bilingual poet, writing in Urdu as well for a longer time. In fact, one of his scholar-friends persuaded him to write in English too. In addition, he has written a couple of scholarly books on Sufism and Islam. Besides, he edits two bilingual journals in English and Urdu to familiarise the intellectuals with the Sufi message and literary classics, which he has inherited as a distinguished scion of a renowned spiritual dynasty descended directly from one of Islam's greatest mystics, Abdul Qadir Jilani (d. 1161). Most of Peeran's collections have been favourably reviewed.

Though Peeran's poetry does not follow any pre-set manifest and his poems are spontaneous, casual pieces, composed under inspiration of the moment yet some of his remarks and verses suggest a fairly consistent. *In Silent Moments*, he observes "*In Silent Moments* is an early offshoot of inner turmoil's, joys and ecstasies experienced in the calm and silent moments of night" (p.1). Out of modesty, he calls himself "an amateur poet". He continues, "I have not put any extra effort or strain. They have come to me spontaneously in a flash of moment and it has assumed the form of my personal poetry" (p.iii). The remarks remind us of William Wordsworth's theory of the "spots of time" and his definition as

“emotions recollected in tranquility”. Subjectivity and spontaneousness are the other distinctive marks of romanticism and even though Peeran clear of romantic themes, his view of poetry comes fairly close to the nineteenth century romantics.

Both by legacy and proclivity Peeran is steeped in Islamic spiritualism. Love and longing for god and His apostle – rather than dread – which is the essence of genuine Sufism vibrate through his verse. Traditionally, the novice has to rid himself of material concerns and temptations (SM p.14) (for abbreviation see the note at the end of this paper) which is followed by a vigorous remembrance (*Zikr*) of Allah. In the Ninety Nine Names’ the poet instructs:

Repeat the names on your lips.  
Inhale him surcharge You (SM, p.17)

But the quest of God is a challenging undertaking and requires adept steering by a “sound captain”, the illumined “Murshid” (SM, p.21). The exercise prepares the seeker:

For total merger  
With the supreme being  
In total bliss and ecstasy (SM.p.58)

Filling the seeker with eternal love (SM.p.61)

You forget you are waiting  
For your friend on the wrong platform. (SM, p.68)

Repeatedly, one is reminded that true love is the precondition and base of spiritual ascent.

Love is a candle of hope  
To burn to show love (CFU, p.61)

But the guidance and privilege is not the outcome of man’s earnest endeavor alone; it is essential a gift and grace of God:

When I lost hopes  
From all a divine voice  
Gave strength and guided me (CFU, 63)



Self-imposed poverty and riddance from avarice is the pre-requisite of Sufism, and Peeran confirms it in “Bliss amidst Poverty” (CFU). The Prophet himself, the supreme model of excellence of the Sufis is reported to have said repeatedly “Al-faqr-o-fakhri” (penury is my pride). Humility is the twin-sister of poverty and a window to spiritual light –

Ego to Zero” (NF, 24). A true Sufi is ever vigilant and in quest of the Divine Beloved:  
Hidden away from every eye  
O! My eyes ever in search (in CFU, 95).

The lover’s quest, however, is not a one-time operation. It has to be renewed and kept aflame every moment of life. Besides, god lives within, and reveals himself at His Will (Faith)

That who loves and cares  
That omnipresent – but invisible  
That one who kindles the heart  
Look within yourself and find Him. (NF, 5)

The poem “Mastani Ma – the green one portrays such an accomplished being. She is selfless, clairvoyant and caring. Her love is universal, and to her – as indeed to all true Sufis – mankind is one indivisible brotherhood (NF, 7). Peeran takes shrines and saints as reminders and receivers of divine grace, but not as His incarnations. No temple, mosque or the Kaaba holds him; he lives in the enlightened heart. Hence, the famous Sufi maxim “*man arafa nanfs-a-hufa-arafa Allah*” – self-realisation leads to God realisation (RM, 40)

Humanism and universal love are the inbuilt features of true Sufism that distinguish it from orthodoxy. Accordingly, Peeran holds all faiths in reverence. In the ‘communication’ he refers lovingly to the last supper, “Maryada Puroshotham”, Sachi danadam” and the Laila-tul Qadar” with equal gusto (SM, 25) and alludes to Mahavira, Jesus, Krishna, Moses, Tankas in the same collection (SM, 90-91). Elsewhere, in ‘My Religion’ he spells out his faith in *sulah kul* in these words:

To look upon mankind  
As children of Adam and Eve  
Not for creating apathy.  
For cataclysmic schism  
For disharmony and strife (A call from the unknown, p.5)

Again in the long poem 'Birth of Prophet Mohammed', the unity of mankind is emphasized in no uncertain terms. The Prophet's mission was:

To open floodgates of knowledge  
To unite man and man is a single bond.  
To liberate the destitute, infirm, oppressed. (CFU, 25)

This pervasive regard for mankind cannot but generate tolerance of diverse approaches to God and love for all his creatures. Peeran's heart turns him to well-being to the entire mankind. Torture, persecution and destitution of man anywhere on the globe upset him. He finds the events of calamity and affliction incompatible with man's creator's universal mercy in his poem "Why All this"

Ah Hiroshima, Bosnia, Sudan  
In all, dare devilry;  
A test for endurance (*In Silent Moments*, 35)

The scene of injustice dismays him:

Look, look, O Merciful, why all this  
Sorry state when you are known  
To be just, kind, compassionate.

Notes of humanism resonate in his verse and in fact, his Sufic beliefs further foster them. In different verses he recalls the feats and sacrifices of various benefactors and martyrs of mankind and has a utopian vision of future:

Let us wipe the tears of sorrows from every eye,  
Let none go to bed hungry, live bare sans clothes (FH, 42)

As a modern Sufi, Peeran combines the mission of amelioration of the people at large.

A well-known Sufi Maxim is *dar duniya bash, bara-e duniya ma-bash*. Live in the world, but not for the world. Therefore, they perform the obligations of the shariat, and attend to their secular interests as well in addition to their spiritual exercises. Peeran, accordingly, combines his Sufic interests with social and professional ones. But, he is equally alive and responsive to the ground realities of the world; he writes about his personal joys and sorrows and reacts sensitively to contemporary political morass and corruption.

The common man's daily life, riddled with perplexity and problems impresses him. For example, "Alas! Woman" exposes the Indian woman's tragic plight (CFU, 84-85) and the flaws of our judicial system are laid bare in 'Justice Done' (CFU, 78), while 'Mera Bharat Mahan' (FH, 22) satirises our hollow claims of national progress. The tragedy of twin world-towers is noticed in two poem – 'Alas mighty terror' and 'strike terror and Grief' (NF, 35-36). So also the 'Talibans' fanatical misdeeds shock his conscience, and he recommends to them tolerance and compassion.

you cut hands, stone a sinner to death,  
 Wither love for humanity on this earth,  
 Soul rending music does not stir you,  
 O 'Taliban' shun violence, acquire world view. ('O' Taliban'; FH, 32).

The anti-terror stance appears again in "frenzied Press" (The Sacred Moments, 44). Belligerence and state-terrorism is decried, vehemently in the poem. 'The Great Upheaval' about Iraq (ISM, 49-50). Calls of conscience and patriotism distress the poet as he thinks of communal violence in India. "Ah Gujarat' deplores the riots, and the innocents' slaughter revolts him.

What wrong had they done?  
 For their parents and homes.  
 To be burnt in the carnage.  
 Godra and the whole of Gujarat in turmoil! (NF, 72)

Peeran's deep spiritual concerns do not hamper his sensitivity to some vital current issues. Necessity of preserving ecology and desire to maintain balance in nature is one such issue. Care for

ecology is supposed to be the concern of specialists even though changes in the rhythm of nature and threat of global warming and irreparable damage to ozone layers in the space endanger the very existence of man. But the Sufis have valued balance in nature and practiced frugal consumption of natural resources as a gratitude to the Supreme Being for the gift of life-sustaining elements. To them wastefulness of these gifts is a sin. In the 'Changing Fate', he cautions against this slow mode of self-destruction:

But man in order to achieve supremacy  
Destroys nature and spreads wretchedness  
And renders himself unfit to live on globe. (SM, 40)

A more, direct evidence of his interest in ecology is available in 'Alas my Neem'. He takes the tree as a part our heritage, and laments its ruthless felling down by an ignorant, though needy, man. The neem tree is associated in common lore with the Ayurveda and indigenous therapy. Incidentally, this thoughtless destruction subliminally reminds us of the foreigners' commercial exploitation and obtaining patents on many of our natural resources. Elsewhere in the 'Lament of a Shady Tree', every axe stroke of the wood cutter wounds the poet's?

Heart, reminding him of the uses and advantages of the old tree to common men. The helpless tree warns its ungrateful betrayer:

Now cutting me down,  
You are destroying eternal peace (NF, 90)

In the "Spread of Pollution", Peeran takes note of the atmospheric degeneration often induced by man's irresponsible and unsanitary conduct. (FH, 58). This physical and moral decay is as enough per se, but for a Sufi-poet cherishing purity, it must be crueler still. Incidentally, among the urbanised Indo-Anglian poets only Gieve Patel shows consistent interest in ecology and Peeran compares favorably with him.

Peeran shows a progressive interest in contemporary world, and international events both as a humanist and as an Indian.

Globalisation obviously is the most talked about politico-economic phenomenon today. In 'Changing Ticks' he glances at the primarily American actuated phenomena, contrasting the others' calculations with his own balanced assessment.

Bohemia is setting in Europe and USA,  
while religiosity holding minds in Asia.  
A new world order is getting created  
With globalisation and electronic inventions  
Intermingling of races of all hues.  
While the Indians are bickering in nationalism. (NF, 23)

Generally, Peeran is not effusive about his personal life in his poetry. Still it is possible to get a few glimpses of his bonds with some of his intimates. The poem on his mother is moving and full of gratitude for her. She is his "life star to guide me forever", "his first love and affection", "his barometer and senses". (RM, 26). His father was an embodiment of content and courage, old fashioned, "oblivious of the changing times", caring for his flock, undaunted by his fatal disease in old age:

Carcinoma could put an end to him.  
But it couldn't overpower his zest for life (ISM, 43)

The death of his son was a heavy blow to Peeran. In a heart sending cry he recalls the dear departed:

Someone is waiting for you distraught  
With tears in eyes, pain in heart.  
With absent smiles, worried face.  
Wrinkles on forehead, disheveled hair. (SM, 49)

Peeran opens his heart unreservedly to his wife in a couple of poems. She was his comforter, his nurse. She attended on him caring in his hospital days with a fractured arm.

She tackled intelligently his stubborn diabetes, wayward cardiac ailment, failing vision and excruciating arthritis:

I remember you,  
you were my succor, my redeemer (Intense Love, in FCU, 4)

Elsewhere, in “My Fair Lady”, he pays her a poetic tribute by calling her a rival to his other love poetry:

Not a moment I can spare,  
To my other love poetry.  
Envious of my holding books  
Pulls the blanket off me. (“My Fair Lady”, NF, 39)

A lyrical and intimate experience of younger years indeed! But his love extends beyond seasons and years. Even as time begins to levy its toll, the poet’s warmth for her remains undiminished:

Times have changed  
Seasons come and pass,  
but my love for you,  
Will remain ever fresh. (‘Manifold Love’ in NF, 45)

The tenderness and purity of feelings recalls to mind, Coventry Patmore’s Poem on his wife – almost a classic – “The Angel in the House”. Incidentally, Patmore (d.1896) was also a deeply religious poet. Peeran wrote two other equally touching poems on his wife – ‘My Best Love’ (SM, 64) and ‘Embrace Me’ (SM, 38)

The “Birth of Prophet Mohammed” is a longish, biographical poem (CFU, 24-33) and begins with a reference to the ‘darkest hour’ of pre-Islamic Arabia. Against this background of ignorance and savagely Peeran highlights the Prophet’s teachings:

To not wage or create a strife.  
To compound and compromise.  
To be charitable and compassionate.  
To be always just and truthful. (CFU, 32).

This focus on universal peace and justice is especially significant in the climate of Islamophobia in the post 9/11 world.

Peeran is a poet of direct statement. He depends little on conventional tropes and embellishments. Still in several poems he introduces pregnant allusions that reinforce the central idea of the poem, and expand the scope of its interpretation. Initially, they are spiritual in context like the instructive references to Arjuna’s mental conflict, Krishna’s advice,

Moses's miracles, Buddha's renunciation, Jesus's temptations and crucifixion, Mohammed's celestial journey and Mansur Hallaj's ecstasies. Occasionally, a parable comes handy to convey the message ('Raining Fire and Brimstone' in *Frontiers of Hope*, p.8). Peeran, however, is remarkably fond of anaphora (successive lines beginning with the same word) which adds to the flow and musical quality of the verse.

Haiku and Tanka are the two notable Japanese genres currently quite popular in the world of poetry. They are characterised by short epigrammatic structure with a very limited number of syllables in three lines (Haiku) and five lines (Tanka) each. Peeran introduces diverse themes amorous social political. For example, the following piece represents the love-haiku:

I am mad in love,  
every vein has turned sacred,  
Honey, divine love. (RM, 72)

This one suggests a pacific mood:

Stillness of the lake,  
throw stones, see ripples around.  
Bomb destroys mankind. (RM, 70)

Or, mark this lament on man's inordinate but barren ambition:

Excessive talen  
More and more money in hand,  
desires ruin the man (RM, 72)

At least seven haikus refer to terrorism with reference to the crash of world towers, example:

Brotherhood of world  
crushed, burnt in America  
In the name of Islam. (NE, 98)

Editing emerges rather unhandsomely in the anthologies. Printing errors apart, quite a few lapses of grammar and syntax remain unnoticed, which in spite of laxity of the usages in the unprogrammed "English's" appear unacceptable in verses of fairly high order for example, "In the Sacred Moments' on page 12, 13,

18, and 20 in several stanzas verbs mismatch the subjects in number. In the Fountain of Hopes, page 20 bear's similar lapses and lines on page 4 and 28 bear each an inappropriate indefinite article and a quaint verb respectively.

These are only random examples, but they do not materially affect the otherwise laudable quality and message of the poems. However, Peeran's titles especially of the anthologies are unusually significant and thought provoking 'Times' and 'Moments figure' in half the number of anthologies. Sufis have always been deeply concerned with time and eternity. In fact, Ibn Arabic, the great Andalusian mystic, reportedly referred to the Sufi as "Ibn-ul-Waqt – man of the time – that is the soul lost in present contemplation and Zikr of God with little care for the future or the sops of reward and punishment. The words 'within' and "frontiers' occurring in three other titles of anthologies replace with time and space – as does the 'unknown' in the title 'A call from the unknown.' Both these subliminal references to time and space highlight the mystical antecedents of the poet his works. Three titles involve images of light, which suggestive of Sufic illumination. The title of an individual poem "Jamal-Beautiful" (In Sacred Moments, p.5), however, involves a lexical error. "Jamal" is non (beauty), and the derived adjective is Jameel', which is also one of the Holy names of Allah.

Peeran has done two informative books in English prose as well to dispel some objections against Sufism by the orthodox and to elucidate the true spirit of Sufism in Sufism and Islam. Traditionally, the orthodox disagreed with the liberal tenets of Sufis, and held them as violative of the true belief. On the other hand in modern times, a school of liberal thinkers have come to deny its links with Islam altogether. Peeran firmly refutes both these views, collating the basic teachings of Islam and Sufism and quoting extensively from the Quran, the Hadith, and writings of classical Sufi masters like Ali Hujwisi (D.1070/71) – the first exponent of Sufism in India – al – Ghazzali (d.1111), Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (d.1161) and Shihabuddin al-Suhwardy (d. 1234). One some controversial issue among the Sufis themselves, he has quoted in full



the English translation of an almost magisterial monograph entitled “Faisla Haft Masala by Maulvi Imdad Ali, a venerable Sufi scholar of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Peeran’s impressive familiarity with Sufi classics is also full reflected in the bilingual quarterly Sufi-world.

Obviously, while his poetry represents his spiritual self-affirmation and enjoyment, the prose works sever to introduce the Sufi message to the uninitiated and the skeptics. In both these literary ventures, he has undertaken a task of great humanistic value – providing the symphony of peace and good – will to a spiritually unfed and tension – ridden world. For the Saa’ch steeped in genuine Islamic tradition – Sufism was nothing but a selfless service to mankind and sincere love of humanity at large.

Though insufficiently noticed because of belated debut and his rather hasty prolificacy, possibly to compensate for the delay, Peeran enjoys the distinction of being the only Indo-Anglian Poet consistently producing Sufic verse of considerable merit. His work promises to retain its freshness and appeal for many years to come.

### **Introduction to *Glittering Love* (2009) by Professor Masoodul Hasan**

“Good wine”, says Shakespeare, needs no bushes”; so also a collection off fine poems requires no frills of a superfluous ‘Foreword’ or ‘Introduction’ by some motivationally “acclaimed scholar” or literary critic. To S.L. Peeran, however, custom seems to outweigh the immortal bard’s sane suggestion. To be fair to him, though it is also true that Shakespeare was obliged, in deference to convention, to admit gingerly in the same breath, “Yet to good wine they use good bushes”. Accordingly, in spite of his well-received ten previous collection of good poetry, Peeran wishes me to play the customary encomium doling ‘brand ambassador’ of his latest collection *Glittering love*. So, as a token of my appreciation of his laudable labor of love, I have to function as the ‘herald’ of the new arrival. But I must hasten to add that this reluctant role in no way implies any self-delusion of celebrity or connoisseurship.

I cannot claim for Peeran, in Shakespeare idiom, the label “the poet’s eye in fine frenzy rolling” – frenzy, in fact, is alien to his talent and temper – but I do feel in his verse the gentle glow of winter – sun bathing nature in its luxuriant warmth. Neither is he a poet of “emotion recollected in tranquility”; for tranquil moods are his second nature, and he records serenely his impressions and sensation in their natural freshness – at once of peculiar poetic asset and an intellectual deficit. For instant utterance often precludes due maturing of thought and finer fashioning of idiom. His natural poetic sensibility, however, generally outbalances the debit. A typical feature of his earlier anthologies is the strong undercurrent of a central theme in each collection. For example, one is struck by the recurrence of the theme of Time atomized into moments in (*In Golden Times*), or mystical spaces (*In Call from the Unknown*, or in *New Frontiers*), or the exploration of the inner self in *In Golden Moments*, *In Silent Moment*, *The Sacred Moment*) or light (in *The Fountain of Hopes*). Of course, occasionally, some of the themes secure and criss cross in various collections, but the dominant theme remains undiluted.

The present volume focuses on the twin and mutually complementary themes of Love and Luminosity – the core of Islamic mysticism too. Naturally, notes of tolerance and Suleh-e-kul (equal respect and peace for all creeds) predominate for example, the poem ‘Free From All’ opens on this note:

He has kept his doors open  
 All the time, everywhere  
 In many forms and shapes.  
 Big vacant halls, cathedrals,  
 Temples with deities, idols.

In the complex, pluralistic Indian ethos the relevance and value of this spiritual dimension can hardly be overstated. But Peeran’s debt to the great Sufis’ endearing. Openness of mind spiritual legacy is evident and in accord with his own spiritual lineage and leanings. The above – quoted lines remind us of a few verses of the great Andalusian Sufi, Ibne-Arabi (d.1240 A.D) “My heart is capable of every form/A cloister of the monk/I a temple

for idols,/A pasture for gazelles, the votary's kaabah/". True, gnosis illumines Peeran's poem 'Shining Truth", and love for mankind at large figures prominently in 'Balance and Harmony.' The same universal love runs through the piece 'Safe Shores", announcing the protagonists resolve "to open widely the closed doors of my heart, eyes and ears". The shared spiritual virtues of "Saints, Rishies, Yogis and Prophets" are acknowledged liberally in the poem 'O Solitude' and several other pieces – a much needed balm for the creed – corroded modern man. Spiritual love also forms the core of the poems like "Refresh Your Soul,' into 'Immersion". Similarly the title piece 'GLITTERING LOVE' throbs with devotion for the Divine Beloved:

My every cell in my body  
 Feels the heat, feels for him  
 The Merciful and the Bountiful,  
 Plays His tunes in my veins

These lines recall the flute's fancy in Rumi's (d.1275) Mathnavi that may be rendered into English as "Dry my veins, dry my body and dry the skin, So wherefrom comes the Friend's call?"

Humanism is the secular version of Sufism, and the two are inseparably intertwined. Peeran flinches at the sight of human suffering. His compassion for a former acquaintance now in rags spurs his hospitality in spite of their present social disparity ('compassion'). This feeling of human kindness extends to unknown beggars too ('Lost Thoughts') and famished, landless labourers ('Birth of Violence') the concern for social justice soon matures into the desire for political amelioration and patriotism, and the poet recalls with sorrow the outrages of Ghories, Ghaznavies, Lodies, the British, the French and the Portugese on the Indian soil.

Peeran's treatment of love is many sided. On occasions he celebrates the natural love between man and woman, sometimes even exposing the abuse and deprivation of women by their unscrupulous 'butter-fly lovers'. Not infrequently this produces self-deprecating, bruised female psyche pathetically whining:

Frailty is my name, I am brittle,  
I can only break into pieces like glass ('Broken Pieces')

Possibly, moved by some actual incident, Peeran packs into these lines the irony and despair bottled up for centuries in the female mind. Likewise, the 'Betrayal' aptly exposes the lurking fear of conjugal insecurity of wives apprehensive of whimsical vulnerability of their husbands to the charms of some younger seductress. In the true Bhakti tradition Peeran's maiden lovers invariably open the love colloquy, and sometimes this 'mundane love', ever conjures a blessed mood (as in the 'Blessed Love' OR 'Refresh Your Soul') Glimpses of touching familial or friendly love also intersperse some poems in this anthology. A loving father's anxiety and welling childhood memories of his bright son on the eve of his voyage for higher studies abroad ripple through the piece 'For A New Life' as do the tender remembrances of a fond and loving elder sister (in 'Ever Cheer for Us') the dirge on the sudden death of an uncle in the midst of festive celebrations on his elevation to the High Court Bench apparently bewails a personal loss, but at a deeper level its underlines the evanescence and tragedy of life in general. Apart from recalling some significant episodes from his personal life – e.g. the Chinese aggression in 'Fall in line' – Peeran offers an overview of his career in a couple of poems. The calendar of his life ('My Life') – each pair of two months symbolising an important biographical phase – is innovative in character faintly reminiscent of Edmund Spenser's (d.1599) pioneering work Shepherd's Calendar. But Peeran's poem closes on an optimistic belief in the continuity of life:

Roses in Nov-December will bear seeds  
For the next generation to sprout and grows

Peeran responds sensitively to the surrounding social reality. The irony of scarcity in the midst of plenty stings his conscience, and the deteriorating Indian ethos and economy strikes him piquantly. Ameliorative political steps have failed, and farmers' suicides are mounting up. Consumerism has contaminated our traditional values.

Today market rules the roost;  
new fashions, High taxes,  
shooting prices booming economy('Booming Economy')

Dwindling agriculture and vanishing old values necessitate large scale demography dislocation. It forebodes an impending doom. This reversal of traditional order breeds corruption and crime ('Birth of Violence'). Some of these poems are patently anti-urban in nature, deriving from the poet's concern for the modern man's fatal indifference to ecology. This also reminds Peeran of the deterioration of his own metropolitan town:

Now garden – city with salubrious weather,  
Is a home for sloth's, nitwits, drug peddlers. ("Jaunts of Pleasure")

Though now out of vogue in Japan, the country of its origin, HAIKU gained notable currency in the west during the inter – war years under inspiration of Ezra Pound (d.1972). but Indo – Anglian poets do not seem to have taken kindly to it. Peeran, however, stands apart in this regard, and the present volume contains a century of haikus of rather uneven quality. The genre specialises in the use of sharp, concrete images derived usually from natural phenomena.

Some of these haikus fulfill this condition successfully, though this may not be said about their syllabic structure. A couple of the more notable pieces are sampled below:

Great wall of China  
Fortified cities with stone  
Push the enemy back.

OR

Moon, solar eclipses  
A sign of floods, destruction  
Or superstition.

OR

Croaking of the frogs  
Thunder, Lightning in dark clouds,

A welcome shower.

OR

Streaming like sea-weeds  
Labor pain to crusted earth  
Earthquake destroys man.”

Without succumbing to nostalgia, Peeran makes no secret of his partiality to the past, yet he does not romanticise his memories. He is a humanist to the core, and he reacts equally sharply to inequities at home and unjust wars abroad, especially the outrageous tragedy enacted by Anglo-American allies in Iraq and Afghanistan. His range of concerns may be rather limited, but his sincerity and universal love largely compensate for the default. Apt use of allusions from the Hindu pantheon and Quranic I Biblical sources enhance the effect and appeal of his poetry. He has the natural gift of distilling poetry from happenings and observations of everyday life, which reveals his human approach to man and nature. Robert Frost (d.1963), the renowned American poet, once remarked that a poem begins in delight and ends in wisdom. Opinions may differ about Peeran’ verses opening the casement of delight, but doubtlessly they sparkle with the Light of Love – the ultimate reach of true Wisdom.

### **Prof Masoodul Hasan on *In Rare Moments***

Disclaiming “any sophisticated theory of poetry’ but professing “to reflect and express” the commoner’s daily: experience; S.L. Peeran’s gift of prolificacy marks his ninth collection of poems, for the present poetic collection makes his ninth anthology in six years. Two prose works on Sufism and a collection of short stories complete his latest literary menu. That he could provide such delectable fare in the midst of his demanding professional responsibilities as a senior Member of the State’s Customs/Excise Tribunal attests his singular artistic fertility and remarkable physical energy – a lucky combination generally wanting in reputed writers.

The present collection comprises 74 poems, and carries a fulsome introduction by an appreciative academician, which tends to satiate rather than appetise. Though uncloyed by traditional romanticism, Peeran nurtures genuine love for nature, as is clear from his recurring references to birds, cuckoos, summer blues, and the predominance of moon-imagery.

Love is his central theme, and often he effortlessly translates mundane love into spiritual, an obvious relic of his Sufi legacy. However, reversing the convention of mundane love in the opening poem 'Longings', the poet sarcastically turns himself into the beloved, longed for by a restless, remorseful lover: "Whenever your thoughts possess me,/I turn to your book of poems/Your love long troubles my heart." So also the title Poem ('Rare Moments ') reads like an epithalamic celebration of mundane love. But Peeran experiences moments of mild mystic ascents too: "Let's dwell deep in the ocean of self (p. 16) OR – "I stand nude before that Eternal Being", OR "Let the illuminating, dazzling lights,/Fill my dark and empty shell."/Deeper Sufic strains resonate in poems like 'Man Arafa Nafsehu', 'Is Allah Everywhere? Or.. 'Allah's Bounty' with a pointed reference to "our Peeran O Peer" of Baghdad, and the poet's belief in saint-intercession. The Sufic notes come naturally to the poet as he himself is the scion of an illustrious divine dynasty of the south. But it is also true that on occasions theosophy is closely nudged by didactic, piety, extolling 'law' over illuminating spirituality. Yet in the true Sufic spirit Peeran decries and disrelishes "debate and polemics" of theologian – pugilists (in the 'White Jhubbas'), and he advocates the Sufi principle of 'sulhkul' (Peace to all) – e.g. in 'our Dogmatic Brothers'.

This humanistic note and voice of sanity, essential to our pluralistic society, sounds loud and clear: "To shun the fashions and the 'worldliness'/But holding on to the 'Otherliness/Perfecting duality, Ugliness./Creating a distance with brother of other faiths./Fantasizing heaven by dubious means."/ (p.3).

Sectarian intolerance and bias is alien to this God – oriented moralist. Piety often overshadows effulgence of divine love, and

true summits of spirituality are rare in the Rare Moments. But Peeran holds a fair claim as a mystic of half-lights. His poetry offers a mildly refreshing contrast to the trends of vanishing positive values and cultural chaos, generally plaguing the contemporary literary scene.

### Notes

In order to save repetition and space textual quotations and references are incorporated in the main text of the article. The works have been noted according to the following abbreviation. The figures following the abbreviated title denote page numbers.

- |    |                                       |   |     |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|-----|
| 1. | <i>A Search from Within</i> (2002)    | - | SFW |
| 2. | <i>A Ray of Light</i> (2002)          | - | RL  |
| 3. | <i>In Silent Moments</i> (2002)       | - | SM  |
| 4. | <i>A Call form the Unknown</i> (2003) | - | CFU |
| 5. | <i>New Frontiers</i> (2005)           | - | NF  |
| 6. | <i>Fountains of Hopes</i> (2006)      | - | FH  |
| 7. | <i>In Sacred Moments</i> (2007)       | - | ISM |
| 8. | <i>In Rare Moments</i> (2007)         | - | RM  |



## Poetry of S.L. Peeran: Parnassus of Sufism

**Manas Bakshi**

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The contemporary world of Indo-English Literature is agog with several scribes and bards looking for a foothold. Many of them are promising indeed, and to tell the truth, one of them is S.L. Peeran who is Judicial member of Customs Excise and Gold (Control) Appellate Tribunal, Bangalore. As an Indo-English Poet, S.L. Peeran made a mark with his maiden venture *In Golden Times* in 2001. Since then, several books have seen the light – *In Golden Moments*, *A Search from within*, *A Ray of Light*, *In Silent Moment* and the latest one *A Call from the Unknown*.

All these are proof enough of Peeran's talent and tenacity budding everyday in myriads dimensions of his poetic search. And this search is not without an insight into the world of nature, the realm of man for realisation of the aura of Sufism. Bernard M. Jackson while reviewing *In Golden Moments* for Cyber Literature writes "The Poet is not merely speaking of the beauties of nature: the imagery clearly reflects God's greater design for Humanity itself. Furthermore, there are many examples in the included poems to demonstrate both the positive and negative aspects of Man's nature and general disposition!"

This observation of Jackson in the Cyber Literature, June 2001 is further strengthened by his appraisal of Peeran's reflective haiku included in the book *In Golden Times* – "These poems show the many facets of the poet's general philosophy and Sufist inspired

thinking. Many of these poems, however, the purist would prefer to categorise as Senru but nevertheless, there is an interesting and varied selection for the reader of this particular genre” writes Jackson in *Poet*, June’02. Quite in conformity with this Srinivasa Rangaswami in his review of the same book in *Poet* November 2001 asserts that “Poet Peeran is a fascinating combination of the pious, mature, compassionate soul and a sensitive aesthetic being who sets great store by the abiding values of life. In all of the poems the *adhara sruthi* (the reverberating undertone) is good consciousness and a total belief in the virtues of universal love, the true humility and a spirit of servitude and complete surrender to the Supreme Power”.

That Peeran exposes his genuine feeling with ‘an inner vibrancy’ is evident from the following lines:

“Voices of the meek ones are suppressed:/they are hardly allowed to take a fresh breath./those that dare are cruelly oppressed/and ruthlessly dealt a painful death”. Or, Deceptive are their faces to spot prey, like eagles/they wear whites to cover black souls within”.

Since Peeran believes in “Buddha’s tranquility, Ashoka’s peace and Mahavira’s ahimsa”, his way of thinking is also different. He often seeks solace form within even being struck by the strife’s and strides around. “I look and looked around,/search and searched all places,/At last I found it just/within my own heart,/It is my lasting Love”. What could be more appealing than this?

J. Gordon Hindley in his review of the book *A search From Within* in *Poetcrit* July 2002 clearly conveys “I find that the 107 pages of short verses that make up the first part of *A Serch From Within* encompass almost every well-meaning feeling and sentiment we have and, as such, are as wide-ranging as a Book of Psalms; and are equally comforting”. Yes, it is both, appealing and comforting and, at the same time, demanding a positive response from the reader, who is concerned, as much as the poet, with the impact of present day reality on human society and nature.

But what strikes one most as revealing in Peeran's poetry is his distinct approach to the complexities of modern life trapped in present-day society, to the artificial still fascinating traits of living, to 'humanity and servitude/In patience and contentment' and, all this, dealt with a Sufist philosophical outlook. Which is why, in his book "*In Silent Moments*" Peeran can articulate – "The seed bears within, the plant of a rose/or a plant bearing a fruit soar/so also a person born is heavenly/Or carries traits to lead him to hell./What is inherent gets explicit? You express what you absorb?" (p.54) We find its resonance in another poem – "When prayer and repentance do not appeal to him/When he refuses to bow before the Almighty/he is lost in a purgatory blinds". (p.23)

In fact, reality casts its impact on Peeran as much as ideological ingredients. But Peeran knows the art to strike a balance between the two. This is so because thought ramification is a quality that he has largely advanced so that ideas that pervaded his earlier works do not fade away into limbo in his new poetical works but develop new vistas.

As a sequel, subtle concepts pertinent to today's socio-economic undercurrent become more. Dominant in his recent poetry, particularly in the book "*A Ray of Light*". For instance, "Cry baby cry, wail and weep/For pangs of hunger are very deep/The merciless sky doesn't look at you/Nor the rich like to share tier food with you? They drive you away from their doors/they keep ferocious dogs, to frighten you/Cry baby Cry, wail and weep/there is none to put you to asleep". This sensibility is more palpable in such lines as "Chill penury and justice burdened/Soaring sky rocketing prices/Of consumer items. Now blood is cheaper/hungry child searches for food in dust bins/where the birth of golden times is. Promise of enlightened soul, illumined mind/of pen in hand instead of fireworks in tiny fingers/to hang on pillar the pest and the swine?" (p.55)

Not only as a poet but also a human being, Peeran never deviates from his standpoint of commitment to society. He is vocal, in the book *A Ray of Light*, about the odds and devils of our social

system that produces “Sultans of Present Day’ and “For them living in a large palatial house/In aristocracy in style with wealth/Is the only known way of living a life/to keep their thoughts secretive, tightlipped.” (p.100)

And who are they? In Another touchy poem, he pinpoints “Veerappan” and says “I have out beaten Chambal Raja Gabbar Singh/Rani Phoolan Devi. Robinhoods of any ghats/I fool the police and the armed forces/Modern gadgets can’t trace even my hair/Men in pelf and power beg mercy from me/Men in chill Penury seek succor from me/My reign is supreme like a Sultan’s/I am named “Master of Victory” in Hindustan. (p.47)

Undoubtedly, Peeran has used the supple responsiveness of the language to catch various moods and moments varying with situation – both fruitful and inane. Sometimes stilted with ponderous outpourings, sometimes swamped by identical thoughts and images, nevertheless, many of his poems in the collection *In Silent Moments* are inspiring if not stimulating – “Somewhere, someone, someday/will create new chimes and rhythm/To thrill the sullen heart/To enliven the dull spirits/Somewhere, someone, someday will sow the seeds of affection/To bloom as fragrant flowers/To fill the gardens of Love/O heart don’t be dismayed/About ill-well, or tampers frayed”. (p.12)

“A rose spreads its fragrance in the air/Even when crushed, dissolved in water/Rubbed on a stick or in perfumes/It smells as sweet as ever” (p.19)

Peeran loves nature and beauty. “The wintry chill freezes my bones and marrow/I Shudder to think of it in summer/When the boils and my sweat flows? I think of cool spring with scented flowers/All colors merge to form a white curtain/To reappear on it as a rainbow/To delight the hearts for certain/To honor sun and rain with a bow?. (p.39)

And this love is not bereft of his faith in humanism – “Give, while the joys of life are bubbling/Share, while the sun’s rays are shining/Love, while the fragrance of clowers fills the air” (p.59).

Peeran can say all this because he believes in the Supreme power which one can feel if he looks for peace from within – “Look to the inner voice/Its light is eternal/Its joys are multiple/Its grace is divine/It is soothing and pleasing” (p.38)

But man today, more material minded than ever before, hardly bothers about the fact ‘that he has to purify the mind with crystal thoughts/Honey tonged glorify the Lord/With His guidance tread your path/Melodious songs thrill your heart” (p.17)

Peeran’s cult of Sufism which literally means pantheistic mysticism, in the worship of all gods, does encompass his love for nature, craving for beauty his feelings and sympathy for the suffering human; being and, above all, absolute faith in his own religion – a quality that makes The Unknown’ he boldly says, in the poem “My Religion” that “Yes I have a religion/I do practice it/Say my Namaz/turn toward Kaaba/Recite Kalima/Do zikr/observe fasting///but my rites, my symbols/are acts of love/to foster oneness/to increase my yearnings/to look upon mankind/As children of adam and eve/Not for creating apathy/Discrement and Distraction/for cataclysmic schism/For disharmony and strife. (p.5)

Poets international Sept.03 opines about the book ‘this volume is devoted to a mixer of his expressions on various themes his outpourings in religious poetry. The themes of his poems go like this:

My Religion, Birth of Moses; Birth of Jesus, Birth of Prophet Mohammad, the Holy book, The day of Judgment, Meraj, Black Stone, Lady Fathima and the like excels in free verse form. Being a devout Muslim and scholar in Islamic studies.

Peeran takes an opportunity not only to express his insights through these poems, but also make confession in ‘my religion’. In *Poet* October 2003, R.K. Singh writes “Peeran, as a seeker of Truth, understands that the divine Avatars on earth have been the true educators of humankind. Without their guidance the human race could not have realised itself above the level of the animal. And if we forgot the teachings of Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Moses,

Christ or Mohammad, we will simply descend to the laws of the jungle”.

No doubt, Peeran's inner world of spiritual belief has the aroma of divine love, and that is why, being an ardent advocate of Islam with due obeisance to its rituals and rites, laments “Millions of species of animals/Birds, and a wonder/But this man, living in varied/Societies, with class and caste/Distinction, with social strata/Structures, varied faiths and beliefs Cannot marvel at the beauty/Cannot learn to live in harmony/Cannot live with love and grace/cannot take care of lowly destitus” (p.113)

Perhaps now is the juncture when human values decline, faith fades out and love is no more “a thinking in me”, a twinkling in eyes”. Peeran cautions us against a situation “Sinners of the world/Shake your greasy hands in joy/Sun is coming down”.

In short, Peeran's Probing mind explores several areas of human concern and consternation. And he writes with such dexterity, Sincerity and devotion that his poetry becomes vibrant, his expression becomes candid. More so because Peeran is not afraid of calling a spade a spade despite being a high government official.

## The Poetic World of S.L. Peeran

Patricia Prime

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In his Foreword to *In Rare Moments*, S.L. Peeran's ninth collection of poetry, Krishna Srinivas states, "Peeran has gained many distinctions and he is the right man to regain what we have all lost. He cries down the crimes and injustices that prevail everywhere today". Dr. C Anna Lata Devi writes in her lengthy 'Introduction':

The themes of the poems *In Rare Moments* are varied, but they can be fitted into two main categories, life and religion, the dual phases of Man's existence. The theme of life is subdivided into Man, his reminiscences and the part played by nature. Similarly religion has its subaltern themes like God and Heaven". Therefore we approach the collection with the thought that it contains poems on humanity, with all its faults and failings, spiritually and the need to be ever vigilant to social, political and moral issues.

Peeran's poems are utterly present in the world, in the sense that he writes about the issues of society:

Love, grief and hope. There is in work a fidelity to language and the musicality of language which is simultaneously a fidelity to critical thinking, to bodily thinking, and, more problematically, to silence.

If a poem makes itself mean as much in the spoken, syntax and form are the poet's means of composing in and with the silences. Peeran's characteristically, though not exclusively, one-page

poems are an overt sign of his kinship with the lyric poem that expresses itself in plain vocabulary.

Such a poem as the opening poem, “Longings”, exemplifies this power. It’s as if the silences point to the inherent inadequacy of language and at the same time to its potential for vitality and precision:

Whenever your thoughts possess me,/I turn to your book of  
poems/your love songs trouble my heart./An ache, a sigh, tears  
of blood.

For a poet such as Peeran, with his social vision, one whose art is a form of activism that is, active in the world as an agent of transformation – there may be an even more fruitful ambivalence towards silence. The tension, which I suspect attends Peeran’s imaginative, intellectual and compositional processes, creates an urgency and refuses complacency in the work and its consequences. Peeran’s poems are all the more alive in such tension, as we see in “Nothing to Beat”, where the personae, being “lonely, alone and desolate” question God:

Everyone wishes to melt away and/Reach God to question  
him/where were they at fault?/Why did the lover desert her in  
midstream?/Why was he fired, when he was at creative  
best?/Why incarcerated for other’s Wrong?/Why become beast  
of burden forever?

The perspective informing “Take Away” is that “The Parameters of life keep changing daily”. When everything is going well, there is always something bad waiting to happen and, thus, “The taxman is on the prowl like a tiger./To take away even the baked cookies”. When reading Peeran, we are reminded that poems are “our poems” even when the poet in a vituperative mood, can say. “You need to give a dose/of antibiotics, purgatives./to flush out the disturbing/Elements in the body and soul”.

“Closing Chapter” seeks and creates a relationship to lyric that takes shape and acknowledge the fact of ageing, “Fear of flame popping out to plunge me/IN the growing darkness around/time



clicking reminding me of destiny”. “Scrap it All” makes something new of the urban poem with its detailed description of poverty which is leavened by friendship:

In chawls and slums, people cluster together/with comradeship  
to fetch a pail of water./To wail together when struck with  
gloom./Hunger, thirst, chill penury binds them.

“Allah’s Bounty”, a short, perfect poem, begins.

“Allah’s bounty is limitless. It is His/Mercy and Benevolence  
that such a Great Being/should bestow His Grace on  
such/Insignificant creatures like us./

In some ways it confesses to a desire inherent in the lyric impulse a desire for the world to be shut out. Yet, as part of the poem, the title wants the speaker to live in the world, to be present here in his belief not so much as the addresser, perhaps, but as the benefactor – itself an open door, a turn and return. The poem ends.

Certainly of faith (Huqul Yaqeen), strong will/Power and concentration and total submission/to our peers, our Holy Prophet and to Allah ta ala/

And I trust the ways by which Peeran troubles categories of identity, social mores, politics which are understood to be crucial to poetry’s vibrancy and dynamism and living intelligence. For example, “Duality” reads as a work of incisive, provocative probing in the sense of any poet thinking hard and well about the craft and about the conditions a poem aspire to create for it. Peeran asks, Is it because/Man is always at daggers drawn? Bitter, Cold, sarcastic, angry./His various traits/challenge each other, each trait/trying to claim ascendancy.

“Reflection” concludes with the poet’s voice in all its perfect pitch for both the colloquial and the radiant:

“There is no loss, no gain, no joy, no pain/Unburden your  
baggage, hold fast that Rope”.

Peeran is a thinking poet, a generous thinker, and a generative force for poetry and his poetry will remain so.

*In Sacred Moments*, where the poet faces his Creator much as a child faces its mother, asking forgiveness of petty jealousies and arrogance:

I, lost my thoughts, turn to my Creator  
Oblivious of the umpteen sins committed by me,  
I had broken the “Lakshman Rekha”; like Adam,  
Shown jealously and arrogance like Satan.

Like a child in its mother’s arms, the poet asks forgiveness and begs that ‘my sacred moments be dear to me’.

Peeran’s gift for language, the immediacy of his wit and work-play combined with a command of imagery and his powerful feelings can at once capture his readers. With each new collection, Peeran’s admirers look for the poetry which reaches beyond the words on the page and happily *In Sacred Moments* he encourages us to believe that he is close to his goal.

Although each poem stands firmly on its own, as per previous collections the reader does best to read the poems as they are ordered in the book. *In Sacred Moments* is based on Peeran’s sympathetic approach to humanity as one whose heart is firmly centered on the environment and the sacredness of life. This can be clearly seen in “Heavenly Abode” where the poet expresses the difference between our earthly and heavenly homes:

The presence of rivers of honey,  
Milk, cooked fowls, wine and hoories  
Appear to be an allegorical reference.  
If they exist then earthly environment  
And earthly existence should also exist,  
which is not possible.  
To exist in heaven  
there are to be different astral conditions  
with different living conditions,  
what is explained in Holy Scripture.

The poet goes on to say that divine retribution and awards can also happen in our earthly existence, too.

Many of the poems mark not only a familiar environment, but a transition from old philosophies and concentrate on the need for

humility. In “Humility and Submission” Peeran delineates the ideal of the humble man. What, he asks, are the characteristics of humble man? And he goes on to list twelve of his ideals. Here are four of them:

He is truthful, simple in manners, talks and dress.  
He is gentle to the core in his speech and gait.  
He is never harsh to the less fortunate ones.  
He is courteous to his parents, relatives, and friends...

Man may be seduced by romance, tradition and wealth, many finding it impossible to hold onto their faith in the modern world. Peeran projects a new kind of man; the righteous man that, in “One Humanity” is a man of peace and love willing to share “the sorrows and those of less fortunate”. However, in “Ever Submissive” he finds that the “man of love, unspoken, unheard” is “Ever Submissive” to the Lord’s call”. In “A Grim Picture” the poet is under the constant threat of ill-health The doctor tells him, “You may go in coma, lose your/Eyesight, kidneys, may have a heart attack./ultimately you may have death horrible”. This forewarning persuades the poet to try numerous remedies on the advice of his friends, but nothing can prevent the “Call from the unknown”:

None can stop it, when it stoops down, to collect me in both its arms, to take me to oblivion forever.

Similarly, in “Golden Hearts” the poet doesn’t spend time worrying over imaginary goals, but in seeking God in a sublime, purified golden heart.

An uncharacteristic turn into a public, more outward going world takes him to a “Republic-day celebration” where

The trumpets have gained strength day-by-day,  
blowing full-throat,  
elephants also joining,  
the cheering crowd adding to the gaiety,  
an occasion to celebrate the festivities.

These moments of socialisation are few in poems which reverberate with images of God, faith, spirituality. Peeran’s touch is

always light, skillful enough for his work to escape the heavily judgmental; yet he challenges the reader to agree with his philosophy, coming as it does from a background of Sufism. Another social poem is “Fall of Curtain” in which the poet relaxes with old friends, talking about times they’d spent together:

Our buddies bring back good old memories,  
invigorating like tea and coffee,  
accompanied by tasty biscuits, chips,  
talking about by-gone times.

Peeran has earned the right to establish a distinctive style and it is good to see him writing about personal life. It is also good to see flashes of humour emerge, despite the seriousness of the poem. The powerful language in “Great Upheaval”, a poem which deals with “Old civilisation broken-up to smithereens,” can bombs, the ravishing of Baghdad, innocents killed, comes as complete shock after the gentleness of previous poems in the collection:

O Baghdad! Your ancient beauty,  
Now ravished and plundered,  
Innocents killed and buried unsung,  
whither place? The arrow has pierced the dove,  
when Chengis Khan pillaged you, ages ago,  
you stood firm and conquered him,  
the Mongols were subdued and converted,  
now are Yankees going to wear white caps?

In “unlimited Joy and Happiness for 2007” the poet requests the Master “Let the New Year 2007/bring unlimited Joy and Happiness”.

*In Glittering Love* the poems are immediate in impact and the more self-exposed, even ostentatiously so. “I wish I could give him a Mohd. Ali’s knockout punch”. (“Knock Out”). The poems are sustained with no sense of contrivance and never run out of stream. They frequently draw parallels between the poet’s domestic situation (“Soliloquy”) and the contemplative immediacy of mourning a loved Uncle:

Mourning was indeed deep,  
for my uncle, a judge in the high court

suddenly died, without any sign of illness.

We are playing partying,  
enjoying with his wife and children  
on his elevation and becoming a “Justice”

When cruel hand of fate snatched him from us.

(Token of love and affection)

As against the intense physical observation of everyday events there comes at intervals a bitter yet comical reflection of the sacrifices his parents made bringing up “seven daughters, three sons and umpteen grandchildren” (“Umpteen Sacrifices”):

Year after year, my mother bore five daughters  
Hoping for a son.  
Then me, then my younger brother,  
they did not stop till two more daughters followed.

The contrast of such dogmatism with the gory sense of irony and dislocation in the poet’s own aging consciousness is arresting – in both senses of the word. Peeran directs one to the inexhaustable potential of human experience as a source of imaginative enlargement, even when that experience is exclusively the author’s own, as we see in “In Undying Bliss” where he writes about his mind and what it imagines:

“The mind, when it imagines  
When it dreams very often,  
It is like watching  
A television serial.”

“A woeful Prediction” alerts one of the Poet’s preoccupation not only with astrology, but with the “giver of life – The Sanjeevani” and his enemy, “the Lord of “Vidya” and “knowledge” – both of whom communicate in writing:

But the lord of poetry is also Twelfth Lord,  
and also the Lord of the Seventh,  
She is in the company of a “neecha”  
There are no redeeming features!

But such inward struggle only rarely appears in a collection rich in portraits, landscape and experiences of life in India. Peeran is especially good in charting small human activities, witness a

delightful depiction of a sister caring for her siblings in “Ever cheer for us”:

Forgoing your young joys and cheers  
changing nappy of the youngest,  
washing clothes of all the ones,  
keeping the hearth warm and clean.

In the context of the poet’s memories it is not only the thing seen that matters but its effect on other people; while at the same time Peeran can lament the dulling of physical and nervous response:

When you rub two dry sticks  
You get fire for the hearth, to cook  
The dead poutry, fish endless menu  
You are what you eat and drink.

Catastrophes exist primarily in relation to the poet’s own responses and his relationship with his society. For instance, in “Mock Drills” he draws out the fact that modern society must undergo mock drills in order to wake it from its lethargy:

The frequent news of bomb blasts  
In several cities of Iraq and Afghan.  
News of death of men of all ages  
Has suddenly woken up our police.

The book amounts to a series of vignettes, often drawn with a precision in the handling of words, seen as its best in a poem like “Lord’s love”:

Isn’t it a wonder to find birds  
building intricate nests  
to lay eggs migrating  
from one place to another,  
so also fishes from one sea to other?

The unease inherent in most of our lives is seen even in the “Gardens of Bliss”:

Modern times robbing leisure.  
Adding demands, stress to living.  
Breaking the harmony of society.

Ushering in sickness and madness.

At his best Peeran can achieve such delicate effects with a quietly satisfying ease. He can also describe more forceful experience as in "Final Break":

We keep marching, keep enacting, for others to watch, to draw lessons, now and then, scenes after scenes keep changing with actors moving up and down in exhilaration.

We the men of clay, mud and soil,  
Like puppets will break away one day after the toil.

Peeran can be mischievously perceptive of the danger lurking behind appearances, as in "Low Status," a memorable depiction of boys and girls in school, where they "were fish out of water,/only to be teased and pushed to back bench." He is also humorous, as in "For a New Life" and tenderly elegiac in "Adjust," with its portrayal of when, for the writer, he must adjust to life and its vicissitudes: "Life is a mixture of adjustment and compromises/ Fight failures to overcome hurdles and pains." Poems of sadness include the perfectly crafted "Griefs and sorrows" with its vision of the transparency of human life through its griefs and sorrows: "Oh! Sorrows are the sap of the trees./In it dwells the spirits of the lovely." And he can be painful as in the bitter precision of "Evil Fate" where "wars, terrorism, killings –/Manifest our greed and self-love." Pathos is the theme of several poems, including "Pining for Thee," "Glory for Thee" and "Immersion". While tender love succors all, despite its many temptations:

O My Lord! Save me from  
The temptations of this world.  
From its glit and glamour.  
From its slippery path. ("Love forever and ever")

The visionary quality in these poems can seem astonishing in its range, its depth, and its complexities. The rootedness in the local Indian landscape is no limitation at all, its connectedness to the world through war, terrorism, greed and suffering runs through these poems. Sometimes the emotion becomes simpler and calmer;

the poet's feelings break clear of disintegration and are articulated as love, as in the title poem "Glittering Love":

My every cell in my body,  
feels the heat, feels for him,  
the merciful and the bountiful,  
plays his tunes in my veins.

But the pain is there in the love, in the overwhelming sense of sorrow that pervades this whole book.

The final eleven page poem, "Advent of Islam" is divided into two sections containing four-line stanzas. In Part I we learn about the beginnings of Islam:

The four squared walled house  
Known from ages as "Kabba" "God's House",  
Built in honor of One Supreme God, Allah,  
By Father Ibrahim and son Ismaeel, in Bakka  
Later came to be known as Mecca.  
For centuries adored, loved, worshipped.

In this part we learn how the Archangel Gabriel brought a message to Muhammad from Allah:

In peaceful ways Muhammad  
Spread Allah's message of monotheism  
to shun the practice of idol worship,  
to unite and live in brother hood.

In Part II we learn that millions of people pray to Allah for forgiveness:

Millions and millions  
assemble at Mount Arfat,  
The mountain of Mercy  
to pray for forgiveness  
for eternal blessings from Allah.

Among Muhammad's teachings, we learn to treat our neighbours as ourselves, and

To protect to environment,  
the animal and the fauna.  
The plants, trees and plantations,



Make the habitation beautiful.

A final admonition warns humanity to:

Think of your relatives and friends.  
At all times, unite them in love.  
Let love be the guiding force for all.  
At all times love one and love all.

Finally there is an eighteen page section of haiku. Among my favourites are these:

Gushing of water  
inundation of small lakes  
Houses in turmoil.

Croaking of the frogs  
Thunder, lightning in dark clouds,  
A welcome shower.

Bird plumes are now clipped  
Spirit of freedom in the cage  
Love destroyed for now.

Colorful buntings,  
In the midst of joys and mirth  
Onset of monsoon.

Peeran is a hugely skillful wordsmith, and his careful technique always creates meaning. It is exciting to see a poet exhibiting as he does a vigor and freshness of imagination that delights the heart and lifts the spirit.

In fact, S.L. Peeran has been celebrated for his poetic imagery; his social, political and moral alertness; his uncanny ability to make the ordinary extraordinary; and, not least, a humor all his own. Gathering much of his material from the minutiae of Indian philosophy, religion and culture, Peeran matches meditations on spiritual concerns and the weight of history with a nimble wit, shifting to moments of clear vision and intense poetic revelation.

The poems *In Garden of Bliss* are mainly presented one or two per page, interspersed with several longer poems, which adds positively to the experience of the reader and encourages perusal at a thoughtful pace.

The first poem “In Garden of Bliss”: “Greetings for dawn of twenty eleven”, addresses aspects of the coming Year:

A year with endless dreams in our eyes to gleam,  
Everyday when blessings shine and beam,  
Every second when joys are born,  
Every moment when happiness dawns.

The lengthy title poem, “Garden of Bliss”, contains a strong sense of preservation, the desire to care for lovely things, and ends with the words:

All the gathered souls will sing praise,  
will witness the effulgence of the Lord,  
all will think, see alike in Oneness.  
All will become manifest and clear.

While the lengthy poem, “The Blessed Prophet Mercy to the Humanity”, concentrates on the creation of the world and the sayings of the Holy Prophet:

Lord is hidden in the self of Man,  
While the light of Mohammed  
Is enshrined in the glorious hearts  
Of the believers,  
Lord and His angels  
Send their blessings on Mohammed.

Peeran fights with words against the implications of kinship in “I in Him, He in me” and the “daily solemn prayers” in “Namaz” invite us to a relationship with the Supreme Being through prayer and good works:

“Namaz” the daily solemn prayers/recited day in and day out,/is to break the violence of the mind,/to seek peace, solace for the soul.

Other poems, such as “Light or Mercy” and “Open Foe”, delight us with their observation of the human condition.

In “The Endless Journey” Peeran expresses mankind’s torment in being caught up in the vortex of changing times. He sees mankind being “tested” amidst the background of “endless space”, “The moving Moon”, “The pathology of various diseases” and “the arrival of the computer age”. The poem ends with these words:

Man is devil to himself,/enemy of own self,/of his  
neighbor,/man a friend,/a father, a guide,/a saint, man an ever  
enigma,/a paradox.

Describing a surprisingly modernistic landscape, where the old order fades, he writes in “Our Paradise”:

This is the ancient land/where hides of goddess cow once  
holy,/is now turned to leather,/the fine shiny shoes for convent  
schools,/the bones are crushed for gelatin,/to be mixed as an  
elixir/in chocolate Vitaminised drinks for strength.

In “Look Beyond”, he expresses his sorrow at “forlorn memories” and the way in which we cling to them. In the closing couplet, he says:

Enjoy changing seasons and lovely streams,/enthuse yourselves  
with charming dreams.

Later in “Long Tiring Journey”, he writes, with acceptance, irony and remembrance of a train journey, which also works as a metaphor for the poet’s way of expressing his feelings about the journey through life:

The out of breath steam engine/with several long bogies/has at  
last reached puffing and jetting/the end of the wry station./the  
initial journey was a joy,/then exiting, then exhilarating,/then  
tiring, hoping after hope,/that the rusting train comes to a stop.

The poem “Aam Aadmi” focuses ironically on the ‘leisure and comfort/And cozy life’, which have been replaced by mankind’s greed and sloth: “Our peaceful, surroundings now replace/by motorised, mechanised life”.

“The best half” is a poem about the poet’s relationship with his wife: “One thing I found after three decades/of marriage is that is impossible/to befriend and console your best half”.

After three decades of companionship, the poet finds himself in the unhappy position of being in a loveless relationship. While “Prayer for compassion and Mercy” is a plea to the Lord for “that patience/that fortitude and calmness, steadfastness/practiced by Prophet and his followers”.

Following the poems are eleven quatrains, of which I quote my favorite:

You have to journey the whole world,  
to know its vagaries and its mirth,  
to know its slipperiness and its pitfall,  
only to realise, treasure lies below your own feet.

A section of sixteen haiku ends the volume: my favorite being:

Songs are in my heart,  
Let fingers move on the flute  
Music makes me sing

In these heartfelt poems, Peeran’s deep meditations and self-knowledge are evidence of his ongoing spirituality and longing for peace and tranquility in the world. It is a sobering collection as we see the poet examining the contemporary scene, comparing it with what has passed and seeking change in an imperfect world. While the poems in Garden of Bliss are moving and compassionate, they do seek answers to problems that beset us all in this ever-changing, disturbing world.

S.L. Peeran’s collection, *Eternal Quest*, exhibits a mature, thoughtful voice. The poems are skilled and well-crafted. There is a deep love of the worlds of nature and the imagination, which is not sentimental but knowledgeable and perceptive. The more I read, the more I felt that most of the poems actually create a kind of halfway house, halfway between the security of the imagination and the presence of the real world.

Peeran writes lyrics about people, places and ideas that no matter how lucid they are – and they always are – rarely do they lose that element of mystery, that sense of the numinous, which is inseparable from the best poetry: the sense of something beyond the sense of what is there. In his poems he is able to detach himself from the stress and conflict of the everyday world to connect with his innermost self. In his poems he is able to bear witness to the uninterrupted flow of events of the external world. His poems chronicle his observations and communications between this world and his thoughts and ideas.

In Peeran's writing he also engages with serious political concerns underscored with deeply personal experiences. The world 'out there' of unrest, injustice and conflict is not something to be compartmentalised but co-exists with the domestic on equal terms. A flower or a childhood memory blossoms next to the horrors of conflict. He is not a poet to shy away from life but pushes language into its face until it screams.

Poetry happens along the divide between thinking and dreaming, so what better medium with which to address the equally pervasive duality of things as they are versus things as we wish to see them: the It and the I which humanism has tried to equate with objectivity and subjectivity; science has no more codified the universal It than religion has the universal I. So here we are, in the poetry of S.L. Peeran, a master poet, master of the interstice: the paradox that is our own cause and effect. Here is where we leave the innocent world for the world of moral responsibility.

Certainly, *Eternal Quest*, is a strong collection. Characteristically, serious in mood, formally assured, wide-ranging in references and exploratory, the poems may indeed be read as variations upon frames, stopping places, ideas and meanings in a continuing journey. This is the travel or re-tracing, and the possibilities of discovery remain open.

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## Poetry of S.L. Peeran

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S.L. Peeran is a bilingual poet from Bangalore writing in Urdu and English and a Judicial member of Customs, Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal, Bangalore. Peeran started his career as a poet in Urdu and on the advice of a learned friend he started writing in English. Though he is fairly a late bloomer in the field of writing English poetry, he has progressed fast and published so far eleven collections of poetry in English which is indeed no small achievement. He comes from a well-known spiritual dynasty, descended from one of Islam's much revered mystics, Abdul Qadir Jilani (d.1161); being an advocate of Sufism he wrote two scholarly books on Sufism and Islam and edits two journals in Urdu and English to familiarise the elite with Sufi message. So far he has published nine books of poems: 1. *In Golden Times*, 2. *In Golden Moments*, 3. *A Search from Within*, 4. *A Ray of Light*, 5. *In Silent Moments*, 6. *A Call from the Unknown*, 7. *New Frontiers*, 8. *Fountains of Hopes*, 9. *In Rare Moments*, 10. *In Sacred Moments* and 11. *Glittering Love*. His poems have appeared in various journals and anthologies and his reputation as a poet in English is now well established. His first two collections gave him a promising start as a poet in English. The next collection *A Ray of Light* dedicated to his grandfather and great-grandfather who were known for their great service and generosity to the poor and the needy. It is quite appropriate that he wrote on his late grandfather a long poem in which he paid him a

rich tribute and it is included in this volume. C.L. Khatri, the poet and editor of the journal *Cyber Literature*, in his Foreword to the book, writes “Peeran is essentially a poet of faith, love, compassion and inner wisdom. The present anthology is an exploration of light with a Sufic mission to spread the light of the fine sensibilities imbued in our religions. In this way poetry serves as his vehicle. In his Introduction to the book Peeran apologises for any shortcomings in English syntax which shows his modesty as he has good command over the language”. Poems of this collection present his views on life’s situations from all angles. For instance in the poem ‘Life is War’ he expresses his cherished opinion in clear and emphatic words:

Life is like going to war.  
 You need to choose strong sturdy soldiers;  
 Give them the best of physical training  
 To combat with strategic support

As a person espousing the cause of moral principles, he wants to spread the light of human values and urges that we should be free from corruption and sinful activities. The poem ‘Spread Light’ gives a clarion call to spread the light of moral values:

Say what you want to say  
 In a loud clear way.  
 Let it be audible to one and all,  
 Let it be a clarion call

He continues this theme in another poem ‘Lead Me to the Light’, which is indeed a remarkable poem composed almost in the form of a prayer resembling the Biblical Psalms in tone and tenor. The poem is full of universal message transcending the barriers of religion, caste, colour and creed. He includes the element of love also in his poetry and his treatment of the aspect of love is at once appealing as it expresses his sincerity with simplicity; look at the treatment of love in his poem ‘How to Meet You’:

The sweetness in you  
 Has turned into a lovely spring,  
 With fragrant flowers all around  
 To remind me of your deep love



The next collection *In Silent Moments* gives us a sketch of his wide and varied thoughts and his changing moods; Peeran writes, “*In Silent Moments* is an early offshoot of inner turmoils, joys and ecstasies experienced in the calm and silent moments of night” and continues “I have not put any extra effort or strain. They have come to me spontaneously in a flash of moment and it has assumed the form of my personal poetry”. To a certain degree poetry becomes a vehicle for him to project his Sufi thought and Islamic spiritualism. He advises the youth not to yield to materialistic gains and temptations (p.14) and though the realisation of God is a challenging task, one has to seek God’s grace:

For total merger  
With the supreme being  
In total bliss and ecstasy (SM, p.58)

Next collection *A Call from the Unknown* is steeped in Sufi philosophy, which he tries to articulate with missionary zeal, and the modern man can draw real sustenance to his existence from the spiritual stream. Prof. R.K. Singh in his Foreword to this book writes, “Peeeran, as a seeker of Truth, understands that the divine Avatars on Earth have been the true educators of humankind.

Without their guidance, the human race could not have raised itself above the level of the animal”. The book moves on the same lines as the previous one and the poet says God is the only hope and guide for him at all times:

When I lost hopes from all  
A divine voice gave strength and guided me (p.63)

The poem ‘Bliss Amidst Poverty’ presents the principle of Sufism which says that one should be away from material wealth and avarice. The Prophet, who is the role model of excellence for the Sufis, is said to have repeatedly expressed ‘Al-faqr-o-fakhri’ i.e. penury is my pride. A true Sufi is always in search of the Divine, which is expressed in the poem ‘Ever in Search’:

Hidden away from every eye  
O! My eyes ever in search (p.95)

In the poem “My Religion” he lays emphasis on the essential global view of humanity that the entire humanity is one family.

As such he says his rites and symbols are:  
Acts of love to foster oneness’:  
Not for creating apathy  
discernment and distraction;  
for cataclysmic schism;  
For disharmony and strife.

He says wherever there is light there is bound to be shadow and he cleverly tries to make an appraisal of worldly things in degrees of light and shade and the poem ‘Light and Shade’ makes it very clear:

Where there is creation there is destruction  
Where there is life there is death  
Where there is system there is chaos  
Where there is light there is shadow  
Where there is desire there is hatred  
Where there is blessing there is curse

His next collection *New Frontiers* is a continuation of the universal theme of exploring the growing awareness of the much needed love of humanity which is cogently described in his poem

‘Freedom from Turmoils’:  
But a heart yearning for love,  
pure and sublime, reaches peace.  
Love breaks the shackles of slavery  
And releases one from drudgery.

His longer poem “Lament of a Shady Tree” is a general plea to humanity to save trees and treat them with due respect. Peeran spends much of his poetic talent in making this poem a memorable one. The next volume *Fountains of Hope* is replete with lines of humanistic appeal and many poems describe the sacrifices of great men for the good of the world:

‘Let us wipe the tears of sorrows from every eye,/Let none go to bed hungry, live bare sansclothes’ (p.42).

A popular Sufi maxim is – ‘*dar duniya bash, barae-duniya mabash*’  
i.e. live in the world, but not for the world.

Peeran gives priority to social obligations and responsibilities and condemns corrupt and unsocial ways. The poem ‘Mera Bharat Mahan’ is a satire at the empty claims regarding our national progress. He is very much shocked by the barbarous and inhuman acts of the Talibans and in the poem ‘O Taliban’ he makes an appeal to them to give up violence and develop tolerance and compassion:

You cut hands, stone a sinner to death.  
Whither love for humanity on this earth.  
Soul rending music does not stir you.  
O ‘Taliban’ shun violence, acquire world view. (p.32)

Peeran’s social consciousness finds a dominant expression in his next volume *In Sacred Moments* which reveals his anti-terror views and his condemnation of state-terrorism. His awareness of the political turmoil in Iraq finds an expression in this book (pp.49-50). He is very much distressed by the communal violence in Gujarat and his poem “Ah Gujarat” condemns communal riots and the killing of the innocent people:

What wrong had they done?  
For their parents and homes  
To be burnt in the carnage.  
Godra and the whole of Gujarat in turmoil! (p.72)

His next volume of poems *In Rare Moments* reveals a voice full of authority and his swift poetic development. The detailed Introduction to this book by Dr. (Mrs.) C. Anna Latha Devi, the Vice Principal of a College at Nagercoil, runs to nineteen pages. His verse proclaims his abiding love for humanity and his yearning for spiritual blossoms which is made clear in his poem “How to Reach the Truth”:

Truth is always simple  
and most humble.  
It fulfills all its promises  
and oaths. It is never deceptive,  
neither it camouflages,

It is open-minded and open-hearted,  
never secretive or suspicious.

His challenging poem “Where does Allah Reside?” like many others expresses his strong devotion to the Supreme Lord and it explains that it is not at Mosque or Temple or Church the True God is found, but deep within one’s inner self. This volume also consists of a few haiku, twenty-five in all, and here is one to illustrate:

Fragrance to a rose  
the songs of the nightingale  
to cheer the sad heart.

The poems in his latest book *Glittering Love* are mostly expressions of his deeply felt emotions and as such they have immediacy of impact. For instance, in the piece “Knock Out” he expresses his idea with so much of force that it finds an energetic outlet:

‘I wish I could give him a Mohd. Ali’s knock-out punch’. Often in his presentation of general situations we find some humorous or ironical parallels in his personal life. One such comical reflection can be seen in the verse ‘Umpteen Sacrifices’ where he refers to his parents who waited after giving birth to five daughters for a male child with inexhaustible patience when at last the poet was born who was later followed by a male and two female children:

Year after year, my mother  
Bore five daughters, hoping for a son.  
Then me, then my younger brother.  
They didn’t stop till two more daughters were followed.

His satire has his personal stamp which is quite conspicuous when he comes to describe the modern situation of confusion and bloodshed and the slow reaction of our intelligence and police force which is quite clear from verses such as “Mock Drills”:

The frequent news of bomb blasts  
in several cities of Iraq and Afghan.  
News of death of men of all ages,  
Has suddenly woken up our police.

Finally there is the last poem “Advent of Islam” a lengthy one that runs into eleven pages divided into two sections filled with fourline stanzas, the first part describing the beginnings of Islam and the second part showing millions of people praying to Allah for forgiveness. The book ends with an eighteen page section of haiku of which some of them are interesting: ‘Bird plumes are now clipped/Spirit of freedom in the cage/Love destroyed for now’.

Thus Peeran’s poetry reveals his Sufi thought and ideals and his staunch secular mind. Poetry becomes a medium for him to propagate human values such as peace and compassion and carry his good-will mission. Indeed he is a poet with a noble mission and his poems are a constant expression of his love of humanity. His lines have strength and sincerity.

**S.L. Peeran's Poetry –  
A Body of Aspiration and Inspiration**

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Although S. L. Peeran bloomed belatedly in the field of Indian English Poetry, yet he has given away a gradual and prolific growth.<sup>1</sup> His appearance with 13 poetry Collections is of no meager importance. Enscenced in a high comfortable and commendable bureaucratic discipline with illustrious family lineage going back to the column of the Maharaja of Mysore.

S.L. Peeran like Raja Rao endeavours to convey in a language not his own the spirit that is his own. What is more like Kamala Das the distortions, the queerness and the Indianness of English is to him as human as humanity itself. That is why the bulk of Peeran's poetry shows him a human speaking to humanity on humanism. Truly speaking, English essentially being the language of intellectual make up cannot effortlessly convey with much precision the spiritual plane. Compared to the poets who form a close identical literary peer group, Peeran stands apart and is different in approach and outlook. The charm of his poetry lies in an extended outcrop of spiritual consciousness. Peeran is basically a Sufi poet. Sufism simply is a science – a process of discovering the divine perfection which already is in man. Sufis so lays maximum stress on spiritual environment: On Wahdatulwujood – oneness of being. Likewise they prefer to travel in the company of spiritual

masters called Mursid or Guru. This Sufi lore brings him closer to philosophers and mystics of times of yore. Besides, to keep man at par with his maker by indoctrinating virtues such as truth, love, faith, charity, harmony, peace and freedom etc., forms the moral fiber of his poetry. Being didactic he at once preaches to provide profound truths. The subjective aspect of the poet acknowledges full non-conformity with contemporary mode of living and social set of connections. That is why Peeran seems to give vent to ire and displays extraordinary sense of discontentment and disapproval. Every now and then he becomes visible to advocate spiritually upright and practically viable moral truths. Above all to enlighten his readers and to generate the much needed buzz for displaying variety, multiplicity and heterogeneity.

S.L. Peeran's poetry displays an earnest eagerness and concern for the welfare of human beings as it takes the readers straightway into the web of spiritual awareness. Indeed his is a self-confessional mode which provides a significant constituent to bring him closer to Allah. That is why he seems to have emerged with a mission. The mission being change – Change in an already decaying, rotting and worsening civilisation. In such an attempt the poet nowhere appears heuristic. The cavalcade of his poems further keeps the readers agile and reflective. As a matter of fact the bulk of his poems not only assuage the ailing society but also offers sweet and soar concoctions of love. Love human as well as divine. In this attempt the ageing conscience of the poet apprehends sardonic sense of irony. It is to liberate the infirm and the destitute. A unique mode of looking into dissent, feud, persecution, maltreatment and torment. In portraying such negative traits the poet uses a new vocabulary which indeed is an innovative contribution to English speaking world. The tone is often gentle, supple, benign or melancholic. Though at times the irony becomes sharp and pungent yet the balance amicably maintained salvages him from endangering the existence of man. To spiritually unfed and uninitiated masses his poetry imparts like first rate successful maestro a symphony of peace and goodwill. As a whole his probing mind explores multiple vistas of human concern and consternation. His poems being an outcome of

confrontation with stark realities of life in society conspicuously exemplify deadly, fatal, toxic, lethal and unhealthy situations insecure and insular around him. That is why his voice fabulously yet ferociously disintegrates and explodes at the gradual deterioration of sanctimonious and self-righteous values. Herein his holier than thou attitude brings him closer to the philosophy and theology of Sufism.

The existing panorama of Contemporary Indian English Poetry is under the shadow of doom and gloom. On behalf of scholars, critics, media and publication houses there is insufficient acknowledgement of new and emerging poets. Researchers also appear more inclined to work on well-established poets. So we get less or scanty recognition of new poets by Indian or international readers. As far as S.L. Peeran is concerned his roots are well established. All 13 poetry collections have been reviewed by critics of extraordinary competence both at home and abroad. Reviews appear often regularly. Full-fledged articles have forced readers to go through his poetry collections at least for one more time. One M. PHIL dissertation has been published (one PhD). Much more is in offing-yet to come out. Coming to wind up Peeran truly takes us beyond the personal towards the immediate yet more greater awareness. The awareness of life and times imparting us a feel, a touch and a vibration at once impulsively reflective and interpretative of his milieu and roots. His fortitude and gratitude further push forth a sensitive, sane and sensible artistic critique unique in impeccability and crispness verily fresh, frosty and nippy displaying uncommon with and tempting imagery. Above all his tender gestures and meditative curves lend an ornate and flowery touch to his poems. A treat and a feast to all thoughtful readers.

However the outstanding and pragmatic aspect of Peeran's poetry is the frequent use of syntactic variety in verse forms. The presence of syntactic features such as – dislocation, elaboration, fragmentation and regularity etc., provide assistance in deciphering the diction and technique of his poetry. This quality is also noticeable amply in English and American poetry. Besides most of his poems are narrations in third person pronoun. The poet appears



more nominal than verbal. The nominalisation of finite verbs not only lends charm to his impersonality but also imparts esoteric, static and technical touch to his poems. As the poet talks more in notions and less in facts the employment of archaic and uncommon words acts like nut and bolt in the edifice of his poems. Abstract qualities are either personified as human individuals or anthropomorphised. The lexical device of reiteration and colloquial cohesions further enhance the grandeur and ardor of his poetry. Deviations occur when semantically incompatible words are brought together. Consonantal and multisegmental bands appear to reflect the split and disjointed sensibility and psyche of the poet. Traces of vowel phonemes and alliterations further embellish Peeran's art of poetry and poetics. The punctuation and other English language lexicons are upto the mark. Even so discerning readers and critics cannot find slightest traces of fault and flaw in his poetic compositions.

In defining the black soul found playing humbug in socio-political circles S.L. Peeran creates a complete contrast with his literary counterparts like D.C. Chambial and O.P. Bhatnagar because of inner wisdom. In Satanic or chaotic world Man predisposed to create illusion and false paradise, his crookedness and gullibility forms the theme or thesis of his major poems. The poet good humouredly makes use of biting wit penchant and trenchant at least to offer meaning to a meaningless world. Besides his innate relation to the sacred and the consecrated carries familiar readers beyond all point of views. This change known as spiritual makeover has no further scope for emotional, intellectual, psychological or religious bondage. It is a fair play of liberty and autonomy beyond all logical arguments directly leading to total submission at the feet of *God*. Herein the poet seems to rejoice and celebrate at the divine play like Kabira and Amir Khusroe. If truth be told Peeran is a poet on holy ground – a pilgrim whose peregrinations dive deep into *Tagwa* – piety, love, compassion, humanity and faith in goodness. Many of his verse lines will indubitably pass on to posterity as adages and epigrams like aphorisms of Bacon or sayings of Soloman. Instead of

romanticising he aims at humanising his archetypes. Here indeed is God's plenty. An avid reader of his poems without doubt claims for a readaholic attitude while the wise counsels of the poet are witness to his workaholic proclivity. Almost everywhere from first to last the reverberating undertone seems cognising Spiritual consciousness. His talent and tenacity further reveal extraordinary logic, insight and precision notwithstanding his cynical and whimsical propensity, viz –

O Let us not now worry of the other world  
The unseen hereafter of the purgatory blinds  
Of rivers of honey, milk and "Hoories"  
Of that one day being to our thousand days.<sup>3</sup>

Undoubtedly Peeran very succinctly awakens us to the meaning and purpose of human existence and its ultimate destination. His poems are true responses to various situations of life such as – falling ethical values, ethnic commotion, cultural confusion, hybridity and decaying, putrefying civilisation etc. Besides like a true but sensitive observer the poet observes various manifestations of omnipresent being to redeem mankind in a mystifying paradox. Why a person of Peeran's caliber is inclined to write or why he writes? The poet himself conveys the reply –

How can I keep silence  
When my mind is tortured  
With bitterness on watching  
Throttling of good sense  
And man slipping into utter darkness<sup>4</sup>

It is this quality which makes Peeran a significant and promising poet of our times. In ontological order of Indian philosophy Peeran comes in evenly balanced terminology with theological systems of belief in Karma Yoga, Visisthadvaita and Prapatti. One and the same maxim criss-cross the framework in various poetry collections. However, the predominant theme is Sufism and Suleh-e-Kul. The dust of darkness that has accumulated over the years needs to be brushed away by the gentle, soothing, fresh and enlivening breeze of divine love. This notion of paramount consequence and significance amply illustrates often

highlights the spiritual practices which enable the applicant to attain a state of oneness with the divine. Being prolific Peeran's poetry in its consolidated and substantial form further puts on pedestal his craft as though a substitute for religion. The Haikus both in *The Garden of Bliss* and *Eternal Quest*<sup>5</sup> at places glow with like Will-O-The-Wisp. To sum up one can say that Peeran's poetry is not a prayer but a comportment of it.

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## **Spirituality in the Poetry of S.L. Peeran**

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### **Introduction**

The works of many contemporary Indian English poets remain unexposed even today. The growth of Indian poetry has been abrogated, as it has not been given the appreciation and recognition it deserves by local readers, media and academicians (Roy, 2012). Studies are still being carried out on the works of eminent poets like Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das, Jayant Mahapatra and A.K. Ramanujan (Dodiya, 2000). In addition, no initiatives have been taken to acknowledge and encourage some less known poets who despite their creative ability and poetic sense have been subjected to politics and elimination. Hence, the present study is an earnest effort to recognise one such contemporary poet who has not been popularised by well-known critics. S.L. Peeran is one such poet and the focus of our discussion will be on his works. Peeran is well acknowledged for his work as a Sufi and Spiritual poet. He had emphasized the need for religious pursuit of mankind, but also indicates that mere following of religious principles without application will not lead to salvation (Prasad, 2011). Peeran has been celebrated to be a poet whose focus is on the cradle of spiritualism. His works are centered around the faith of religious tolerance. Through his poems he promotes the need for the growth of spirituality among men. His works add new dimensions to

Indian Spiritual writing by promoting Sufi style of writing. R.K. Singh calls him the ultimate spiritual poet,

He is a firm believer in God, family and humanity. He stands for values like humanity, tolerance, love, truth, faith charity, respect, justice, freedom, peace, harmony, unity of God and mankind, promotion of education and culture and love of nature.<sup>24</sup>

### **Life and Works of S.L. Peeran**

S.L. Peeran being a Sufi, brings out spirituality and religion in his poetry, at the same time he is careful in emphasizing that religion is a tool that propagates humanity. His readers looked up to him for idealistic and spiritual reflections in his poems which have the potential to make a man devoid of his follies, vices and mundane attachments. S.L. Peeran is a bilingual poet who has written in both English and Urdu (Prasad, 2011).

S.L. Peeran hails from a renowned lineage of Persian, Arabic and Urdu scholars and poets belonging to the erstwhile Mysore State. His great grandfather was a well-known owner of the title 'Siraj-ul Ulma' (Sun among Scholars) and for his notable services to the state. His grandfather was given the title "Moin-ul-vizarath" (Pillar of Ministry) which he received from the late Mysore Maharaja. S.L. Peeran's father who was an engineer was also Sajjada-Nishin of the Darga Saint Hz-Qader Awaliya in Srirangapatna.

S.L. Peeran had an extensive college education, starting from a Bachelor's degree in Natural Sciences from St. Joseph's College, Bangalore in 1969, Bachelors in law from Govt. law college, Bangalore and finally went to National Institute of Social Science for a Post Graduate Diploma in Social Service Administration (Khatri and Sudhir, 2007). His first occupation was, Labour Welfare and Personnel Officer at an industry, after which he switched to providing consultation for industrial law and personal management. In 1976, he started practicing law under the auspices of Justice Sri. P. Viswanatha Shetty, (retired Judge of High Court of Karnataka). His experience as a lawyer was instrumental in rendering him a

competent teacher in Havanur Law College, Bangalore. In the year 1989, S.L. Peeran was chosen the Member-Judicial of Customs, Excise and Gold (Control) Appellate Tribunal, New Delhi in 1989 as a reward for his successful career as a lawyer. Ten years later, in March 1998, S.L. Peeran was transferred to the Chennai Bench. Later on, he was transferred to Bangalore again in 2004 and in 2009 July, he requested and was granted a voluntary retirement.

S.L. Peeran's involvement in Sufism was immense, including human growth and development as well as poetry writing in English and Urdu. He was also a writer by choice and his first book was "The Essence of Islam and Sufism and its Impact on India" published in New Delhi in 1998. The poet's initial poems were in Urdu in the beginning of 1997 and at the end of that year, he started writing English poems as well (Prasad, 2011). It is noteworthy that, S.L. Peeran despite starting his writing career late at the age of 48. He has produced eleven volumes of poetry which has been much appreciated in the literary world. *In Golden Times* (2000), *In Golden Moments* (2002), *A Search from Within* (2002), *A Ray of Light* (2002), *In Silent Moment* (2002), *A Call from Unknown* (2003), *New Frontiers* (2005), *Fountains of Hope* (2006), *In Rare Moments* (2007), *In Sacred Moments* (2008) and *Glittering Love* (2009) are the poetry compositions published by Peeran.

*Fountains of Hope* is one of his remarkable works in which his emotions and ideas of philosophy of life have been portrayed with much significance. It is apparent that his views and thoughts expressed in this poem are based on his inferences of life from his experiences. His in-depth idea of life and the subtle variations depicted in his words are capable of capturing the reader's attention completely. His words have the unique ability to drift a reader to a world that he saw through his eyes as a writer. The poet has a special gift of delving deep into unexplored faces of life and bringing out meaningful analogies entwined with creativity. In addition his poems use simple but charming words that are perceivable for any reader who understands the language.

Mr. S.V. Ramachandra Rao has revealed a crucial aspect of S.L. Peeran's poetry saying.

“...struggle between hopes and despairs is not the only mainstream of the exceptional collection of poems. The various hues, moods, anguishes, hopes, disappointments, joys of union sorrow of parting and separation and other aspects of romantic and other types of love occur on an off the book, proving the poet to be an ardent devotee and genuine votary of love. This is one of his important poetic strengths and the poignant lines sometimes cause much contemplation and often bring tears to the reader's eye.

### **S.L. Peeran's Views on Importance of Spirituality in Poetry**

S.L. Peeran uses some simple yet significant words to describe the mystic law of the entire universe. Some of these words are 'eternity, horizon of time without beginning, wonder of life, and aspect of the eternal'. Poets have a profound sense of everything they see, hear and feel and try to relate them to the truth and law of life which subsequently they pour out in the form of creative words (Hasan, 2007 pg. 17).

This is why the poet has the ability to help readers who have a closed mind and experiencing a psychological imbalance to open up to the world and observe obstacles as minute entities in the long scheme of life. The theory of the expanding universe conveys the idea of positivity, courage, joy, compassion and willpower rather than ego and selfishness. Most poets venture the avenue of poetry that transcends this truth to the weak and lead them to a path of rejuvenation.

When the mind becomes clear and his pathways leading to positivity are reconnected to the realisation of universal truth of life, the closed part of heart should ideally take efforts to instil thoughts of good will, promote it and root it to eternity (Peeran, 1998). As a result, empathy, compassion, ability to restrain from negative deeds will return and become inevitable characteristics of humans. In accordance as the, ego shrinks, he broadens his horizon and shares

good will, starting from immediate associates, family, community, groups, ethnicity and finally humanity and nature in general (Peeran, 2007).

Peeran was of the view that spreading good will is evidently the best and most constructive way to regain the lost bonding between families, society and nature. A poetic and creative heart constantly works to oppose negative forces that break bonds between humans, nature and the greater universe. Further, it fights the Satan of the mind that provokes violence, prejudice and greed (Yaravintelimath et al., 1995). Good will abolishes negative energies of the society and focuses on depriving fellow humans of these negative forces. Nonviolence, compassion and trust as demonstrated by Mahatma Gandhi are the best evidence of effect of spreading good will. It is also necessary to promote mutual understanding and empathy towards others to expand the path of goodness and demolish the evils of the society (Gokak, 1975). S.L. Peeran further attributes that a poetic heart naturally harbours these qualities and that is why they have the ability to express the greatness of the all-pervasive universe, write words that relates with common man and help him see the world as an extensive platform of scope.

### **Themes of Spirituality in the Poem of S.L. Peeran**

Peeran's poetry features are often mistaken as mystic, but it is in truth spiritual. He talks about the truth of life which may convey a mystical sense, for common man fails to see the world in the truest sense (Peeran, 2002). He describes inherent qualities of man like mercy and compassion which is lost when man becomes a slave to earthy resources or is influenced by such affected humans beside him. This is when he seeks help from God and builds a trust which gradually takes him back on track.

The predominance of Sufism and spirituality in Peeran's works gives it a healing touch offering hope and faith. His words remind man of his duties, innate qualities and the path to progress not only as an individual but for the goodness of the world as a whole. His



poems have a meditative property at the same time meaningful, predominantly reflecting human nature and his growth.

Each one of us have  
Our own galaxies  
They are satellites  
With our sun.  
They reflect the splendor  
Of the everlasting light.  
When the darkness descends  
The cold moon without habitation  
Moves round and round its master  
Waxes and wanes again and again  
To create time, a path to tread  
Both the master and the servant  
Work in unison and in harmony  
To create unlimited and unseen seasons  
For man to reflect and ponder upon (Peeran, 2002)

These poems are different from philosophical preaching in that they are not previously quoted truth but truth as a cleansing for the human mind. Perhaps, a definitive line cannot be marked but these poems are of the nature that makes a reader exclaim “Aha!”, it is a kind of realisation that may have been known but not realised or viewed in the described perspective. In philosophical words, his poems are an awakening from ones slumber. His poems are however cannot be classified as intellectual.

S.L. Peeran’s poems vividly express that he is a religious person with great respect and faith in God. He mentions that his faith in God and his plentiful blessings humbles him and helps him in times of troubles. The poet also appreciates the existence of God in times of happiness which he describes in the poem “Grace” from the volume *In Rare Moments*.

Blow my sails, push my boat of life  
My rudder of faith is firm, I hold fast  
Neither storms, nor thunder, nor lightning can shake me  
I am not on a slippery path. I have my khizr”  
A friend in need is joy for ever  
An ever slave is a pleasure forever. (Peeran 2003)

All religious faiths revolve around the concept of God and Peeran's faith in Islam is no different. He depicts his strong faith in Allah/God in many of his works. In the poem "All Round Welfare", Peeran evidently respects and embraces the goodness of all religions and despite the differences in ways of worship, people of all faiths prostrate at God's feet to get His blessings. "Allah's Bounty" is one poem where he directly seeks the blessings of Allah whose mercy he believes is boundless. He often uses words like – O Lord, 'O Master and Divine Mercy which shows his fullest involvement and belief in the Almighty.

O Master, can I have your glimpse  
 To lift my sagging spirits an enlighten soul,<sup>11</sup>  
 His firm belief in Almighty is also evident in these lines –  
 When I lost hopes form all  
 A divine voice gave strength and guided me. (Peeran 2005, pg. 12)

S.L. Peeran is an ardent follower of Islam and strongly believes that preaching Islam is the way to cleanse the world of its evils and spread brotherhood. Accordingly, in one of his poems he narrates the birth of Prophet Mohammad.

A star was born, a light shone.  
 A manifestation of the ultimate Truth.  
 Purity in shinning dress dawning,  
 To cleanse and illumine the universe.<sup>21</sup>  
 To take humanity to Zenith of peace.  
 To open the floodgates of knowledge.  
 To unite man and man in a single bond.  
 To liberate the destitute, infirm, oppressed.

His poems follow that spiritual transformation is different from philosophical transformation and his poems are focused on spiritual transformations. He is not influenced by intellectual ideas or doctrines rather he is guided by religion and humanity. His poems are devoid of criticisms of any other religion though he is a devout Muslim. He attempts to describe the goodness he perceives from other religions and sees it in relation to teachings of Islam itself. Such an endeavor was the poem "My Good Old Friend." In this poem he avers that people's faith is differentiated only by the way

they pray, dress and manners but the belief in one ultimate God remains common.

Once in a deep sleep, I dreamt  
Being in a mosque, flooded with lights  
A bearded turbaned moulvi  
Leading prayers and piteously seeking grace  
I later walked out and passed through  
A temple full of worshipers  
The same moulvi, now I found him  
As a poojari, placing artees  
In a moment, I found myself  
In a church, the padri dressed  
In long whites, placing candles  
On the altar and doing service  
In a flash, I recognised him  
So did he. He smiled and  
Waved his hand in familiarity  
Adorning different dresses and manners  
Muttering in different tongue the same name. (Peeran 2002, pg. 12)

Through his poems Peeran promotes the idea that ultimate spirituality involves being enraptured by the love of God. In the following poem “What is Khulus”, Peeran promotes spirituality in promoting the virtues of humbleness leading to godliness.

I want to know from you as to what  
is “Khulus” and who is “Muklis”?  
Satan is afraid of “Mukliseens”.  
Those are most humble, God – fearing  
And most simple ones. Is simplicity,  
sincerity profound? In it humility  
resides and Divinity descends. A sincere  
person is a most humble person, is  
without ostentation without pride,  
prejudice. He does not put on airs  
he is never arrogant and haughty.  
He walks with softness. His speech  
is honeyed tongue. He has no  
roughness. He is gentle to the core.  
He is forgiving and does not mind  
taunts, criticism and humiliations.  
He suffers pain, agony with light-hearted

humour. He is not angry  
But jolly and extremely good,  
good and good full of love.

Peeran as a believer in Sufism and Spirituality promotes his work with faith and hope. His works have a healing touch and serve as a constant reminder that man should have duty towards himself, his family, his society and ultimately his faith. This spiritual transformation is observed in the following poem,

Each one of us have  
Our own galaxies  
They are satellites  
With our sun.  
They reflect the splendour  
Of the everlasting light.  
When the darkness descends  
The cold moon without habitation  
Moves round and round its master  
Waxes and wanes again and again  
To create time, a path to tread  
Both the master and the servant  
Work in unison and in harmony  
To create unlimited and unseen seasons  
For man to reflect and ponder upon

## **Conclusion**

S.L. Peeran stands out among other contemporary English poets in his way of expressing his beliefs embracing spirituality and Sufism. He retains the credit of being the only Indo-Anglican poet who writes Sufi verses in a fashion agreeable to readers across all barriers. His poems are not only intensified on God but also describe practical issues faced such as social and environmental problems. But, the ideas, reflections, imagery, style, creativity, figure of speech and personification predominantly revolve around Sufism. Most of his poems delineate the aspects of Sufism.

On reviewing the works of S.L. Peeran extensively, it is evident that the poet has completely immersed his thoughts in Sufism by reflecting which, through his poems, believes that love for mankind,

humanity, compassion and trust can be spread. S.L. Peeran through his poems reflects the significance of religious tolerance, promotes faith which is how the world can become a second heaven free of negativity, evil and ego (Prasad, 2011). He advocates establishing good relationship with fellowmen by positive communication and spreading of love and peace. It is Peeran's belief that his spirituality and practice of Sufism that has lead him to write poetry which is why his strong notions and faith in Sufism is depicted in his poems "Time" and "Again". Peeran's poems are for all class of people, emphasizing on the prime factors that are endangered in the world today – peace, humanity and growth; this he elicits in his poems in a descriptive and intuitive fashion and ultimately play a role in the spiritual transformation of the reader.

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## **The Poetry of S.L. Peeran: A Hope for a Better World**

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Immersed in philosophy of the Sufist theological precepts, S.L. Peeran has emerged, from the dying ember of 20<sup>th</sup> century Indian English Poetry, like a veritable phoenix. Here, indeed is a poet with a sense of mission<sup>1</sup> Says B.M. Jackson, a Judicial Member of Customs Excise and Gold Control, Appellate, Chennai is a bilingual poet composing poem in English and Urdu. He has seven collection of poems to his credit. The poetry of S.L. Peeran is an outcome of his confrontation with the stark realities of contemporary society. He is uncommonly sympathetic and knowledgeable about man's faults. He is dolorous at the rid growing capitalism, individualism, communalism, tyranny, agony, dissatisfaction, poverty, avarice, corruption, exploitation, violence, moral, degeneration, selfishness, and unspiruality. He is well conscious to the lethal and unhealthy situation around him. His poems are a call to invoke in dead veins of man – spiritual light, wisdom, peace, truth, happiness, glory, universal, brotherhood, beauty and goodness and to revolt against darkness, war, inhumanity, egoism, selfishness, superficiality, ugliness, indifference and jealousy, Dr. Shujaat Husain observe:

When he finds against human being and what is dangerous for the country, he sits not idle, on the contrary he becomes ferocious and fearlessly expresses his views through his poetry.

His heart bleeds seeing the deterioration that is taking place in the country.<sup>2</sup>

The threads of love and kindness are torn and dissolved by misfortunes, hunger and dis eases. Miseries sufferings and humiliation are unable to have an effect on the affluent. These surroundings make him dejected and he cries:

Shattered are the lovely dreams and uprooted  
Oceans are now on fire, who will quench the thirst?  
To whom shall they render their tragic tunes?  
How to revive the dead spirits?  
How to redeem them (N.E.8)

He feels that the time is completely changed and mishaps occur each day and dangers lurk everywhere;

Life in city fraught with dangers many,  
At every corner some devils asking money  
Time clicks its seconds beckoning  
To a hazardous fearful journey! (I.G.M.24)

The poem 'Ah Relatives' is a satire on blood relations that boast of being his well-wishers but at last 'make us bleed and wounds all over' whenever he tries to find solace and comfort, he be true. His heart becomes heavy and mind feels dullness on the callousness of man for each one where literate – illiterate, young – old and man – woman all are in lack of sense and shame and chaos is rampant everywhere sans the last touch of peace;

Overflowing patients in hospital callous doctor  
Government officials working with indifference, unconcern  
Police turning their face away picketing 'mamool' (A.R.L. 11)

Bes ides this, his poetry is par excellence in healing the wounds given by the extra modern modes of the man of present millennium. He has very searched out the loop holes in civilisation, culture, spirituality, love, peace and salvation. Manas Bakshi comments;

Peeran's probing mind explores several areas of human concerns and consternation and writes with such dexterity, sincerity and devotion that his poetry becomes vibrant, his expressions

becomes candid so, because Peeran is not afraid of calling a spade a spade despite being a govt. official.<sup>3</sup>

He like an aesthetic being feels the presence of an ephemeral desires the root cause of all ills and tornados. They mar the charms of this world and the next. There is the gulf between the man and civilisation that cannot be bridged without realising God and his omnipotence beyond the literal meaning of existence. The mystic current in life. Now and then Sufism can be glanced in his poems as he appears very close to every religion and wants to be one with higher spirit. C.L. Khatri say about his Sufism.

For the poet, the goal of life is to be one in solitude and to free forever of shackles of every kind and he partakes into the glory of a teacher, saints and prophets.<sup>4</sup> He invokes the man to be merged in God. In “Light upon Light – Noor” he say;

Utter His name, enlighten thy soul,  
Mind eyes, sparkle, lo behold  
Light upon light, for final merger (A.C.F.U.34)

Spirituality can vitalise the wretched one because God does not differentiate between rich and poor. The presence of divine light is the panacea of all ills that makes indifferent to all the hurdles and obstacles of life. In Bliss Amidst Poverty, S.L.Peeran shows the satiety and satisfaction of the poor:

In our hearts  
A divine light dwells  
To be at peace and in bliss (A.C.F.U.34)

He finds that man should not spend his life in trifles of worldly desire and grieve in pain on not finding the cherished dreams, but he must surrender himself before the Almighty;

With deep devotion, I burn the candle  
Of my life at His feet in total surrender.  
I am now left with no will of my own.  
My master’s service is my main motto  
I wish I were a dog to befriend HIM (I.G.T.63)



According to him, if man surrender himself whole heartedly before God, the eternal light certainly help him in reducing the self. He consider the religion of humanity as the supreme religion of the cosmos and demolishes the barriers of religious orthodoxy by bringing out the message of God from all religions, i.e Christianity, Hinduism, Muslim, Sikhism and Buddhism for the betterment of humanity, Srinivas Rangaswami comments;

When we approach Peeran's poetry, we are on holy ground. He believes in simple wisdom and meditation to feel with a pilgrim of deep piety, utter humility and sincerity, infused with pure love and compassion poor all of mankind joyous in the certainty of faith that goodness and truth will ultimately prevail over darkness and evil, and ever blissful with a heart brimming over with yearning for with the universal soul.<sup>5</sup>

Dejection and disappointment can be marked out in the poetry of S.L. Peeran but in spite of notice so many pitfalls he is still optimistic to mend the torn cloth of humanity and civilisation. He is hopeful for the glorious future;

To be up and sing in chorus and harmony  
Rejoice in light of wisdom  
In the learning in the elevation of mind and soul  
The dark one, accursed devil vanishes in thin air \* (A.S.F.W. 34)

In the poem, "A Cry of a Victim for Peace", lamenting at the inhuman treatment of man, destruction of nation and growing crop of double talk, hypocrisy and falsehood, he gives the message of Ahimsa and Dharma;

"Shun thy enmity and illumine thy heart  
With lofty ideals of Ahimsa and Dharma  
To recreate a paradise on earth, here" (I.S.M.)

His is not a class poetry but a poetry in which he celebrates and gives the world and en masse. He burns with great sympathy and brotherhood for all, high and low, rich and poor, noble and vile etc. The human soul has immense possibilities of good in it which are brought out full by the poet. His strong faith in the regeneration

of humanity runs through his whole poetic work. Dr. R.K. Singh remark:

He is a firm believer in God, family, humanity, humanity. He stands for values like humanity, tolerance, love, faith, charity, respect, justice, freedom, peace, harmony, unity, of God and mankind, promotion of education and culture and love of nature.<sup>6</sup>

His haiku and tanka bear the same appeal to humanity and his insistence on moral values in life. His haiku cover the whole spectrum of human experience and emotion. Dr.K.Srinivas say:

He writes haiku and tanka with illumine vision. There is inner vibrancy, the matchless verbal incantations in his lyrics! They gleam as flames, intense and fine. They have visible brilliancy. They have deep poignancy. And there is passionate naturalness in all he writes.<sup>7</sup>

His versification is as unconventional as his language and there is a rare compatibility between his form and his themes. Sometimes the long unrestrained lines in its free flow capture in its very form his spirit of humanity and harmony that Peeran breaths into his verses. Both his verse and his diction are suited to create the effect he aimed at, and to convey his message. Through his reflective, idealistic and spiritual poetry he is hoped to transform the very character of man, his follies, vices and unspirituality, and change greater than those caused by the longest and the bloody wars.

### Reference and Abbreviation

1. *Review of C.F.T.U. Poet*, Ed, Krishna Srinivas April 2004, p. 50.
2. *Review of New Frontiers*, is a Store of Peeran's Wisdom, p.4.
3. Review of A.R.L. and I.S.M., *Bridge in Making*, Ed. P.K.Majumdar, p.50.
4. Foreword of A.R.L.
5. *Review of A.S.F.W.*, poet Ed. K. Srinivas, June 2002 p. 60.
6. *Review of I. G. T.*, poet, Ed. K. Srinivas, June 2002 p. 59.
7. Foreword of I.G.T.

8. *In Silent Moments*, Bhubaneswar; HOLI, 2001 abbreviated as I.S.M. in the text.
9. "A Ray of Light", Bangalore; Biz Buzz Pub 2002 abbreviated as A.R.L. in the body of the text
10. "*A Search from Within*", Bhubaneswar: HOLI, 2002 abbreviated as A.S.F.W. in the body of the text"
11. "A call from the unknown", Bangalore: Bizz Buzz Pub 2003 abbreviated as A.C. F.W. in the text.
12. *In Golden Times Bangalore*: Bizz Buzz Pub, abbreviated as I.G.T. in the text.
13. *New Frontiers*, Bhubaneswar: HOLI, 2003, abbreviated as N.F. in the text.

**Aesthetic, Social and Mythic Consciousness in  
the Poetry of Aurobindo Ghose  
and S.L. Peeran**

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**Abstract**

This paper deals with aesthetic, social and mythic consciousness in the poetry of Aurobindo Ghose and S.L. Peeran. This paper clarifies the fact that the contemporary poets too have the beauty and understanding for the poetry which could turn any stone to reach its height. Peeran has proved through his artistic beauty and knowledge of spiritual as well as social, aesthetic, mythic consciousness that poetry is not the only means of enjoyment but also a simple way to awareness. Aurobindo can be quoted to understand his spirituality, "... when the consciousness meets the supreme Reality or the spiritual reality of things and beings and has a contractual union with it, than the spark, the flash or the blaze of intimate truth perception is lit in its depths"

*Keywords:* Aesthetic, Social and Mythic Consciousness, Spirituality, Sufi and Nature.

Indian English poetry is remarkably well known when it comes in term of aesthetic, social and mythic consciousness as Indian history and culture is very rich in itself. Indian poets do not hesitate to search their theme in the lap of Indian myths. Pre-independent, post-independent as well as contemporary Indian poets are also well

known devotes and saints, their poetry emerges from their heart, the heart which only knows way to God.

This chapter is a benign effort to bring a contemporary poet S.L. Peeran in front of a well pioneer Sri Aurobindo Ghose dealing both the poets poetry on the basis of aesthetic, mythic and social consciousness. Before coming to the two poets let us know what we understand by aesthetic mythic and social consciousness.

### **Aesthetic Consciousness**

Aesthetic is traditionally regarded as a branch of philosophy concerned with the understanding of beauty and its manifestation in art and nature, nowadays it is also regarded as a phenomena of art and its place in human life, in other words it could also be said that aesthetic also involve the creator, the person experiencing and the art itself. Aesthetic consciousness generates from emotion, emotion is key to experience art in the way the artist intended his art to be perceived. A work of art, whether a painting, poem, play, etc., that has a dark and ominous tone seemingly inflicts an expression of an emotion upon the reader. Emotion is vital for any consciousness, without emotion one cannot feel the real intention behind any particular piece of work. When one talk about aesthetic consciousness, it mean he or she can understand the emotion behind any work of art as he has experienced it in the light of inert knowledge.

### **Social Consciousness**

A poet can only be social if he could sacrifices his whole for sake of his people, his readers and for humanity. When the reader reads any poem of a particular poet and he understands the emotion or pain or joy in the content of the poetry of that poet then he could be called as socially aware. When a poets talk about some social issue like inequality, human harassment, poverty, corruption etc. the tone of his poem speaks his feeling and pain he is going through. Sometime it could also be seen in some poetry that it not only highlight some of the major issue which is engulfing our society but

also show us with proper solution to follow, this relation and knowledge of a poet with his social surrounding makes him socially conscious.

### **Mythic Consciousness**

Indian English writing is full myths, poets dealing with myths color their writings in a very careful manner as they very well aware of the facts that readers faith are emotionally connected with it. Poets' associated with myths writing also need proper knowledge of literally speech to give proper effect and judgment to their writings as his work acts like a bridge between myths and the reader which will enhance reader's knowledge about myth and correct them through his writings.

Sri Aurobindo Ghose is a legend in Indian English writing, to compare Aurobindo with S.L. Peeran is not possible, this paper is only a benign effort to present the contemporary poets on a same pedal.

Multi-faceted Literary Dexterity, Shri Aurobindo Ghose was a revolutionary, a thinker, a writer, a play-wright, a poet and above all a seer. As a writer, he was considered as the 'first and the foremost' as a poet. He created a massive output of poetry stretched over by a period of about seventy years.

Every hardship, every joy, every temptation is a challenge of the spirit that the human soul may prove itself. The great chain of necessity wherewith we are bound has divine significance and nothing happens which has not some service in working out the sublime destiny of the human soul. How could the world have attained its excellence if we has been denied the knowledge received through such benign soul.

As 'a lovely, mystical lyric of great transparency.' 'Revelation' has a visionary power. The poet experiences a spiritual illumination, as it were. For Aurobindo, nature very often becomes the abode of the heavenly spirit. Here also the poet envisions the presence of a spiritual creature amidst nature.

My breath runs in a subtle rhythmic stream;  
It fills my members with a might divine:  
I have drunk the Infinite like a giant's wine.  
Time is my drama or my pageant dream.  
Now are my illumined cells joy's flaming scheme  
And changed my thrilled and branching nerves to fine  
Channels of rapture opal and hyaline  
For the influx of the Unknown and the Supreme.

I am no more a vassal of flesh,  
A slave to Nature and her leaden rule;  
I am caught no more in the senses' narrow mesh.  
My soul unhorizoned widens to measureless sight,  
My body is God's happy living tool,  
My spirit a vast sun of deathless light

Transformation is a mystical poem in which Aurobindo speaks as an illuminated soul. The speaker is no longer a man of flesh and bone; he has been transformed into God's happy tool.' His very soul is lit up with the rapture and joy of being a part of the unknown and the supreme. The poem captures the process of transformation that a spiritually enlightened person experiences.

Aurobindo claims 'Nature' as the abode of the heavenly spirit. In his poem Aurobindo elaborates behavior patterns and aptitudes, ideas and intentions and showed as the way of attaining purity of heart and sublimity of spirit. It was through the efforts of these God – moved souls that the cultural attainments were refined and embellished, the link between man and God, the slave and the lord, was established. He establishes the spiritual existence with the connotation – 'a check of frightened rose' and 'heavenly rout' reflects Spiritual World.

O Thou of whom I am the instrument,  
O secret Spirit and Nature housed in me,  
Let all my mortal being now be blent  
In Thy still glory of divinity.

I have given my mind to be dug Thy channel mind,  
I have offered up my will to be Thy will:  
Let nothing of myself be left behind  
In our union mystic and unutterable.

My heart shall throb with the world-beats of Thy love;  
 My body become Thy engine for earth-use;  
 In my nerves and veins Thy rapture's streams shall move;  
 My thoughts shall be hounds of Light for Thy power to loose.

Keep only my soul to adore eternally  
 And meet Thee in each form and soul of Thee.<sup>2</sup>

S.L. Peeran is an important figure in the contemporary Indian English Poetry, is a bilingual poet, writing both in English and Urdu. Although a late bloomer, who started writing poetry at the age of 48, yet has surprised the poetry world during the last ten years by presenting more than ten noteworthy volumes of poetry: *In Golden Times* (2000), *In Golden Moments* (2002), *A Search From Within* (2002), *A Ray of Light* (2002), *In Silent Moment* (2002), *A Call from Unknown* (2003), *New Frontiers* (2005), *Fountains of Hopes* (2006), *In Rare Moments* (2007), and *The Sacred Moments* (2008). *Glittering love* (2008), *Garden of Bliss* (2010), *Eternal Quest* (2012).

Peeran like Aurobindo Ghose depict on the fact that being on earth is no pleasurable experience. As Aurobindo discard earthly pleasure and says human body is a material one and it is the spirit that adds divinity to the same.

He who would bring the heavens here:

Must descend himself into clay  
 And the burden of earthly nature bear  
 And tread the dolorous way.<sup>3</sup>

Likewise Peeran also in his poem "My Poem on Total Surrender" depict that the moment of being in the Divine Presence is the most joyous moment. It is the merger and union. This is what the Sufi yearns for. He wishes to be always in the company of Beloved in that Eternal Bliss and Supreme Love, which fills the Consciousness with Divinity, with Supreme Satisfaction and enlightenment. He loses his personal identity and attains Moksha in his own life by breaking the law of karma or rebirth. When light down there is enlightenment, the darkness disappears. The light eats away the darkness. There is glory and the fragrance spreads all over.



Hence, the joy of the union and merger destroys the past regrets and future fears. A Sufi feels that his being is enveloped with his Lord's compassion. He feels that each particle of his body is his Lord's creation. He feels that his consciousness is merged with his Master's and the Master's consciousness dwells in him serenely and life glows in him sweetly and calmly. Songs flow from his lips in the pleasure of his Master's love, which the Master showers on him eternally. A Sufi is totally a surrendered being.

I love Him, Respect Him and honor Him;  
Each breath of mine is spent in His service  
Day and night, merge and I slave forever  
Out of dedication and love of labor  
Neither vagaries of weather, ill health  
Nor desires, nor slumber can deter me  
With deep devotion, I burn the candle  
Of my life at His feet in total, surrender  
I have no complaints, demands, compulsions  
No grievances, grief or pain  
Undoubtedly, I am captured by Him;  
I am now left with no will of my own.  
My Master's service is my main motto  
I wish I were a dog to befriend him.<sup>4</sup>

S. L. Peeran also chose his subject from Quran to make the reader aware of the truth that there is nothing but only path of truth which will lead them to Almighty god, his poem "Lord Ever Merciful and Beneficent" is a perfect example of this;

A command received by Adam and Eve,  
Directly from the Lord Almighty  
In the presence of archangels  
Who protested creation of man from clay.  
For they felt, they were part of the light  
And fire, that could destroy man.  
Lord Almighty taught Adam, His Names  
And tested him, in presence of Angels,  
Who were ever in obedient attendance.  
Dumbfounded, they prostrated, seeking pardon.  
Lo, their leader, Archangel, protested,  
Defiant, out of jealousy, pride and pelf.  
Refused to yield, cringe, cower before Adam.

On the pretext of his superiority and knowledge  
 On the premise that Adam's race would create  
 Dissensions, destructions, bloodshed and sins.  
 An angel is pure, in total submission, to Lord  
 Should he bow before impure men of clay?  
 Thus Satan was banished, from Lord's Grace.  
 To ever remain as an arch enemy of man.  
 To tempt, lure, lead him to commit sin,  
 To indulge in sinful, mirth, joy and pleasure.  
 To make man to hate man for destruction.  
 To covet the neighbor's wife and to steal.  
 To commit heinous acts, to be shunned.  
 Neither pity nor mercy shall befall such men.  
 Thunder, lightning, storms and pestilence  
 Should ever pester them to shameless death.  
 To hell, they would be thrown by Lord's wrath  
 This to punish, for befriending, Lord's adversary, the villain  
 Who is a confirmed enemy of man.  
 The Lord, the Merciful and the Beneficent  
 Though has granted a decree and license  
 To Satan, to destroy, His creation.  
 To mislead humanity and lead them to cross roads.  
 But save those, who are in submission  
 In humility, serving humanity with sacrifice,  
 With love, devotion, serve their brethren  
 To save men from disarray and wrong paths,  
 Such shall receive Lord's Grace, Mercy,  
 For Ever His door is open to receive them.<sup>5</sup>

Another poem "Peace within" of Peeran speaks about peace, which could only be achieved after several turmoil but once it is achieved:

One has to undergo severe  
 Mental and physical sufferings  
 Agony and turmoil's in life  
 Before arriving at the Truth  
 A testing time, a period  
 Of severe anguish and pain.

On arriving at the Truth  
 You reach the stream  
 Of fresh, soothing waters

To quench the thirst  
To gain moments of  
Ecstasy, joy and Supreme –

Bliss, to bring peace within  
And enlighten the dark soul.<sup>6</sup>

Aurobindo has been represented as saga and philosopher who has plunged the secret of nature beyond the ken of perception and changed the concept of things and material. Aurobindo uses combination of abstract and concrete terms to invest the images with more abstract meaning without becoming overly abstract.

Peeran's poetry emerges from his heart, as poetry emanating from mind steeped in faith can sometimes be effective and enlightening and a restorer of truth and justice, but history of the world, however, been ample proof of the unprofitableness of such poets.

It could be said about Sri Aurobindo and S.L. Peeran that if one is a model of endurance, the other is an emblem of selflessness, sacrifice, fervor for truth and oneness of God, submission to the will of lord, chastity and piety. In short, each of them is a lighthouse of guidance showing the path of exalted behavior in one or the other walk of life.

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## **The Poetry of S.L. Peeran**

**S.V. Ramachandra Rao**

M.A. Lecture in English

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In all humility and in a mood of sincere appreciation, it gives me much happiness to pen this article on the prolific and consistent poetic efforts of S.L. Peeran. At the outset it is necessary to mention that to intuit into the real purpose of this voluminous work of verse running to eleven volumes, should be the main purpose of the reader. The reader should want to draw sensible reference and conclusions from the body of verse in a humble mood of balanced appreciation.

Some of the features worthy of being taken note of as a useful background to the verse is the role of Influences. Giving equal importance to all the influences it becomes necessary to understand that the most important and vital influence is without any doubt that of the noble and lofty teaching of Sufism and the Sufi Saints.

It is important at this juncture to note that our dear poet belongs happily to an exalted and evolved Spiritual order of Sufi Saints called the noble Qadri Shah order of Iraq. This aspect of his training and background work is necessarily more important than other aspects and influences on his life, mind, poetic sensibility, attitude and approach to life and verse-like formal Indian modern education, joint family background, simple and pious life style, study of Natural Sciences and Indian Law, Study of Social Service administration, teaching and practice of law, decades of work experience as a respected Judicial Member of a quasi-judicial body,

happy travel experience, meaningful “Sanga” which means positive relationship with various respected individuals and groups, influences of the “alma mater” in helping to evolve a better understanding of the purpose of God and purpose of life and so on. His story plays an important role in shaping the minds and lives of poets and so it is with Peeran.

It is therefore to be rightly concluded as a matter of much poetic importance that the simple noble and lofty teaching of the present day world recognised Sufism is the main background of his writing, poetic and otherwise.

It becomes therefore necessary to attempt with all humility a simple understanding of the teaching of Sufism. This is a wonderful ancient system tracing its original through the evolved Sufi Masters back to the primordial and greater God, sometimes also referred to as Almighty God. A system which reunites enthusiastic seeker and aspirant for higher and deeper knowledge is welcome in any age and time, in various countries and is found simplified and developed in various evolved and exalted mutually self-respecting and appreciative Orders, Sects, and Creeds,

The modern world is in a need of much reformation and transformation on a global Scale to achieve a peace fully and better world with concern for the welfare of the posterity and future.

The Sufi teaching simplify life by prescribing a simple system of discipline. This discipline concerns itself with all the aspects of the total being including the human body mind, psyche, intelligence, intuitive powers, latent powers, dormant powers, psyche powers sleep, state deep sleep state, dream state dreamless sleep state, various realms of being connected to these and to other aspects and so on. Initially the learner or the aspirant to understand his own inner divine nature and pray to Almighty God, who is the real Master, to help in his search for a pious teacher to give him continuous guidance till perfection is achieved permanently. The discipline primarily involves the correct understanding of all aspects of the total being and self of the human individual – the mind and

the various senses; perception of all phenomena real and unreal; the mouth and throat for food and speech, the role hunger and the stomach, the role of sentiments, feelings and emotions and the heart; the control, discipline and sublimation of the urges, desires and energies and of the total simplification of all aspect of human life, so as to help a conscious understanding of higher wisdom and truth as given by God; and most importantly to reconnect to the Divine consciously in every moment of life – at all times, and this for a higher of purpose.

This higher purpose is primarily to become a conscious and simple embodiment of goodness and virtues as taught by Almighty God. The simplicity and humility in the approach and practice, constantly, of this goodness and virtues is such a complete daily required actively that there is nothing else to do at all. The humble aspirant or seeker slowly and steadily learns the discipline and perfects it; so that over the decades of regular practice he becomes a teacher himself. It is believed by some that there is rebirth and many rebirths and life times of sincere practice is necessary for becoming a perfected Master. A perfected Master is one who has reached that state or status or level by being a Perfecting Master over many lives of regular discipline and practice.

Another important aspect Sufism is that the Sufi Seeker, aspirant, teacher or Master must constantly cherish, nourish, motivate, aspirant generate and cultivate goodness and virtue practice for the benefit and evolution of all beings of the world. This is an essential feature (to benefit other) of all higher wisdom and teacher in all systems. So we find in Sufism the wisdom of ages given by God and is nonsectarian secular, acceptable, unlimited and totally helpful for the benefit of all. In this context it is important to note that like the teaching of all religious, spirituality and mysticism, Sufism has been always in keeping strictly and correctly with word of God; the Rules of God and the Will of God.

It is undoubtedly in Sufism as in other systems that this essential feature of obedience and adherence always, and totally to

the Word of God the Rules of God and the Will of God has to be consciously remembered and practiced at all times.

An understanding of the thus far mentioned background of Sufism becomes essential for a study of the preoccupations, favorite themes areas of reference and primary concern of the poet Peeran. He is lucky to belong to a well-established Sufi Order of many centuries history. He is further lucky to have father, grandfather, great grandfather and the host of exalted ancestors all of whom are simple, pious, noble, sincere evolved practitioners of the discipline and teaching – thus becoming either saintly or after complete Saints themselves. This hierarchy of a noble ancestry gives to the poet Peeran a rare and extra ordinary advantage over other types of poets especially in the Indian context.

This advantage, is that he is essentially a simple and humble Sufi aspirant seeking the truth while at the sametime praying for a peaceful and better world. This advantage is also observed in the fact that he is a perceiver of the reality in his immediate surroundings of his home place, work place and elsewhere of the world of news and media and of the world itself with many of its details. His poetic conclusions are strongly influenced by simple sufi background. Much of the sufi wisdom controls and influences his poetic treatment of his favourite and other themes.

A study of these influences in his poetic treatment of the various these themes needs to be made in all humility for an appreciation chronologically; book by book of his eleven books of verse thus far published. Starting with the first attempt *In Golden Times*.

Concern for the welfare of one's own children is an enjoyable and happy activity of any sufi aspirant and quite understandably of over good sufi poet Peeran. This concern is brought out clearly and in a simple manner voicing words of wisdom applicable to all.

In the poem “To my little daughter” (p.4) to do everything with grace is taught;

Let all that you do, with grace be done,  
This is the way Dame Dignity can be won.

Further good advice is given to avoid the “fruits of disharmony” and to be noble and lofty in seeking the correct company and to seek the blessing the correct and to seek the blessings from God;

With absolute truth,  
Heaven can be sought  
Of fruits of disharmony, partake not  
For company, look to the Sun Stars and Moon.  
May they shower on you friendship’s boon!  
With sweet flowery eyes lit with love.  
My dearest, seek benign blessings from Him alone

Continuing this advisory mood of wisdom for the Children there comes on page 46 the noble poem “Advice to a dear Son”;

The eldest child of virtue is Patience  
And the golden means to peace is Silence  
On your visiting a house,  
when they open the door,  
Greet them with word “Peace be yours”  
Be kind and gentle to one and all,  
So that your hosts may treasure your call

Earlier in the poem “Wooing Truth” (p.5) the truth about Truth is brought out in completion with the virtues involved:

Truth is complete only with love  
Compassion, Mercy, Charity and Justice

The Sufi teaching of completely controlling and overcoming anger is understood by the following stanza of the poem “Oh Truth (p.6).

Whenever my anger roars and thunders,  
Its makes me commit all sorts of blunders!  
It crumbles my will to do good deeds.  
Makes me look small, and to shames it leads



In the poem “Confusion” (p.18) the need for the Sufi, discipline to control “his good traits” is brought out in the last stanza:

The light of wisdom seldom downs  
On confused minds, thus disturbed.  
A Mahatma is he who gives rein to his.  
Good traits and keeps bad ones curbed!

The humble Peeran is a poet with a totally controlled and balanced mind illumined by a clear conscience answerable to the All – knowing God – Almighty God. This God Conscience prompts him and actually urges him to break out of silence into poetic concern to makes preformed saying –

“Provokes me to utter saying preformed” (Silence, p.24)

How I can keep my silence  
When I see much of wrong around?  
It chills my conscious in moment tense;  
Provokes me to utter sayings profound  
How can I keep my silence  
When my mind is tortured with bitterness  
On watching throttling of good sense,  
And Man slipping into utter darkness?  
How can I keep my silence  
When youth have lost their shame  
Age old customs their countenance  
And Nature its beauty, name and fame?

The good poet Peeran does not believe in making over colorful, over powerful, proud and glamorous many – feathered peacock dances full of fanfare and gaudy outburst. He is contended to be just a crow – in the poem “I a crow” (p.26)

“I wish I were a crow  
Cawing for my own pleasure  
Flying either higher or low  
A simple black creature.  
.....”  
.....

The moral of the poem is in the last line; “Simple living makes life a treasure”

Sufi principles of “Love and affection being the most beautiful flowers in the garden of life” is well brought out in the poem – Education, Religion, Affection” (p.27)

Affection is the basis of goodness  
It makes one forgiving and kind,  
It frees one’s mind from darkness  
All mortals, as one, Love can bind.

The important question relevant and necessary to all human being in this world, past, present or future, of all nations and all religions, are-What is life for – ? (the answer is “Life is for giving”)-What is life for a human being?-(the answer is to protect the weak and meek”).

This is from the poem “Human Life” (p.36)

Life is for giving, as much as for  
Taking of energy from sun,  
Bliss from moon, existence  
From rivers, rain and Nature.  
Life is for supreme sacrifice  
On the altar of the ever living  
To protect the weak and meek,  
That’s life’ for a human being

Yearning for God’s blessing is the theme of the poem “Bless Me (p.54). Man’s faith in God and specially the deeper and more intense faith of any sincere aspirant is clearly brought out in this poem. Here God is the one who “delivers from all miseries and calamities “ He is a “Most Compassionate One” and a “Haven of peace and tranquility”, God is the one, who gives “ a life of bliss, of solace and contentment” The poets prayer is that he too should be “chosen” for God’s Choicest blessing: –

I have heard, O Eternal Lord,  
Thou showerest thy choicest blessings  
Upon all thy chosen ones.  
Let me, then, be one of them

Continuing the theme of God-Man relationship is the poem “His Grace”(p. 61). The “Beneficence”, “Might” and “Mercy of God is understood. Then the more important point about the extension of God’s blessing of His goodness and virtues, (thou in Him independent of man but given as a blessing – for “God made man in his own image”. found in man also independently, as the true divine inner nature) is brought out in a simple manner

My being is enveloped with his compassion,  
Every particle in me is His creation.  
He dwells in me serenely,  
Life glows in me sweetly and calmly.  
Songs flow from my lips in praise of His Love  
Which He showers on us from Heaven above

These last two lines epitomizes briefly the rationale, logic, true purpose and intention of the poetry of good poet Peeran, whose songs flow from his lips in praise of God’s love.

The good seeker of God’s grace wishes to becomes “a dog to befriend Him,” “for man’s psyche and his upbringing might have distanced him from God. The poem “Total Surrender” (p.63) is one of the most important and outstanding poems of all his eleven books of verse, demanding to be quoted in full as it clearly explains the poets attitude of humble servant ship to Almighty God.

### **Total Surrender**

I love Him respect and honour Him,  
Each breath of mind spent in His service.  
Day and night merge and I slave forever  
Out of dedications, Love of Labour.  
Neither Vagaries of weather, ill health  
Nor desires nor slumber can deter me  
With deep devotion,  
I burn the candle of my life  
At His feet in total surrender.  
I have no complains, demands, compulsions,  
No grievances, grief, or pain.  
Undoubtedly, I am captured by Him.  
I am now left with no will of my own.  
My Master’s service is my main motto.

My wish I were a dog to befriend Him.

These God-man relationship concerned poems are found (as I will try to humbly explain later, book by book) in his entire body of verse in all the eleven books on and off but consistently. The concern here is of the poet, our good Peeran, to understand fully and correctly and for all time his own true divine exalted nature and through his poetic utterances and efforts to teach this to the reader and mankind in general if they have not already understood this important truth. The truth, then is that the true inner nature of human beings is divine-full of goodness and virtues. The virtues must be listed and understood and practiced with sincere daily and disciplined regular cultivation. The overall important quality of Goodness must be remembered and sincerely developed. These are called “Brahma-Viharas” as given by the God Brahma, the Highest in the Hindu Pantheon. These Brahma Viharas are four number and if practiced correctly enough to make any human being’s life one of fulfillment, success, true and lasting happiness and obedience to God, this four essential virtues are “maitri” – loving kindness “karuna” – compassion (for all living being) “Mudita” – appreciation joy (to rejoice happily at the success and prosperity of others without envy jealousy, anger, pride or resentment) and the last one which has to be constantly practised regularly – to practice the other earlier three virtues, is the virtue of “Upeksha” meaning mindfulness, correct awareness and alertness and a constant and strict vigil and attention on the minds the kinds of thought, the senses, the immediate surrounding and environment and with all the phenomena with which the mind psyche and senses are dealing in all the realness.

The virtues are called “Paramitas” in Buddhism are ten in number and must be regularly cultivated and practiced after a correct understanding of their true meaning and purpose. This cultivation of the ten “Paramitas” helps in truly understanding the true inner nature of man which is pure and divine. This divine nature is understood in Buddhism as a potential, but as yet un-enlightened “Buddha” nature. The Hindus call this “Buddha” nature as “Daivam” or “Daiva – Swabhawam”. This important

aspect is in actuality taught in simple words in all religions. Our good poet Peeran understands the true “STRENGTH” of such simple teaching about the inner divine nature of all human beings and he-as a believer and promoter of inter religious harmony rightly says in the poem “strength” (p.69)

Oneness in god’s plurality is the strength of Hinduism  
Islam’s strength is unity in sect’s plurality,  
Singularity of purpose is the main strength of Jainism  
Motto of service is the strength of Christianity.  
Self-sacrifice is the subtle strength of Sikhism,  
Buddhism’s solid strength is Soul’s purity.  
The common good of masses is the strength of Socialism  
And difference of opinion is the strength of Democracy.

The search for the divine within man is clearly brought out in out in the poem “Priceless present”(p.64). The speaker in the poet wishes to give a precious and a priceless gift to his beloved “his dear soul mate”. This priceless present or gift has to be something higher than and unavailable “even in the grandest of treasuries of mighty Kings and Nawabs”. After much searching the realisation downs on the speaker that nothing is more priceless than the goodness of true divine love in his heart.

I looked and looked around,  
Searched and searched all places  
At last I found it just  
Within my own heart  
It is my lasting Love

In the poem “Bury the Hachet” (p.65) sane advice for a peaceful world is given in the lines:

Let the planet live in Buddha’s tranquility, Ashoka’s peace and  
Mahavira’s Ahimsa. “Let the nobility of heart prevail,  
Buy not the arguments of renewal  
Of past stormy tempests and holocausts  
Let the Sun’s effulgence shine forever

Another line of wisdom is found in the last line of the poem “beauty and Love” (p.69) where the power of true love purifies mind souls and gives peace to the mind:

Love radiating rays purify souls and endows mind with peace.

The first books of verse *In Golden Times* by God – obedient Peeran is significant and thought provoking with the correct attitudes and wisdom. Good poet Peeran is looking at the dance of life in this world and he happily knows that we are all in one colorful, musical, harmonious band singing songs of thankfulness, gratefulness and celebrations in praise of the One God, the Highest God, the Supreme God, who teaches Love and Compassion for all being of the Universe (more than just inter religious harmony).

The arrival of poet Peeran in the Indian poetry realm is important, in that his all – inclusive, all protecting, all loving, all – celebrating attitude of wisdom and compassion (which is an essential teaching of all religious and Sufism) is of immense significance of and useful advice of wise words of wisdom and is clearly brought out by the following lines from the poem “A Resolution” (p.78):

Let's resolve to be a part of a single harmonious band,  
 Let us all sing together celestial songs  
 In praise of God who to all of us belong (*In Golden Moments*)

After the first collection of poem *In Golden Times* which creates a good impression and lasting impact (note the lines and poem quoted in the first part of the article) comes quite expectedly a second collection: – “In Golden Moments” which presents life with varied hues and colors.

The purpose of this article as explained earlier is to highlight the Sufi learning, training and upbringing and cultivation and practice to work towards spiritual perfection by our humble and good poet Peeran. A study of his eleven volumes of verse shows that he is also much concern about all kinds of human being the illicit liquor people, the illegal activities people criminals, terrorist, wrong doers, and sinners. He is also concerned about the egoists – ego manias, over assertive ego persons, the wrongly proud.

The misinformed, the ignorant and the confused, the one strayed from the correct part, the ones who need prayers to come

back to the correct path and so on. These concerns have caused much contemplation to the poet and resulted in many poems of presenting the faults, traits, short coming, limitation and drawback of such sinful and sometimes dangerous characters, groups, and attitudes

Suffice it to say that such poems in eleven books of verse are an expression of the dismay and sorrow suffered by the poet because all these sinners have strayed from the good, honest, and righteous path, have sinned because they haven't yet understood their own true divine nature, the goodness and virtues that God has given them and especially because they are not fully obedient to God. This dismay and sorrow of the much-caring poet expresses itself times and again in verse which presents the facts and reality of the characters, situations and unwanted sinful activities with a poetic clarity, simplicity of language, often surprising concreteness and frankness which serves the purpose of expressing the earlier mentioned dismay and sorrow.

Here it must be clearly mentioned that the main purpose and effect of reading the eleven books of verse is to appreciate the good characters and the good in all and to be wary of and to pray for the sinners.

Good poems of good beings like the many Prophets, Messenger, of God, Apostles, Sages Mahatmas, Saints, Rishis, Hermits, Fakirs, Saints, Healers, and other, than these and such exalted persons, even ordinary human being who are good and virtuous and who have significantly contributed by their goodness, virtues, good life, and care and concern for others, have also been immensely written by our appreciative poet.

In the poem "Chill penury and poverty" (p.3 and 4) the poets concern for the welfare of the poor and poverty stricken is brought out in the many sad details of these under-privileged people. The poet is really concern about their future and wishes them, all well:

Is there any redemption for them?  
Can love, care and charity from the rich –  
Bring culture, harmony, progress to them?

To smoke their world, an abode of peace!

In continuation of this concern for the poor, the poem “Charity” (p.9) brings out the importance of charity to make the individual and the world better place:

Charity purifies mind, enlightens the soul,  
And lightens the burden of craving,  
The burning greed vanishes from the heart,  
Raising goodness to a Divine Path.

If charity and other virtues comes from the heart, words come from the mind, and as speech from the mouth. These words also came to the poetic page. In the poem “Multifarious words”. (p.23) The importance of words is explained and understood.

The power of a word is great indeed-  
Ever word is packed with meaning.  
A word of praise is creativity  
And of consolation – regeneration

The right attitude is to speak the truth or be silent after understanding way the Word of God was given to man in the first place:

It is the word of God to mankind  
To speak truth, at all times,  
And be a man of words, or  
To remain silent, for it is golden.

There are many human beings grooping in darkness in their ignorance and confusion. In the poem titled “Grooping in darkness (page39) the simple Sufi truth about the living God inside and divine, true inner nature is brought out:

He could realise  
The living God in him.  
To enlighten his soul,  
And to find a cherished goal.

The limitation of romantic love – “Cupids eye falling on me” is explained in the poem “A distant cry (p.41):

I took a plunge in to the sea of love,



Only to be drowned in emotions,  
I realised too late that beauty,  
Was only skin deep and to wane.

The realisation dawns upon the lover that beauty is only skin deep. Without mentioning in words, the poem in keeping with the overall tone of simple Sufi teaching makes us think about higher forms of love like man-God relationship which does not have the limitations and sorrow of romantic love.

“God who?” (p.56) “Is a very important Sufi poem about the path to self-realisation and God realisation by reading it, understanding it and by practicing its advice any one can become a better person.

The poem “what Next” (page59) bring out the essence of true teaching of wisdom be it Sufi wisdom or any other. These lines gives good advice for social service to earn a good name and more importantly to earn merit in heaven. It is said “*Jana Seveya Janardhana Seve*” which means “Service to man is service to God” when we help animals, the needy, the poor, and so on what happens is that:

Certainly  
You will be notice  
Certainly  
Help will reach you  
When you show love, compassion,  
Many to His creature  
He will  
Certainly  
Show you a straight path for success

A very positive poem which highlights God Brahma’s teaching of the fourth “Brahama Vihara” – “Upeksha” or mindfulness is the poem “Be Optimistic” (p.69) where the title itself conveys the message. The virtue of mindfulness needs to be practiced all the line. Then comes the need for intuition, spontaneous action, improvisation, to be sure of oneself to have immense faith in one self and to be optimistic all the time. It is a poem teaching positive thinking and optimism and therefore needs to be quoted in full:

### Be Optimistic

You need to have a clear mind  
And should know what you want from life.  
A lot of things happen around you.  
But you need to be alert all the time.  
Lest you go overboard with the sensation  
Bickerings, Scandals, Scams,  
Criticism, Condemnation and quarrels.  
You need intuition and act into  
Spontaneity, improvisation.  
Be same and above all have  
Immense faiths in yourself  
And be optimistic, all the line (*A Search from Within*)

After the first two collection of considerable merit and range, comes a third collection *A Search from Within*. As the very title suggests this is a different kind of work – *A Search from Within* – a contemplative, introspective and reflective poetic and analysis of the intricacies of the mind and its moods; successful and unsuccessful romantic themes; hope trust, devotion and obedient dedication to the Merciful One – God and so on.

The title of the book sets the mood for reflective and introspective activity.

In the poem “Attain Piety” (p.15) the question is asked:” Can a corrupt soul attain refinement?” the answer is given in the last stanza advising the corrupt to repent and ask for forgiveness and to live correctly again;-

Repent and turn a new leaf again  
Vow to lead a life of Ahimsa and Truth  
Sacrifice pleasures and live in humility  
Piety is a sure way to attain salvation

In the poem ‘Sanity’ (p.16) the need for developing love for all beings with hope, faith and devotion. The songs of Celestial Love have to be sung daily but needs practice with patience with many years of hard toil.

Behold! Love is the elixir of life  
To drive the pathos and pangs of strife

Though difficult to hold and grasp it  
By hope, faith, devotion, mind gets lit.  
Sing daily the celestial songs of love  
At first the heavy storms prevent the sails  
You need to nurture the plant to grow in you  
By years of hard toil, love, subdues the trails

“Complain, to whose avail” (p.19) is a poem in which the poet is tired of the complaining world of human beings with its “Overstrained, over flowing complaint book,”

He does not want to add to it. Wisdom dawns on the poet who wants to become silent and be at

A systems work in Tedium,  
in disharmony  
Are at logger heads  
In conflict, without letup.  
Let me bear the discordant  
Chimes, out of tune melodies  
Watch disarray, display of wrath  
Confusion and chaos unabated

The wise decision of the poet is not to complain any more but to forgive and tolerate the complains and confusion of others.

The poem “Daily Supplication” (p.21) expresses the faith of the poet in the dependable guidance of God to help his growth and evolution;-

Thou shall guide me for ever and ever  
To reach the shores of ecstasy and bliss

‘Be discrete in approach’ (p.23) is an important poem in keeping with the Sufi teaching of controlling the speech at all times. The Buddhist also teach the cardinal rules for speech, which are – to speak only the truth and not to utter false hood or lies; never to use harsh or rude words, not to slander, gossip or engage in idle and loose talk and more unfortunately not to take any intoxication drinks (alcohol etc.) drugs or substances so that the mind, speech, behavior and manners may not be affected by these above

mentioned substances. Therefore this “discretion” advising poem deserves our attention:

I don't wish to comment  
Pass strictures, speak  
Or condemn or find fault  
With all and sundry around me.

“Repent at leisure” (p.44) is a confessional poem of much significance because in it the poet sincerely repents for the wrongs he has done to others:

Ah! Can I go back to that time  
When I wronged my friend and hurt him  
To make amends and befriend him  
To forget that moment and create cheer.

The poet's need to make amends befriend the wronged friend again is touching and makes us sympathise with his repentance and confession.

A different kind of poem is “Zeros gain Value (p.74) Here God – the Great one represents the number or digit ONE. All the beings are millions of zeros lining together next to the number ONE thus working a universe of great value. This mathematical or arithmetical equation explaining the superior role of God (Number ONE) and the great value obtained by the millions of obedient beings (Zeros) is brought out in a novel and unused manner:

We are all millions of zeros  
But, all of us lining together  
Besides that great only one  
Have gained a great value.”

We are all bound together with the GREAT ONE as servants of HIM in unity and obedience. To understand this truth, then of the evolved Sufi approach and teaching of the ONE SUPREME GOD above all the other ‘devas’ and ‘devis’ and all the beings of the universe with their unity in diversity is of an utmost importance to avoid conflict discord, strife and war and to work for a peaceful and better world.

The poet is in a dreary and disillusioned condition full of despondency and without hope in the poem “ Mercy and Compassion” (p.76) in which not only his friend but even foes turn him away from their doors. At this stage the Divine voice of God reaches him and accepts him with his Grace and Mercy:

When I was in dreary condition  
Having lost all hopes and in disillusion  
Desponding gripping me all over  
Cast away from doors of friends and foes  
A voice from beyond reached my ears  
Awake, arise, my doors are open  
Reach me with you loving heart  
I shall receive you with open arms

“Everlasting joys” (p.93) is another mathematical or arithmetical poem where the law of modern economics is used to explain the limitlessness of Divine Love which can only increase in its quantum and dimension, but never diminish:

The law of diminishing returns is never for men of love.  
Love is foes from rancor and strife, to last forever  
Sparkling eyes themselves are peace of dove.  
Women, a creation of love, a symbol, as mother.

In this third book of verse, the poet deals with the theme of dejected and jilted love in many poems. Such poems of separation and suffering of the dejected lover. The limitations of romantic love and the resultant sorrow and suffering are poignantly brought out. Contrasting such themes of limited love are the poems of higher and Divine love of the God-man relationship. In all such poems total trust; faith; devotion; and surrender to God is expressed with the hope of achieving the evolved consciousness and union with the Ultimate Realty. These aspirations for Divine love and unity with the absolute Truth with a correct understanding of the ultimate reality is of utmost importance in the spiritual evolution of man. It is not exclusive to Sufism or any “ism” or religion only but voices a universal concern of all beings for a evolved and higher living with constant remembrance of God for a disciplined and obedient life at all times. Such poems renew the hope of man giving us reassurance

that all will be with the world for God is in His Heaven looking after us and guiding us to perfection.

God is in His Heaven and all is right in the World

– Robert Browning

### **The Poetry Collection *A Ray of Light***

The fourth collection of verse titled “A Ray of Light” as the very title suggests is a ray of light and hope in this dreamy world of modernisation and changes in life style. The format, font used, line length and stanza formation is readable and visually quite often satisfying.

The poem “Love has no cause” (p.3) is a completely positive love. A poem about union and merger, it shows the intention of the lover to be in a close bond of conjugal bliss with his beloved lady:

And minds meet in a glimpse,  
And yearn for coupling together.  
To merge and be one in solitude.

The last line expresses the desire and longing to be one with the beloved at all times. The lover’s yearning is expressed in a simple language:

With longings to be at all times the poem “A kind lady” (p.5) gives such an impressive and positive account of a kind woman. We feel the urge to meet and befriend her. We wonder who she really is. Some poems like this bring out appreciatively good human nature at its best.

“A tribute to my late grandfather” (p.6-10) gives a thankful, grateful and gratitudinal account of an extraordinary saint, a humble and obedient servant of God. His old world wisdom and modernity and westernisation are clearly contrasted, glorifying the traditional values. The poet is lucky to be in the “Inner circle” of the peer’s benediction and benevolence. The elder called “Buzurg” in Urdu, is a giant achiever with much cultivation of virtues and noble living – magnanimous, charitable and concerned about social welfare in a positive and contributory manner. The four-page poem

of twenty-five stanzas is well balanced effort by poet Peeran, clearly bringing out in a pen-picture the character and life of the admirable peer whose noble life is worthy of emulation.

“To be notice and seen” (p.31) is a poem in which knowledge and love are explained:

Knowledge does refine a man  
But love kindles a candle  
Like a glow worm to gleam  
To be notice and seen.

This is a volume of verse in which the good and difficult aspects of life are contrasted. The ills of modern life, urban living, westernisation, and modernisation are often presented with some sordid details sometimes. The role of hypocrites, charlatans, crooks, the cunning and other in present day modern life is often dealt with in a cold and sarcastic manner, the sarcasm indicating the poet's dismay at such characters. The redeeming factor of the volume of work is that there is some verse purely about positive aspects of life realistic accounts of siblings, childhood, family life and so on.

Varied subjects appear throughout the volume as a variety entertainment. This entertainment, then, celebrates the multi-colored, multidimensional dance of life in all its hues and colors. It is important to remember the positive lines and affirmative sentences and forget the unsavory characters.

The trend indicates to us the perception of a poet-person trained in advocacy and judicial matters. Therefore he is judgmental and condescending in the treatment of the disobedient persons who are not following and obeying the rules and the law. The poet is much worries about the corrupt persons, exploiters, the selfish, the non – virtuous and ignoble.

Bringing into our midst such characters through the poetic medium, he presents us with a difficult – to – accept detailing of the ills of society because of such ignoble person. The poet Peeran is looking at the world as someone trained to be lawful and obedient to God always.

Therefore in his perception, the good are praised and the bad are criticized. This trend is found in all his verse, in all the eleven volumes thus far published.

### **Collection of Verse *In Silent Moment***

This fifth collection of verse by good poet Peeran is a continuation of the sensibility which concern itself with the condition of man, the benevolence of God and related issues. Relevant question are asked as to why man suffers in spite of the always available grace and benediction, help and guidance from God. Advisory affirmations are made to alert the very mind of man and help it to focus on the humble and obedient path.

In the poem “puppetry” (p.6) God is the puppeteer controlling our lives. We think that we did this and we did that, when in actuality His Hands hold the control:

Ah! What a gamble, what a show?  
 For all to think I played that part  
 That I did this and did that  
 Did I do myself, when  
 Thine Hand held the control

This poem “Nature good Samaritan” (page11) lists the virtuous action and practice necessary for a good person. Nature helps such person. Except for two lines all the remaining lines use only positive words. The virtues to be practiced by an obedient person are enumerated in detail in simple sentences high lighting the essential.

The poem “Crowning glory” (page50) brings out God’s Grace for the virtuous men.

virtuous men are held by string  
 Of divine love and blessing

Righteous living is always well rewarded:

Life led with righteous living  
 In humility and servitude  
 In patience and contentment



Enjoy honey and fruits of heaven.

The poem "Thoughts for the day" (p.59) is most positive poem. It gives sensible advice as to what to do in life. The first word of each line is an advice in the form of a verb deserving listing. Give, Share, Love, Illuming, Sing, Play, Pray, Say, pay, realise. These first words the lines as verbs are followed by advice as to what to do and when to do. It is an important poem advising the reader and mankind to act in the living moment, in the precious existing time. The poem deserves to be quoted in full:

Thought to for the day (p.59)

Give, while the joys of life are bubbling.  
Share, while the sun's rays are shining.  
Love, while the fragrance of flowers fills the air.  
Illumine, while the summer of times is clicking.  
Sing, while the birds of all hues are chirping.  
Play, while the youth in your is still charming.  
Pray, while the faith in God is lasting.  
Say, while the mind is still illuminating.  
Pay, while the bank account is still graning.  
Realise, while the sort in body is still existing

In the poem 'Thy inscrutable ways' (p.4) the voice of God is seen as manifested and heard in melodies and in songs of unison inspite of chaos and confusion. The voice of God expresses itself in different languages in the voice of the many beings:

Each babel, to lisp thy numbers  
Thou teaches us different programmes  
To play a variety of melodies  
With unique harmony, to sustain a system

The next two stanzas deal with the suffering of mankind. The poet reaffirms his faith in God who is the given of various blessing:

Ah, the ONE who gives joys and ecstasies  
Happiness and pleasures, mirth and laughter  
Wealth and show, glamour and glitter  
Fills my soul, with pangs of separation.

The poet expresses his dissatisfaction with the condition and suffering of man. He has understood correctly that there is a living within him. The poet is aware of a hidden mirror which through his inner eye has helped him to understand God's game and God's ways. Tired with the suffering of mankind the poet prays for liberation and wants to merge in the Heavenly abode and presence of God forever. This prayer touches us and reaffirms the poet's total faith in God:

O Master! Enough is enough  
 Seen have I thy game, found thy ways  
 Liberate me now, to freedom, to fly  
 And merge in you forever

This book like the earlier four reiterates and reconfirms the Sufism ideal and tenants in more ways than one. Central to this theme is utter devotion, total dedication, complete faith with hope and trust, a convinced belief in the goodness and virtues of God which created, nourishes and protects the goodness and virtues in man. The poet aspires realms of consciousness and being, and seeks a permanent abode in the wish and prayer for union with the divine consciousness and hope for a place connected to the realms of God's Heaven this desire, wish and prayer for union with the divine consciousness and hope for a place connected to the realms of God's Heaven is the "liet motif" of all of the verse of the eleven volumes. It is important because it is in keeping with Sufi attitude, thinking, teaching and practice.

A study of the eleven books of verse with this main theme of evolution of consciousness, practice of virtues, conscious connection with the Divine after correct understanding would be a worthwhile efforts appreciation.

### **Collection of Poems *A Call from the Unknown***

Continuing the trend and themes of the earlier volumes comes the sixth volumes with some new themes (Prophets).

Birth of Moses (p.9 to 17). The true sufi respects all Prophets, all religions and all paths to the divine. The good work of Prophet Moses is very respectfully presented:

Thus, Moses led his people to the promised land,/His staff struck on ground, steams flowed,../His twelve Jewish tribes found each one,/to cultivate and grow in prosperity (p.16)

Birth of Jesus (p.18 to 23) All teachings, religious, spiritual and mystical are for re-establishing man's connection with the supreme God, there-fore the good Sufi poet Peeran happily acknowledges and respectfully accepts the teachings of Jesus Christ:

Oh! What perfect teachings,  
Training fisherman as fishers of man,  
To grace the poor with serene joys,  
To console the sorrowful (p.21)

The purpose of all teaching of divine wisdom is to help overcome human suffering completely and understand the purpose of life correctly. Therefore the teachings of all Prophets are equally acceptable to the un-biased and un-prejudiced seeker, whether Sufi or of any other path.

Again, about Jesus, Peeran happily states,

So lofty teachings  
So great ideals!  
For humanity to yearn  
And life in peace

Worn out poems and old friends (p.44) In this poem, the poet expresses his difficulties with the poetic mode and poetic ideas in a tone, which elicits our deep sympathy for he's craft:

When the idea of the poem rolls back,  
It is like a mouth-eaten tattered book,  
A rusted iron railing, an over worn patched dress,  
It can neither be mended nor moulded for expression  
An unsteady person (p.45)

This poem presents an interesting of picture of "a jack of all but master of none" the protagonist has "wavering mind" with

“contradictions and confusions galore”; A mixture of good, bad and ugly”. He picks up work but leaves “it half way under” because he does not know concentration and perfection. At the back and call of everyone he is “a peculiar character for jest and fun”

Ah! Relatives (p.47) The poem creates a truthful picture of uncaring relatives who cause sadness, sorrow and suffering. These hurting relatives one “ones, rolling in wealth, desires and luxury” or are “some of them with pride of learning” the poet honestly defines what heard his family expect from all relatives, and these line make the reader respond with sad sympathy:

We yearn for love, for solace, comfort from relatives,  
It remains a mere wish, a mirage  
To disappear and melt away like clouds

The last stanza realistically brings out the suffering caused by uncaring relatives and is expressed in strong words and images:

Ah! Relatives! Our own blood, flowers of same garden,  
You are endowed with deep propensity to cause hurt!  
To make us weep and carry wounds all over  
That don't heal, but bleeds to leave pain, and agony?

Heart full melodies (p.57) gives a realistic picture of the need for man to overcome negativities and rise to higher states of true and divine love, to develop a strong righteous mind, a calm heart reflecting love, and finally a “Pure and sublime” love, is free from selfishness, not demanding and not jealous.

This poem helps the understanding of the need to develop pure virtues sincerely and to be cured completely of all vices and vicious thinking.

Pious man (p.68) Saints, Prophets and pious men are recognised for their good effect on the troubled and suffering mankind. They come suddenly, these virtuous men when there is disorder, so that they can help to bring about proper order:

Suddenly virtuous men, Saints Prophets appear  
In an age full of turmoil, chaos and wars  
Like rainbows on dark clouds of pathos

To cheer men and clear minds from grief.  
Pious men are beacon of light  
A light house of knowledge and will power  
To dispel doubt and darkness  
To lead men to solace and peace

Note that the virtuous men, Saints, Prophets and pious men cheer mankind “and clear mind from grief “. The images that they are a “beacon of light” and a “light house” of knowledge and will-power are apt and relevant. They dispel “doubt and darkness”

To lead men to solace and peace. Any person, whether a Sufi seeker or of any other path to God, has to happily accept the important role, teachings and good work of such holy persons. The reader also accepts this truth with happiness.

“Humility” (p.69) Thomas Stearns Eliot (T.S. Eliot), the Noble – Prize Winning modern poet, says in his “Four-Quarters” “The Only Wisdom you can Hope to acquire is the wisdom of humility. Humility is endless”

Poet Peeran understands the difficulties in practicing humility.

You may reach any heights in life  
Or remain penniless without any position,  
But it is very difficult to scale  
And reach the height of humility

Hope and Dreams (p.92) in this poem the need to inculcate positive values and training is emphasized. Hope, courage of conviction, serenity of mind, patience and moral strength are all necessary to overcome hurdles in life and to retain happiness and harmony. Love and affection are also of much importance.

A Distant call (p.12 4) The last poem of this sixth collection of verse relates to the title of the book “A call from the unknown” it traces an unknown source from deep within which inspires deep meditation

A distant call from the unknown  
Emanating from deep within  
To lift you from mire and mirth  
And inspire you to deep meditation

### Collection of Poem *New Frontiers*

“A New Message” (p.9) the poem deals with reviving the culture of bygone times. The poet hears a grinding voice from Heaven which advises as follows, “Enliven the spirits, with aims and ambition of open minds

Allow new light to enter your selves  
Drive away darkness Unite frontiers of love  
Under able leadership  
With love, zeal enthusiasm  
You can create a real new world.  
That is not an utopia,  
But where you fulfill your dreams.

Remembering an elder sister (p.16) The poet Peeran's close relations have a tremendous effect on him. They are a recurrent theme in his verse. Gratitude, appreciation and love for them is expressed with much sincerity, and deeply felt affection which creates extraordinary imagery and effects. The dear elder sister is remembered with nostalgia, “Now, she is part of our memory like a pearl/hidden in an oyster, a diamond in the stolen crown,/she sparkles within us and comes in our dreams/She has left amber in us.”

Her love casting in us as sweet memory  
To charm and enthrall us forever.  
Although separated from us and far beyond seas.  
Her love engulfing the tiny island of ourselves”

“My Good Old Friend” (p.62) this is an unusual and wonderful poem about the unity in diversity, the same virtuous goodness found in different forms of the eternal self.

The poet in deep sleep has a strange dream. He sees a moulvi in a mosque leading the prayers. The same person later appears as a poojari or priest in a temple. Yet again the same person now appears as a padri dressed in long whites in a church where he waves his hand in familiarity (to the poet):

As if to say, I am everywhere  
Adorning different dresses and manners  
Muttering in different tongues the Name

“Unworthy Joys” (p.71) this poem celebrates the universal (and sufi) teaching of total devotion to duty, which is a must for all human beings, in accordance with the rules of God. In the Hindu tradition fulfilling one's duty is related to the system of “Karma Yoga” and the sincere fulfiller of duty is called a “Karma Yogi”. Peeran is aware of need for doing his duties sincerely and completely with a dispassionate and devoted attitude such an attitude, constantly practiced results in JOYS:

The joys emanating from completion of duty  
After undergoing trials and sufferings  
Pains, woes mingling in the soil  
To bear crops, trees with flowers and fruits

The quality and everlasting permanence of such joys are described in the second stanza:

Such joys are earned with sweet  
Of the brow, with severe toil  
To create everlasting happiness.  
Such joys are cream of life

Such a stanza earns true and heartfelt respect and reverence for the good natured poet and the virtuous person Peeran whose devotion to duty is worthy of emulation by all and sundry; – to work for a more peaceful and safer world free from crooks and corruption.

The meaninglessness of joys which are not earned through “Just” means is considered illegal – as “stolen property”. It is unworthy of respect and cannot really be enjoyed because of its deprived of earning:

Unearned joys are stolen property  
Unworthy of respect, can't be relished

“Nature's Bounty” (p.73) this poem celebrates the plenitude and abundance created by Almighty God. There is enough of all amenities and essentials for all the being as suggested by title of the poem, itself.

The correct attitude is to think of the wellbeing and welfare of all being. God takes care of all his creatures. Even an ant dare not bite any one. This explains God's protection and concern for the safety and welfare of His creation.

The will-power of man helps him to overcome the "lasting pain and woes":

Nature's Bounty

Millions sleep calmly and soundly  
 To wake up at dawn with freshness  
 Not an ant dare bite any one  
 Encapsulated, protected like cocoons.  
 Desires cherished in deep memories  
 Unwashed by day's vicissitude  
 Or night's deep slumber's rest  
 Ideas flow like streams, to fulfill,  
 Life though with lasting pain and woes,  
 But the will of man overcomes it.  
 To present happiness, joy to relish  
 Like fresh streak of morning's light  
 Millions of species of fauna and flora  
 Beget from nature, food, water to nourish

"Smooth Sails" (p.76) this is one more completely positive poem with therapeutic and healing affirmations expressed with an unusual joy and celebration.

Before the flowers wither and fall down  
 And loose its fragrance for ever  
 Let me pour forth my sweetest songs  
 With melody to be played on flute of life  
 To thrill the sullen and saddest hearts  
 To bring them joys and smiles on faces  
 Before the evening closes and darkness falls  
 When silence reigns in every nook and corner  
 Let me pour in the silvery cut glasses  
 The sweetest, purest drinks of all times.  
 That thrills the heart, enlightens the mind  
 Brings a twinkle in the bright eyes  
 Let laughter, the best medicine reign  
 Let the times sail smoothly forever



### **Collection of poem *Fountains of Hopes***

This is the eighth collection of verse by Peeran. Elsewhere, in this present collection of reviews, forewords, introduction, and articles, a long introduction and a humble appreciation of this eighth volumes of verse is printed, written by Peeran's friend – lecture, poet and critic the present writer (S.V. Ramachandra Rao). Please refer to it for an analysis of some of the verse of *Fountains of Hopes*

### **Collection of verse *In Rare Moments***

This is the ninth volume of verse by Peeran – The prolific Poet. There are many poems of a deep spiritual insight and wisdom “The poem how to reach the truth? Is one such poem which requires by its intrinsic merit to be quoted in full: “Please tell me as to why it is difficulty to/Reach the truth and so easy to lie?/. Truth is a steep mountain, slippery/And difficulty to climb. It requires courage/of conviction. Faith is its fountain/and certainty is its wheels. Love is its engine and prayers is its petrol./It has to confront obstacles, rough weather./It requires sacrifice./It has to face hunger and thirst./Sometimes it loses face and has to face humiliation, insults./Truth is let down by one and all./It has to stand above like a scare – crow in a rice field./Truth is always simple and most humble./It fulfills all its promises and oaths./It is never deceptive/neither it camouflages,/it is open minded and Open-hearted, never secretive or suspicious./It is generous and hospitable and charitable,/it is quick in forgiveness and in repentance./It is fearless and crystal clear./It shed tears for sufferers./One who is truthful reaches eternal light and Lord i.e Reality”.

Obviously, the poem is all about the Absolute truth and Ultimate Reality, Reaching it fully, or reaching there completely is the main purpose of the spiritual aspirant. All paths acknowledge its importance. The poet uses unusual and novel metaphors and images to explain the difficult path to reach the absolute truth. The ups and downs of the difficult journey are well brought out in a simple language with appealing and complex imagery.

“Desolate Damsel” (p.52) this poem dwells on the themes of romantic love as opposed to Divine Love. The differences explained. The “lovely woman” is in suffering because of the limitations of romantic love and lovemaking. The poet advises the sad women to seek God’s permanent perfected and Divine Love. Her earthly physical love making was only ephemeral, transient and limited in scope. Therefore she is informed about the lasting and dependable love of God.

Turn, turn, O desolate damsel!  
 The real love in Lord you find.  
 Never the betrays the one who loves  
 His showers His beauty and His co race.  
 His doors are open all the moments.  
 He receivers everyone with open arms

The last line shows that God is Kind and Merciful to all those who trust him, and are faithful and always obedient to Him.

“Million Praises” (p.56) the poem is not about the moon itself, but about the “moon of the Moon” referring obviously to the Creator God and his achievements. It is a way of speaking, close to symbolic, a roundabout manner of referring to the Supreme God. The humble poet’s tongue glorifies Him a million times. Then the poet expresses his grateful wish that a millions of tongues should praise Him:

Let millions of tongues praise Thee.

“Memory.” (p.60) In this poem, the un-biased and un-prejudicial attitude of the wise poet is highlighted. The relation between intelligence and memory is established. Adam’s example is given. He forgot his promise to God and because of a weak memory suffered. The poet happily appreciates the priestly class of Hindus-the Brahmins: “See how Brahmins have succeeded;/It is because they take every little minute care to preserve their memory/and have fashioned their daily living/in such a way that memory is preserved/and becomes their lasting gift”

“Rare Moments” (p.64)-poem this title “Rare Moments” connects to the title of the volume of verse itself – “*In Rare Moments*”

“ It is a poem about the precious time spent in the company of the beloved. The role of friends who encourage the loving couples in their romantic activities is mentioned. The poet rightly appreciates the precious time spent together by the true lovers, and the poem itself celebrates the role of romantic love and love making in human life:

Such glorious moments are rare indeed!/A special moment to preserve in precious memory./Blossoming love spreading its charm all around./Ticking the young minds to steal the hearts. Nothing is hidden during the period of mirth and joy,/Minds and hearts meet lovingly and sweetly./A fine moment with everyone adoring with best Glittering jewellery findings body for display. Making couples to dance to its tunes” Thrilling music to the beat of the drum.

### ***In Sacred Moments – Collection of Verse***

The very first poem of this tenth collection of verse is also titled “In Sacred Moments” The same is the title of the book itself.

The Sufi musicians with their blessed music, the Qawwals with their Qawwali singing, the poet with their poetry and ardent outburst of divine inspiration, all these along with their sincere prayers are seeking the higher realms of “becoming and being,” higher consciousness and total experience of union with the ultimate truth and absolute reality by the grace of the master – The Divine Master.

The poem “Enlighten Soul” (p.2) wishes for such a complete union with the higher realm and state of Being. Big time images of the sun, the moon and the stars are used to describe a new state of being where the love for the master “will never wane or get lost,” (Stanza one)

Till the poet reached the state of complete faith and love for the master life was “measureless and dull” Now his life, because of the renewed hope and attitude (“Sun in my heart” and “moon in my mind”, “Stars in my eyes”) has “enlivened and found peace.

The poet expresses his wish for higher knowledge:

“O Master, can I have your glimpse./To lift my sagging spirits,  
enlighten soul.”

“Ever submissive” (p.19) This is a special poem about a special  
and extraordinary kind of person – the man of love. He is  
unspoken, unheard, because of

“Calmness descending from his being  
Silent like a cool free flowing streams.

Welcoming with open arms man of all hues”

The virtues of this Man of Love are many, though simple one  
praise worthy:

with sparkling eyes and welcoming smiles/with graceful gait and  
soft spokenness/with gentlemanly manners and lovely  
looks/with butter words and pleasing speech.

With warmth in heart for one and all  
Ever submissive to the Lord’s call

It is the ever submissive nature of “the man of love” that  
makes him achieve such an impressive range of virtues and good  
qualities making him admirable and worthy of emulation.

“Say Something” (p.33) this poem lists the reasons why we all  
have something to say (always). At lists fifteen causes of speech in  
the form of nouns and delves in to the psyche of the modern man  
and especially what troubles him to burst out into speech.

“Adoring Saints” (p.48) A completely positive poem which  
gives a list of twenty one virtues of SAINTS. This list of virtues can  
be happily prescribed to all human beings for daily memorisation  
and for sincere cultivation and practice. By visiting the places of  
saints (we have thousands of them in our country) and by learning  
about their lives and works we draw inspiration. We adore them for  
their sincere practice and their achievements; therefore the title of  
the poem is “Adoring Saints”

If the good poet Peeran writes books of verse with only these  
kinds of poem which adore, explain appreciate and recommend the  
good saintly, Godly and Divine, the Sufi purpose of learning,

practicing, cultivating and (through poetry) teaching the good wisdom (based on the rules of God) will be BETTER served and easily achieved. The important feature of such poems is that only GOOD and POSITIVE worlds should be used purpose fully and purposely.

“O Master!” (p.55) Another spiritual poem expressing the Sufi’s adoration, love, devotion, humility and sincere faith in the Supreme God The Master. The poem though simple in vocabulary is profound in content and earnest in approach. Such poems become the epitomy of Sufi perception, perspective, attitude and simple way to the truth and God.

O Master  
Where ever Your Name is uttered.  
I am there, sans malice  
In my heart and mind.  
In whatever Form, You are worshipped  
I adore and love you.  
O My Master, do not  
Forsake and shun me  
My heart is a honey-combed love  
Let me bow my head  
Before you forever and ever.

### **Collection of Verse *Glittering Love***

This is the eleventh volume of verse. “O Friendship!” (p.46) This is an interesting poem on the theme of true friendship with good and sincere values. The poet gives an account of how the true friend has always helped him.

O Friendship!  
Ah my friend! Come let us share our values.  
That have grown over the years in thick and thin,  
With abiding interest, we have clinged to each other.  
To sail the boat of life in smooth waters.  
Whenever the ship was in turbulence,  
O my friend you were by my side to give strength  
When roses and petals have rained, I hugged you,  
O my friend, I have shed tears on your shoulders.  
‘A friend in need is a friend indeed

You have proved the idiom a million times.  
Let the bonds of this friendship strengthen day by day,  
Let's move hand in hand in unfathomed times.  
O Heavenly Love! Forsake us not on judgment day  
Show clemency for sake of our true friendship

“Whiff of Fragrance” (p.59) This poem deals sensibly with the theme of the young and the old. The elder's role is expressed with a humorous tone:

We have to stand like a sentry without movement,  
Day in and day out, carryout the same rigmarole.  
Oblivious of the good, our presence makes, to others.  
We are like a canopy, a shading tree,

The bubbling life is for the young and growing.  
We need to stand alone and watch them,  
Protect them, succor then, greet then.  
Be a source of joy and happiness to them.  
We have to pass like cool flowing streams.  
Allow the youngsters to enjoy the whiff of fragrance

“Free from all” (p.60) Consider this poem with patience:

Free from all

When saints, yogis and Sufies shun life.  
They in fact are giving up ownership, over lordship,  
Over chattel and properly, over persons, things  
They give up the angry and belligerent attitude.  
They have nothing to take, nothing to give  
They are above all material pleasures  
Freed themselves of worldly wants and desires.  
So that their heart sparkles bright.  
They have unburdened their baggage.  
Without saving or bank accounts, purse.  
Neither they need to give nor to take anything.  
Their relationship is platonic with the world.  
Their heart and mind is free from the world.  
So that they concentrate on that Being”

It is of much importance to note that these holy men saints, yogis and sufies have not only giving up ownership, Lordship,

chattel, property, persons, things but also the angry and belligerent attitude,

This giving up of the angry and belligerent attitude is the most important prerequisite to be able to begin the learning, practice and cultivation of virtues, essential for growth and evolution spiritually.

All of the religions, spiritual and mystical paths emphasize the importance of overcoming anger after understanding its nature and causes. All paths also teach the importance of overcoming (anger and) ignorance and confusion.

In the traditions of Buddhism and as a universal truth over – attachment, anger, ignorance and confusion all lead to human suffering. After understanding and completely overcoming these four causes of sufferings, the seeker or spiritual aspirant must understand, learn, practice and cultivate regularly the ten virtues called “Paramitas”

These ten paramitas, according to the “Theravada” Buddhism tradition are: – Charity; morality, renunciation, wisdom, energy or effort, patience, truthfulness, determination or resolution, loving Kindness and equanimity.

Apart from these ten virtues the “Theravada” system recommends the practice of “mindfulness” at all times, very essential even for the practice of virtues.

The “Mahayana” tradition of Buddhism recommends the following list of virtues or Paramitas for daily, regular understanding, learning practice and cultivation for the betterment and benefit of oneself and the betterment and benefit of all sentient beings. The list of virtues is: generosity; discipline or morality! Patience, diligence or effort, concentration; insight; skillful means; aspiration; spiritual power and wisdom.

Further Buddhism (and all paths and all faiths also) teaches the need to develop and practice the right view; right intention, right speech; right effort, right mindfulness; and right concentration. This is called the eight fold path.

The last lines of the poem “Free from all” is:

Their heart and mind is free from the world./So that they concentrate on that Being.” The holy men need to practice the virtues regularly to be also to “concentrate on that Being.” In conclusion it can be said that Peeran has made a significant contribution by his eleven volumes of verse. The “liet-motif” theme of Sufi noble thinking and the teachings of universal wisdom is the main virtue of this verse. In this context it is useful and worthwhile to remember the twenty one virtues listed in the poem “Adoring Saints” (p.48 of the tenth volume of verse – *In Sacred Moments*)

It is of present day importance that all human beings practice these virtues for betterment of all and for a peaceful and safe world. The virtues are: – humanity, generosity, culture, gentleness, humility, sincerity, godliness, simplicity, silence, benevolence, calmness, sweetness, love, affection, kindness, compassion, charity, broad, mindedness, vision, learning and wisdom.

The wise teachings emphasize three main aspects which are necessary for the seeker or spiritual aspirant. These three are the teacher, the righteous path and good company. It is appropriate then to quote the following poem:

The Three Jewels  
Total faith and trust is an always must,  
In the perfected teacher  
Who is a divine preacher  
Then, the righteous path,  
A daily Ganga bath,  
By correct ways and means  
Eara your bread and beans.  
Let your friends be good  
To share your humble food,  
Sanga of the noble  
Helps the peaceful global.  
Sri Ganapathy Sastry  
We wish Peeran all the best for his future work



## Syntax and Lexis in Peeran's Poetry

M. Rajendran

Poet/English Teacher

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The very poem in his first Volume 'Love' is a free verse poem. So the lines analysed to see if there is any predominant phrase which reports more than the other phrases.

Doubtless mind (Noun Phrase N.P.) Soul serene (N P)

With thee beside me (PP+PP.....Prepositional Phrase) Life is a trifle (Subject +Verb + Compliment

.....S+V+C) Rudder of faith (NP+PP)

Cuts off turbulence (Phrasal Verb + NP) Meandering thoughts (NP)

Dampen the spirit (Verb + NP)

Shackles of iron (NP + PP)

Or walls of brick (Conjunction+NP+PP Cannot curb or (Verbal Group + Conj.)

Prevent love (VG + NP)

Pure and sublime (Adjective + conj + Adjective)

Nine kind of structure are used in all 13 lines. Only 3 kind of structures repeat once or twice. There is syntactic variety in his free verse poems.

The presence of syntactic features like dislocation, elaboration, fragmentation and regularity will help us to understand the style of his poetry.

## Dislocation

(transposition of adjective and noun to give emphasis) Soul serene (from Love) Pearls tiny and small (Melting Heart) O Strangers! Strange are thy ways (puppetry) Adverbial dislocation are often resorted to in his poetry, Quickly subside the eruptions (Reach Clear Conscience) Elaboration (Using co-ordination and sub-ordination to the skeleton of the sentence) When modifying words, phrases and clauses are added to the basic structure, we see this device exploited in poetry.

I felt shattered, + broken, + Co-ordination of compliments + friendless, + a destitute

\*crippled with torn sails\* Subordination of adjective clause # with contemptuous smiles# Co-ordination by Apposition of pp and scornful looks \*teasing and tearing me (Inner Voice-VI)

In the poem, 'The Day of Judgement' (Vol VI) a number of subordinate clauses are attached to the fourth line by means of a comma. In 'Souls Outpourings' every stanza is a subordinate clause except the last. And also the S. Clause is conjoined with NPs and PPs by conjunction. This characteristic 'apposition of clause' makes the style more vibrant and quick – moving. but the piling up of adjective clauses in the poems 'Nature Good Samaritan.', Makes the poem slow moving. Fragmentation: (occurs when an essential component in the structure of a sentence (S or V or O or C) is omitted.

Exclamatory Fragments: Ah! What a gamble, what a show?

Omission of the Verb: Million eyes looking at you (Lajja-Shame Vol.VI)

In 'Alas Indianness', the first stanza has the verb and the next three four lined stanzas have no verb but the verb in the first stanza can be extended to them. Fragmentation comes naturally to the poet. As most of the Indian writers use regular sentences, their poems appear prosaic. But In Peeran's, poems have dis location, fragmentation and elaboration often. These are considered the primary instruments of poetic expression in British and American

poetry. Peeran is a verse-practitioner. There is the rare use of apposition of vocatives as in his contemporaries. Elaboration by subordination occurs more in his later poems. Diversity in the structure of lines in a poem is more but less in sentences some of his poems, almost the whole poem is of subordination.

### **Lexis**

The content words and the grammatical words used in the first poem of the first Volume and in the poem 'Rebirth' (Vol.VI) are given here.

Content words Grammatical words

Noun Verb Adj Adv Article Prep Conj. Poem-I 16 5 5 1 25 3

Poem-II 23 1312 61715 9

The poet is more nominal than verbal. Nouns are by nature more static and their use adds to longer sentences. Nominalisation of finite verbs results. In a kind of Impersonality in style-Most of his poems are in third-person narration. Nominal Style makes poems esoteric, static and technical. The larger number of nouns leads to longer sentences.

You float like a lovely butterfly  
like pleasant lotus unfolding petals  
like rose to spread fragrance  
and like banyan tree to spread it's branches.  
(A Distant Call-VI)

Eight words are nouns in these four lines but a single sentence.

### **Use of Concrete/ Abstract terms**

He writes more about notions than about facts, persons or things. He dwells on attributes (qualities) of persons or things. Personal Experiences are let out in impersonal style. Most of the titles of his poems are abstract. In the first stanza of the poem. "Oh Praise", of the six nouns, (day, praise, flowers, variety, pelf, power), only 'flowers' Is the concrete noun. In the second stanza of 'Storms', (Vol. II), the nouns are "joy, bliss, nature, devastation, madness,

creation”, all are abstract nouns. Abstract terms predominate in his poetry. He has been deeply hurt by the riots in Gujarat, terrorists in the name of jihadis, corruption in public life, sufferings of the poor, the demolition of the Babri Mosque’ But in not a single poem he has pointed his fingers towards anybody. A lot of sorrow is given vent by a large dose of abstract terms. Time will bring changes, he hopes. In his latest “Welcoming 2004”, he has written:

The heavy dark clouds have melted,  
The storms have subsided,  
weather is fine”.

Specific detail are buried into the heart. Concrete experiences give birth to general thoughts. He expresses Indian sensibility by carefully selected lexical items.

Poojaris, muezzins, padres begin worship  
House wives are first to light the ‘deepa’ to gods.  
(Early Morning Dawns-VI)

He uses archaic words to provide an old word aura.:

O thou wrapped up  
Arise and deliver thy warning  
And thy word” (Birth of Prophet Mohammed VI)

Natural objects and abstract qualities are anthropomorphised and personified in some of his poems and presented as human Individuals.

“Mother Nature in madness,  
to devour her own creation”  
Storms-Vol I

“Supreme bliss flows in my blood”  
Halku (Vol I)

The lexical devices of reiterative and collocational cohesions  
Reiterative Cohesion: From the poem, ‘Life Flows’,

Word Repetition: leaf (in lines 1 and 8), yellow (lines 1 and 9),  
brown (lines 2 and 9), dust (lines 10 and 11) Synonyms: dusk and

darkness. General Words; storm, thunder, lightning,, dust, eternity, life, dusk

Super Ordinatics stalk: leaf. Collocational Lexical Cohesion:1.yellow. brown 2. growing, rising, flows 3. weak, bleak

In the selection of themes, there is variety and complexity. Incidence of lexical deviance is found more in Indian English poetry. And Peeran is not an exception. When a poet resorts to figures of speech (metaphor, personification, hyperbole, Irony etc.), deviance occurs. When semantically incompatible words are brought together, deviation occurs.

1. Emerged the new born to breathe the world's mirth till tomb. (Life)
2. Your arguments are triggering passions (Man, the Destroyer)
3. dipping Sun.(Amidst Surrounding Mysteries)

These deviants reflect the poet's originality and the feature of 'collocative clash' that is symptomatic of the lexisot modern poetry. In 'Groping in Darkness' (Vol II) and \*W eave Fabric' (Vol.VI), the use of words were studied.

	Monosyllabic Words	Disyllabic Words	Trisyllabic Words	Polysyllabic Words
Poem I	48	12	2	—
Poem II	36	17	3	3

In these two poems, use of more mono and disyllabic words maintain the even quality of the one. (leisurely quality of the tone). A quick succession of monosyllabic words produces a jumpy or clipped rhythm:

A literary work is studied on the basis of the categories of language it employs such as syntax, lexis and phonology close and open syllables at word-terminal positions in the poem 'Ever in Search' in 'A call from the Unknown' are given under:

Total Number of words in the poem	:	78
Total Number of close syllables at word-ends	:	50
" open "	:	28
Percentage of close syllables at word ends	:	64
" open "	:	36

If a poem has more percentage of open syllables at word ends, it will have an even and unobstructed flow. The more percentage of close syllables makes the quality of the tone slow and deliberate.

Consonant clusters at Initial positions of words give a sense of release to words. But the clusters at final positions tend the words to get bogged down in the cacophony of clusters and the flow of the verse is slowed down. In the poem, 'Absence of a Friend' (Vol VI),

Total words are: 60  
 Words with Initial clusters: 14  
 Words with final clusters: 10

So the poem has a better flow when we read aloud. Spencer has more consonant clusters at the beginning of words while Milton has at the end. When a rhyming quatrain was scanned, it was found that rising and falling feet are equally present in it.

Modern writers seem to be fond of multisegmental clusters and this attitude is said to be reflecting the fragmented sensibility and psyche of the poet. The earlier poet used lesser number of clusters and so said to be presenting a unidirectional sensibility.

Several thoughts have gleamed my mental screen.

Floating images, colourful ideas for a good poem. (VI-From Worn out Poems and Old Friends)

In the first line, there are 6 clusters but in the second line, there is a single cluster. Also in the first line, there is only one cluster with three segments.

All goes well for one who sings  
 Holy hymns with tune and rhyme.

In the above two lines a single cluster with two segments is present in each. Peeran's sensibility is unidirectional.

**The use of summative and key words:** The most dominant consonant and vowel phonemes and their frequency in the poem,

“Prefer Mad World” (VI) are given below:

/s/.....17    /n/.....13    //.....15    /i/.....14/    /ai/.....7

This poems shows the preference of the people to follow a grave and still path in the first two stanzas and in the third stanza, the poet calls us all to walk into a world where the birds chirp, the breeze runs over the green, life bubbles, culture abounds and the soul remains uncorrupted. The summative words which sum up the semantic thrust are empty, void, screen, silence, moments, pathos, chirp, greenery, breeze, bubbles, abounds... In most of the words, the dominant phonemes occur. These words move the poem forward. The word rush is the key word. It is placed in a significant position at the beginning of the third stanza. The key word has the voiced form of/s/, From this study, it can be deduced that the poet's sensibility is not a complicated one but unidirectional. For the use of Alliteration and Assonance, several examples can be quoted from his poems.





**Part IV**  
**Introductions, Reviews, Forewords**  
**to the Work of S.L.Peeran**



*In Golden Times*

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***In Golden Times* – Dr. Krishna Srinivas**

Like Blake, Peeran sees the world in a grain of sand and Eternity in an hour.

An administrator lisping in numbers may sound strange but Muse in Peeran has blossomed into many-splendoured exuberance in this collection of poems – *In Golden Times*.

Every moment of Time is a mountain. Invisible, magical realities beyond our senses, float out of the unconscious, when the boundaries between the self and world are crossed. It opens expanded moments. The poet dives into these moments – one with nature, its darkness and mystery. Thus poems gleam as magic al chalices, reality winking at the brim. Here in this collection, there is self-discovery, new grounds to liberate emotions.

Let us take his most pensive poems:

Let's walk away from this listless life  
To a yonder place where there is no strife,  
But is full of peace, solace, serenity –  
A place full of nature's beauty.  
Where rainbows appear upon the skyline,  
Where minds meet the joys of the Divine,  
Where the art of living is a grace,  
Where barriers of religions have no trace".  
Such poems abound in this volume.  
The poet rages at the injustice, prevailing all around:  
"Voices of the meek ones are suppressed;  
They are hardly allowed to take a fresh breath.

Those that dare are cruelly oppressed  
And ruthlessly dealt a painful death.

But he powerfully pleads that the good of masses can be restored:

Oneness in god's plurality is the strength of Hinduism,  
Islam's strength is unity in sects' plurality,  
Singularity of purpose is the main strength of Jainism,  
Motto of service is the strength of Christianity.  
Self-sacrifice is the subtle strength of Sikhism,  
Buddhism's solid strength is soul's purity.

His poems on "*Life's Story*" is monumental:

Life is a tale of meetings and partings,  
Of woes, sorrows, and afflictions,  
Pleasures, joys, mirth and laughter,  
Regrets, repentance, remembrances,  
Fading memories, future fears,  
Hatred and harrowing experiences,  
Heart's outpourings, mental outbursts,  
Trials, turmoil's, tears and tensions,  
All recording themselves in the form of  
Either prose or poetry.

In the above, he has portrayed all life's dimensions – that baffle our everydayness.

Tailhard de Chardin stresses that the greatest blessing of the poet is to have the sublime unity of God to save the world. Poet Peeran has the concrete immensity of the far beyond. He ascends to higher spiritual planes, developing concentration of thought, increasing power of mind and gaining ecstasy which entails unity with everything. In this noble task, Peeran attains unique crispness of language and classical gems like "Total Surrender" reaches a peak of perfection.

With deep devotion, I burn the Candle  
Of my life, at His feet in total surrender.  
I have no complains, demands, compulsions  
No grievances, grief, or pain.  
Undoubtedly, I am captured by HIM.

He writes *Haiku* and *Tanka* with illumined vision. There is inner vibrancy, a matchless verbal incantation in his lyrics! They gleam as flames, intense and fine. They have visible brilliance. They have deep poignancy. And there is passionate naturalness in all he writes.

***In Rare Moments – Dr. Krishna Srinivas***

Poets with Vision experience Eternal Moments.

When senses are renovated and cleansed, poems rise in them like a fountain. Yeats had visitations of supernatural agencies when he wrote poems.

Great Valery combined the calculating precision of a mathematician with the imaginative passion of a poet. He admitted God gave him a line and he constructed his flawless architectural patterns.

Wordsworth experienced his oneness with the nature. Poetry springs from a state of ecstasy – akin to madness. Swift and Johnson wrote poems of enlightenment.

It is from the infinite depth of the Unknown, great poems rise.

The great Victorian Critic E.S. Dallas emphasizing this subterranean World that lies within us brilliantly says – In the darkness of memory, in unbidden suggestions, in trains of thought unwittingly pursued in multiplied waves and currents – all at once flashing and rushing in dreams that cannot be laid, in the nightly rising of the somnambulist, in the clairvoyance of passion, in the force of instinct, in the obscure but certain intuition of spiritual life – we have glimpses of a Great Tide, ebbing and flowing, rippling and rolling and beating about where we can see it.

Poetry needs conscious control. Poet's mind enforces harmony upon the turbid flux of existence. Poet Peeran reveals the power and vitality that streams through the Universe and animates all creation. He chooses his words to act as missiles that will explode in the reader's mind. He weaves himself closer to all that surround him.

Peeran has gained many distinctions and he is the right man to regain what all we have lost. He cries down the crimes and injustices that prevail everywhere today. Like President Kalam and Daisaku Ikda of Japan, he visions a paradise that will come.

Poetry lovers in the world today face a challenge from technology and poetry is threatened its very existence. But poetry will not expire. It has conquered all onslaughts and mighty powerful poets have rescued it from a fall. It is high time poets like Peeran must stand together and fly the flag of Poetry gloriously.

Now is the right time.

Now is the moment to survive and win. Yes it will

### ***In Golden Times – R. K. Singh***

I have been reading S.L. Peeran's poems in various small poetry magazines that support new voices both at home and abroad. As the Octogenarian Founder President of World Poetry Society Intercontinental and Editor-in-Chief of Poet, Dr Krishna Srinivas notes, the Muse in Peeran has blossomed into many-splendoured exuberance in this collection of poems (Foreword).

The poet is critical, philosophical, reflective, and interpretative of his milieu and influences: *In Golden Times* offers a n overview of the contemporary society besides a view of Peeran's own idealist temper. These reveal the depth and complexity in the poet's vision and literary techniques over the last few years. He appeals to me as one of the few form-conscious Indian English poets with a strong sense of rhythm. And, as a pursuer of Truth and Reality of Life, he is socially conscious as well:

How can I keep silence  
when my mind is tortured with bitterness  
On watching throttling of good sense;  
And Man slipping into utter darkness?

And

Voices of the meek ones are suppressed.  
They are hardly allowed to take a fresh breath.  
Those that dare are cruelly oppressed.  
And ruthlessly dealt a painful death.

The rule of law should be 'Right' not 'Might',  
For Right has its balance of Equity,  
Overweighed by Goodness,  
Evil takes flight  
And Mercy emerges with equanimity. (p.12)

As a seasoned bureaucrat himself, Peeran is one with the general perception about politicians:

Deceptive are their faces, like a mirage,  
Hiding the traits of diabolic figures.  
With eyes trained to spot prey, like eagles,  
They wear whites to cover black souls within (p. 15)

He is critical of lawyers, too, who "in black flowing gowns" frequently disappoint their clients:

"There's more sound than sense in what they argue –  
Fumbling with "My Lord, Your Honour" at every breath!  
Twisting words forcefully, but awrily, with stealth,  
They bore the judges with their long tongues!" (p. 17)

He is aware of the egoist rich, who personify "an ugly/Demon, showing itself through a/pretty face, to scare and ensnare/Everyone with its atrocious/Behaviour, to cause annoyance/Give pain and wound soft hearts." (p.30).

He shares his realisation:  
Time alone will show that,  
with joy and grief, love and hate,  
Everyone's life is sweet and sour" (p.31)

and  
"Life is for supreme sacrifice  
On the altar of the Ever Living  
To protect the weak and meek,  
That's 'Life' for a human being" (p. 36)

With his personal experiences of life's "snares and enigmas", Peeran turns philosophical:

I now learnt to tune my mind  
To sun and shade, rain and storms,  
Struggles and strife's of every kind  
I realised life in its multiple forms. (p.33)

With a sense of commitment, he portrays people and narrates incidents that provide insights into contemporary life and values. He is vocal about corruption ('A Corrupt Person') just as he is ironical about 'closed-door' meetings:

Files marked 'Secret' or Top Secret'  
Make their way into the corridors,  
And information therein exchanged for a fortune! (p.42)

The disturbing trends in the country's management and norms of 'right' and 'wrong' make him yearn for the by gone days "when our lives were tuned to harmonious chimes,/when no news is was flashed of dowry/.... when milk and honey flowed in society" ("Golden Times").

There is compassion in his vision when he says: "You must accept people as they are,/... To create and maintain healthy relation," Despite bitterness and anger, he advises us: "You should maintain your cool with dignity With silence and calmness as Golden aids./Like Time, Forgiveness is a great 'healer -/A balm to soothe pain and to heal wounds." (p.51). He recognises differences among people and asks us to accept them retaining our "personality and individuality" (p.54).

He is a firm believer in God, family and humanity. He stands for values like humility, tolerance, love, truth, faith, charity, respect, justice, freedom, peace, harmony; unity of God and mankind; promotion of education and culture and love of Nature.

Peeran collects 101 theme-based/regular poems in different metrical forms, two quatrains, 84 haiku, and 23 tanka in the 94-page volume of selected poems that reflect his consciousness in action. Though at times he might sound rhetorical, he is simple, articulate, learned, and deft, singing "Glory to the Divine self (p.92) and meditating "like a hermit in a cage." There is indeed "Inner vibrancy" and "passionate naturalness in all that he writes."

Courtesy: *Poet*, Chennai, June-2001.



### ***In Golden Times* – Srinivasa Rangaswami**

*In Golden Times* by S.L. Peeran a Judicial Member of Customs, Excise and Gold (Control) Appellate Tribunal, is an interesting collection of some eighty short poems and a crop of haiku and tanka. It is a wholesome spread of noble thoughts and reflections on life and myriad-faced mankind. Poet Peeran is a fascinating combination of a pious, mature, compassionate soul and a sensitive aesthetic being who sets great store by the abiding values of life. In all of the poems the *Aadhaara Sruti* (the reverberating undertone) is god consciousness and a total belief in the virtues of universal love, truth, humility and a spirit of servitude and complete surrender to the Supreme Power.

The Poet draws his messages from life and his warm pictorial imagination conveys them through a wealth of indelible imagery. Illustrative of this disposition to view life-situations in dramatic dimensions is for example, the poem *Life*: which describes the disquiet of an unfulfilled life. Sorrows the individual.

My life is a tattered book  
Moth eaten, 'dusty and torn.  
It's a kite with its thread broke  
knocked down by the stormy wind.  
It's a boat sans sails,  
rudderless facing the turbulent sea.

As one speaking from his heart, the Poet's words are simple and spontaneous. His straight utterances ring with the certainty of truth Somewhere he declares

Truth is complete only with love  
Compassion, Mercy, Charity and Justice

Like Time, forgiveness is a great healer a balm to soothe pain and to heal wounds, he reminds elsewhere. The optimist Poet assures: 'Times do change like the seasons/Evil shall give way to goodness and reason'. Isn't simplicity Divinity profound?, he asks.

Amity amongst mankind, transcending all inherited inhibitions and prejudices, is Peeran's central creed. Sadly aware that the root

cause of all the strife and bitterness witnessed in our times is bigotry born out of narrow loyalties and fiercely clung – to memories of unhappy history, he calls out: ‘Let the dying, decaying, perishing, icons, myths, idols and superstitions/be destroyed and buried’ (Bury the hatchet,) he pleads. ‘Let not the dinosaurs be resurrected’. His fervent prayer is:

Let the nobility of heart prevail;  
 Buy not the arguments of renewal  
 of past stormy tempests and holocausts  
 Let the sun’s effulgence shine forever.

He would wish ‘the planet live in Buddha’s tranquility/  
 Ashoka’s peace and Mahavira’s Ahimsa’.

The realised soul knows no wants, no regrets, no complaints,  
 in its fulfilled state of bliss. Sings the poet:

With deep devotion, I burn the candle  
 Of my life at His feet in total surrender  
 I have no complaints, demands, compulsions  
 No grievances, grief or pain.

Do not these words recall Rajaji’s uplifting hymn “*Kurai Ondrumillai Govinda!* (I have no wants, nor complaints, O Lord!), made immortal by the transporting rendering of the song in deep piety by the one and only M.S. Subbalakshmi.

What is more natural than that this votary should lift his hands  
 in prayer:

Praise be to Thee, Lord, the only one  
 Let seconds and minutes pass in Thy praise.  
 May blessing thrive, our goodness rise  
 Misery and poverty teach us humility  
 To seek Thy Grace, Love and Charity.

Elsewhere, movingly he sings:  
 O my dear soul-mate!  
 I wished I could give you  
 A lasting, lovely present  
 Which is priceless and precious.

I looked and looked around,  
Searched and searched all places  
At last I found it just  
Within my own heart.  
It is my lasting Love.

Enriched and mellowed by experience of a life-time, the Poet has words of wise counsel, words of practical wisdom, to offer to the young and the not-so-young. You must accept people as they are – he would advise – and forgive those who heap insults on you for ‘they know not what they do. Turn a blind eye to others’ faults, or show compassion, is another bit of advice. Never be an uninvited guest, dear son he tells Polonius-like ‘but courteous be to one who calls on you though unasked or at an hour undue’. To his daughter he would say:

Let all that you do.  
with grace be done

Words not merely applicable to a young maiden stepping out into the world.

In “The Nether World”, which opens with the husband’ s question “Where will you search for me/When I’m gone to the nether world?” is an outstanding poem, a moving poem, replete with reminiscential moments of a shared life between a husband and his wife in a separate state of bereavement. Where will you search for me, the husband asks ‘In my old shoes in the attic,/In my torn and tattered clothes/or in the not so worn-out suits and ties./Which remind you of the rare occasions/Specially worn by me to please you?. ‘In my photographs in the album?... ‘In my diaries full of accounts of our love,/our meetings and quarrels, travels and expenses./our hopes and disappointments, our pains and pleasures?’... ‘or in my love songs and letters/Carefully preserved in dusty files?’... ‘Or in my collection of books which had bored you? you had hated it whenever I held it/For you had yearned to be held in my arms’... soon it goes recounting moments intimately shared.

The Poet's haiku and tanka are a rich crop, most of them suffused with God-consciousness. To quote a representative haiku:

Oh. 'My beloved  
show me they sweet Effulgence  
I am in anguish.

To give another gem:

Why love my son asks  
Candle burns to give light, dear  
To show you the path.

It is difficult to say anything meaningful after the brilliant assessment of Peeran's poetry by Dr Krishna Srinivas in his foreword to the present collection in his matchless language of strident majesty. Dr Krishna Srinivas talks of 'an inner vibrancy', a matchless verbal incantation and 'a passionate naturalness' in all of Peeran's verses. Can there be a richer tribute to the poet. To me the collection is precious as a mirror of what we know of the much loved Poet Peeran as a person and a poet.

Courtesy: *Poet*, Nov.2001

### ***In Golden Times – Dr. A.H. Tak***

S.L. Peeran's *In Golden Times – Selected Poems* is an exquisite collection of numerous shorter poems – lyrics, sonnets, haiku and tankas – delineating the individual perceptions and the social commitments of an Indo-Anglian poet who, as Raja Rao once argues (in his preface to *Kanthapura*) wants 'to convey in a medium that is not his own, the spirit that is his own'. In spite of Dr. Krishna Srinivas' attempt to compare him with William Blake-probably in view of his mystic leanings and religious bent of mind which predominantly forms a vital component of Peeran's poetic themes-S.L. Peeran sounds to me more like Tennyson, reflecting the restless spirit of his progressive age, and Alexander Pope, voicing the artificiality of his contemporary society, particularly in the expressions of grief, love and hope. Like Pope, he most often expresses not so much a personal as a social spirit: his poetry is an

excellent mirror which reflects the social, political, moral and religious trends and tendencies of his times. He very outrightly states:

How can I keep my silence  
When I see so much of wrong around?

The poet very surrealistically depicts the callous ness and cruelty of contemporary society inhabited by astoundingly selfish, insensible and stony-hearted people: deceptive politicians whose 'words change like a speedy train'; cruel soldiers who 'with hawkish eyes and grim face' shed blood of enemies; cunning lawyers who with twisting words' cheat their clients, and 'bore the judges'; corrupt leaders who use 'power to liquidate adversaries'; ambitious men 'with selfish desires and hopes' "and an average majority of foolish persons who 'humble themselves before everyone'. It is a society where.

Voices of the meek ones are suppressed,  
They are hardly allowed to take a fresh breath.  
Those that dare are cruelly oppressed,  
And ruthlessly dealt a painful death.

In the midst of this tormenting and bleak picture of contemporary society S.L. Peeran consoles us, in an almost Tennysonian fashion, by his confident assertion of faith in Love, Truth, Religion and moral values like affection, simplicity, honesty, dedication and s straightforwardness. Love 'pure and sublime', he argues, is 'the source of man's loftiest ideas', 'the inspiration of his noblest deeds', and the best possible: means of his growth and development'. How eloquently and nicely the poet gives his theory of love in the following stanza:

As a seed seeks a safe place to hide.  
Till it gains the strength to sprout and grow,  
Hearts that are weak or marred by frailties  
Need Love to make them strong and pure.

He even advises his daughter:  
With sweet flowery eyes lit with love,  
My dearest, seek benign blessings from Him.

In such verses as these he firmly explicates the ‘Sufi doctrine of Love active agent for a complete metamorphosis of the human soul: a sort of self-sacrifice, different from sensuality. In other words, Peeran without even paying the remotest possible attention to sensuality, sex or physical love, reveals his spirit of reverence for spiritual love which imbues in man a strong urge to give. In such love man who all along had been thinking of his own, interests only, and regarding others as merely instrumental to his own happiness, suddenly finds himself happy only in administering to the happiness of another person. Anyone with such a perfect feeling of love in him is a ‘saviour’ a ‘mahatma’ and a true human being for whom

Life is for supreme sacrifice  
On the altar of the Ever Living  
To protect the weak and meek,  
That’s ‘Life’ for a human being.

It is the fervour of Love that makes self-surrender possible and enables one to grasp the essence of Truth and God who is the Absolute Truth. This is the essence of Sufism: Love alone can establish the kingdom of Heaven on earth – and usher an age of everlasting peace and prosperity in the world because Love for God and Love for man go together. It is one of the main reasons for Peeran’s prayer:

O Truth, pure and ever sublime.  
To drive away my passions and guilt, tell ‘Time’  
Cool my senses and light up my mind  
So that a home in my heart, Love may find.

Accordingly, a man endowed with such qualities of Love and the knowledge of the Truth is a true saviour: “The ecstasy of/Communion with the Divine,/Has released him from human/Bondage and sufferings of the Soul”. Such a man neither gives way to despair, despondence and pessimism in his life, nor gets demoralised by death:

O Man! Love God and do realise.  
That all that is created should finally die  
To dust we return, never to rise,  
For eternity, there we are destined to lie.

In short, Peeran is not so much concerned with the metaphysical speculation of Sufism' (sort of mysticism) as with its pragmatic side – faith, education, affection mystic ways of salvation: submission to God, silent meditation, escape from sensual pleasures and worldly desires, doing acts of charity and to love all those in grief or misery. Such themes form the crux of Oriental poetry (particularly Persian poetry) but to express these things in a second-language – which may be the best vehicle for one's intellectual make up but can never be the best mode of expression for one's-emotional make up is a very difficult task. By performing this difficult task commendably S.L. Peeran has once again asserted that poets can play a vital part in cultural transmission which is very important for international understanding and human welfare.

Courtesy: *Met verse Muse*, Jan-Jun-2001

### ***In Golden Times* – Prof K Jagannathan**

S.L. Peeran's *In Golden times: Selected poems*. published by The Home of Letters (India) Bhubaneswar, confirms, the belief which was been again and again proved by the psychologists, that heredity has a major role to play in shaping an individual's intellect and behaviour even though environments have their influences over these faculties to a considerable degree. This applies in the case of S.L. Peeran the administrator cum poet, who enriches both domains The publisher's write up about the poet in the fourth cover amply certifies this. S.L. Peeran's great grandfather was scholar in a renowned Arabic, Persain and Urdu Scholar in the rest while Mysore State and was bestowed with the title 'Siraj-ul-ulma (Sun among Scholars). His father was a pillar of ministry under Maharaja of Mysore. With those inherited traits Peeran has been drawn to immerse in the philosophy of Sufists, and this intoxicated his thought process. The poem aptly quoted by Dr. Krishna Srinivasa in his forward to this poetical work. Total Surrender' reflects clearly Peeran's outlook of life, his mission and his unequivocal quest in his life – Yet another poem. His Grace' (p.61)

all the poems in this collection are marked by simplicity in composition and wordings – 'and they do not bewilder the reader.

The philosophy of the poet is effectively communicated in a pleasant manner without taxing the reader. This artistic skill of the poet appears to be his monopolistic virtue.

The first poem "Love" is a neat expression in simple terms – functions as the opener to the "Golden times" and its many facets in the hands' of the poet receive added colours. In contrast to these 'the poems "Deserted Love" (p.7) "Pangs of Separation" (p.8) "Our scattered dreams" (p.53) "A Deprived pleasure" (p.67) stand to testify the poet's capacity to ventilate the antithetical feelings with the same ease full of emotions.

Again the poem "Who" (p.45) A surprise guest to share my woes/And share his Joys – "Who knocks my door?". Very subtle in expression, indeed. Some of the poems "Forgive them for they know not (A Christian concept universal In nature) –,

"Choose your friends (A Hamletian prescription) To My daughter '(p.4) Advice to Dear Son (p.46 stress on some moral values of golden times, which are shrinking and disappearing in the modern social order"

Flash back of memories "The smile that relieved Tension" "A soul that can gladden a thousand hearts" are small bits' but having impressions.

Personal glimpses form part of some of the Haiku? "the poet In them admonishes and fixes – the human Peeran." Your false claims of love/Oh Peeran where is Justice?/Satan In you.

I shall never love/Oh Peeran those who dared Me/Now, quickly repent/Turn thy face in love/Oh Peeran you shall 'face. wrath/And be forsaken.' Realisation and consequences, of "faith" lessness in the Creator, are made out in these presentations:

In the '*Golden Times*' (p.43), reflecting the title of the collection, the poet remembers about many cherished values. of the, past,



and laments indirectly for their significant absence in the, present human and the world order.

As an administrator at present and a practising advocate for a considerable number of years, the maladies affecting politics and administration have not gone unnoticed from his vision. Politicians, (p.15; Tanka – (p.92) ‘Bubbling like balloon’ etc. prove these., Love faith, Almighty, compassion repentance, realisation of self-etc. which are hallmarks of sufi find full expression on many poems in this collection. S. L Peeran’s service to that philosophy in the form of poetry is noteworthy and laudable.

Courtesy: *The Brain Wave*, Nineteenth issue by Prof: K Jagannathan

### ***In Golden Times* – Dr. C. Anna Latha Devi**

After reading Poet Peeran’s sheaf of poems *In Golden Times* one is tempted to exclaim, “Oh! What a variety!” – long poems, short poems, sonnets, quatrains, Haikus and Tankas and it is apt to quote Dryden’s words, “Here’s God’s plenty”.

Poet Peeran’s maiden venture *In Golden Times*, a collection of 101 poems of philosophical, metaphysical and enthralling qualities, captivate the attention of only scrupulous readers because they require concentrated reading. The poems render wise counsel and wide perspective. The themes of the poetic gems are varied and thought provoking. Though many of the poems are apparently subjective they are actually far-sighted with objectivity and demand universal appeal.

The poetical frame of Peeran exhilarated by the magical exuberance of love and with love as a companion man can face all the challenges of live. He is confident when he asserts, “With Thee beside me/Life is a trifle” (*Love II* 3-4). The power of love is so great that it purifies the physical, mental and spiritual arena of man. In “love’s Many Facets”. Love is compared to a seed which seeks a secure place to sprout and love boosts a heart so weak or marred by frailties. Though the poet is enticed by the sudden visit of his dream girl he feels disarmed with her smile. Devoid of masculine charm

with his boyish pranks he is at a loss to do the right thing is a realistic portrayal of the buffoonery of the lover on the unexpected visit of his beloved. Love's seat is the lofty souls and truthful hearts and it cannot reside in the hard and stony hearts. Love sparkles one's speech and sympathy flows from it. Even the pangs of love sweeten the life. When Peeran says that it is better to have loved and lost rather than not be loved at all, he speaks direct from his heart. In "Deserted Love" he is certain that without love life becomes dull and colourless. The lover cries with agony:

O Love! why did you desert me  
Under scalding sun? I'm parched and thirsty  
But no more there's shade, no more rain,  
And no more songs of birds to greet me.

In the "Pangs of Separation" the deserted lover is left cold and shivering. Love is boundless and it cannot be curbed or barbed by chains of iron or walls of brick. Poet Peeran must have definitely looked into his heart before penning his passionate love poems.

Peeran, the Indian Wordsworth, is an admirer of nature. The vignettes of nature in his poems especially "Beauty in the Stone" is a record of the poet's appreciation of the marble, a gift of nature and it reflects God's glory. Moreover the different gems like rubies, diamonds, emeralds, crystals and precious metals like gold and silver are all in "nature's colourful grandeur". He like Wordsworth believes that "Nature plays an indispensable part." In "Nature" mountains, clouds, rains, oceans, trees with umbrella branches and the greenery carpets make him fly to the realms of oblivion and ecstasy. Not only nature, "City Lights" too draw his attention to the Golden Bar, to great institutions imparting knowledge, to the holy places and also to monuments of culture.

His poems on Life are admirable. Like Shakespeare who has presented the seven stages of man in *As You Like It*. Peeran compares the life of man to a theatre and it signifies nothing. Trail's and Tribulations are part and parcel of human life and life has sweet and sour experiences. In "Human Life" he dexterously presents the needs and desires of man and his quest for tranquility.

“I a crow” is suggestive of “simple living makes life a treasure”. In the last line of “Human life” the poet emphasises the greatest ideal:

To protect the weak and meek,  
That's Life for a human-being.

“Time Shall Change” contains the assertive vision of the poet that in spite of pains and pangs of life the poet is hopeful that every cloud will give way and life's ship should be decked with HOPE as its sail.

There is realistic flavour in Peeran's pen portrait of the dual side of a soldier – grim but kind, the double act of the politicians, the lawyer not to plead but to judge his own action, the contagious corrupt person, foolish man, a born leader with an iron will, officers of high rank, a lustful old bandicoot with a flair for wine, food and women, a good Samaritan and a born Mahatma.

The poet is full of indignation against the social institutions which are largely responsible for the maladies that affect man all through his life. He cannot keep mum seeing the atrocities and cruelties perpetrated on Man. “Toil and Soil” is a satire on the dowry system and it is heart-rendering to see a poor father struggling to satisfy the greedy groom of his daughter and finally “enabling the groom to bury him in the soil”. “A Closed Meeting” is a meeting of officials in secrecy but the information in the secret files are “exchanged for a fortune”.

Peeran as a poet-counsellor is remarkable. His golden verse of advice to dear son and little daughter to soar high with the belief in God and seek heavenly blessings is sincere and contains the warmth of an affectionate and responsible father. Another sagacious piece of advice is about the choice of friends. The idea that wise counsel should not be discarded is embedded in the short poem “Heed Counsel”.

Heeding their counsel with awe and obedience  
May bring cheer and charm into one's life.

In “Retain Your Individuality” – Peeran is concerned about the identity of a person and hence one should not be carried away

by the influence of others. “You get what you deserve” the title itself is self-explanatory.

Peeran as a man is a workaholic who keeps up the dictum – to work is worship. In the ending couplet of the poem “Work is Worship” the poet crowns work as

How sweet is the honey he churns out  
From the bitter sweat of his endeavours.

Moreover fishermen and farmers who toil ceaselessly in all seasons, in shine or rain are appreciated by the poet.

The title poem *In Golden Times* centers around the poet’s longing to reach the golden times where there was abiding peace and no flash news of dowry deaths, children who were not loaded with heavy syllabus and food materials were in plenty. He wishes to listen to music melodious with sublime themes as a contrast to the filthy songs of the present. More over in the golden times of the past science was a boon and not a bane and milk of human kindness had flown from the compassionate heart. He interrogates:

Oh can we get back those golden times  
When peace was amidst us all the time?

The poem shines with golden radiance with the poet’s longing for peace and prosperity for his fellow-men.

Some of Peeran’s poems are highly philosophical. “Man’s Ambition” is the poet’s cry of caution to mankind. Causing violence to nature and its course by man’s vaulting ambition to reach the unfathomable deep and soaring to the heaven’s zenith results in the end man’s own destruction. In “Might and Right” emphasis is laid on the conception – let right be done to everyone. “Confusion” highlights the fact that “the light of wisdom seldom dawns on confused minds”. The merits of Education, Religion and Affection are the trio which fix the tree of life firmly. He very wisely comments though man is challenged with varied emotions. “A Mahatma” is one who reins his vices and reveals his virtues.

The theme of death is dealt with by the poet and he accepts death as a natural phenomenon and christens it a Teacher. He discloses the universal truth that the towering personalities however great they may be have to meet the destination – death. “The Winter of Life” describes the deep slumber. Moreover he has his own belief on heaven, hell and eternity.

Peeran’s staunch belief in God crowns his achievement as a poet. He appreciates the little children lisping the school prayers. He believes:

All goes well for one who sings  
Holy hymns with tune and rhyme.

In “Bless Me” he looks up at the face of God with heavenly radiance and benign look to get relief from worldly pains and penury. His eagerness to be the chosen sheep of God is explicit when he utters, “Let me, then, be one of them”. Knowledge of God is an inward or mystic experience. Though faith springs from one’s internal resources it is not arbitrary. Like the Metaphysical poets of the 17<sup>th</sup> century England Peeran believes in the interdependence of human and divine love. His poems abound with illustrations that human love is a prerequisite for divine love. He brands a good doer, a pious humble man of sterling character as “A Messiah” or harbinger of God. He is right when he says that “God’s grace is abounding”.

The faith of Peeran reaches its peak when he uses the words of Jesus Christ on the cross forming the title of the poem, “Forgive Them For They Know Not.” Cross is a symbol of sacrificial love which is exemplified in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The extraordinary tolerance and patience which Jesus exhibited on the Cross even to his enemies is to be followed and practised in the day-to-day life when we are insulted and humiliated because, “forgiveness is a great “healer”, a balm to soothe pain and to heal wounds”.

In “Total Surrender” Peeran supplicates himself at the feet of God, the Almighty by adoring and worshipping him. Very beautifully with the choice diction and apt words he expresses his

decision of spending every breath of his life in His service. Nothing can deter his union with God. As he is at peace within himself he has no plea, no request, no demand or complain to make to God. He is like a dog so faithful to serve his great and mighty Master. Lines like

My being is enveloped with his compassion  
 Every particle in me is his creation.  
 (His Grace 11.6-7)

My Master's service is my main motto  
 I wish I were a dog to befriend HIM  
 (Total Surrender II. 13-14)

Speak volumes of Peeran's dedication to God.

Above all, Peeran is a humanitarian. He wishes that even a humble sweeper should be cared with compassion. He poses a question to everyone:

God has assigned her an unenviable task  
 Of being a humble sweeper, a street woman.  
 What is your role towards such a creature?  
 To look down upon and down tread her  
 Or to show compassion and work for her uplift?  
 (Down trodden II. 1-5)

His belief on the universal brother hood without religious discriminations and diverse creed is explicit in his poems. "A Dawn of a New Millennium" with its advancement in science and technology no doubt has multiplied the sources of man's pleasure and comfort. Instead of groping in darkness man's mind should be illumined with the wonders of the new millennium to usher universal peace and "Utopian bliss" "by starving war to its decease". The words of Jesus Christ on the Cross "Forgive them for they know not" reveal the magnanimity of Peeran's soul identifying and recognising religions without fear or favour.

In the Haikus and Tankas Peeran explores his own self and in his "I" and the name 'Peeran' he includes the "Universal I". They are all pragmatic revealing the universal truths.

Like the variety of themes in his poems, Peeran has unique style of his own. The stanzas of the poems *In Golden Times* are of varying length from two lined to four lined stanzas some ending in couplets. In some of the poems there is no stanza division at all because there is unification of thought. First line gets repeated in poems like”. “His Grace”.

He draws images very freely from nature and anything that comes to his hand. Rain is described as “the relentless tears of somber dark clouds”. “Fraternity in the serpentine queue”, “Life is a scene of light and shade”, “My life is a tattered book”, “like beasts behave rich men” etc. are few examples from numerous phrases used by Peeran. He is ironical sometimes, often apt in the choice of the titles of his poems, “I a crow”, “Bury the Hachet”, “Who”, “Charm in Life”, “So Dear” etc. Most of the poems are decked with flowering phrases and ornamental at diction and added feather to the cap of poet Peeran.

Each poem is a gem, unique in its quality requires concentration of mind. As Middleton Murry rightly points out, “He (The Poet) has the word. The word in the poet’s mind partly arises out of the emotional field, partly is deliberately fitted to convey it. This mating of the word to the entire mental experience of thought and emotional field experienced as one is the specific poetic art”. (Pure Poetry” 310). True, a poet cannot write anything about which he has not had any direct personal experience. It is presumed that Peeran’s life and work have synergetic relationship, quite obviously his spiritual side. His works will definitely bring him honour and laurel and he will be hailed as a poet of Peer in the galaxy of Indo-Anglian poets with his forthcoming volumes of poems *In Golden Moments* and *A Search From Within*.

Courtesy: *The Green Lotus*, April-June-2001

### ***In Golden Times* – Jasvinder Singh**

S. L. Peeran in his poems discusses varying aspects of life which play pivotal role in making or marring life. The poet, in almost all the poems attempts to reveal the staunch realities. The poet

considers world as a multi-million faceted theatre of life and human beings to play different roles, big and small (rather long and short) as the poet points out) and game of life goes on with rises and falls, for men aim at pleasures, but have to face the pit falls, due to aberrations like pain, disease, corruption and strain, etc. The poet delves at harsh realities which form part and parcel of life. The poem 'Life of Man' makes one to think over the observations of the poet introspectively.

'Love' is such a phenomenon as it gets its place in every poet's imagination, whether optimistically or pessimistically. Love is an integral part of life, dominating one's imagination as a sustenance of life. The poet in his poem 'Love's Many Facets' calls a spade a spade, with a pertinent assertion:

"Love lives in souls, lofty and true  
And shuns the mighty and haughty.  
Love can never find a place  
In hearts that are hard and stony.'

At another place in the same poem the poet candidly and poignantly points out that-

Though sad and painful the pangs of love  
We are told that sweet they are  
And that, not to have loved at all  
To Love and love, it is better far!

Indeed, once love enters one's heart or fancies it becomes too difficult to depart from it despite odds it more often than not has and pains and pleasures provide strength to strive for the attainment of aims. The poem exhibits a fine blend of poet's imagination and his proven ideas about love's facets.

Truth is another phenomenon which is considered as the moral force and its significance is golden in life, but it is also seen that speaking truth is most difficult at times because of its repercussions. The poet in his poem 'wooing Truth' delves on hard and soft facts about 'truth'. In this small poem the poet pithily reveals abstractness of truth by associating truth with compassion, love, charity and justice, etc. These lines in the poem reveal the



common home truths I feel, this poem would have gained greater strength if the poet had also mentioned the fact that there are stages when men most fear to speak the truth and to face it when consequences pose great challenges. Still, the poem is admirable for the revelations the poet has made about this abstract aspect of life. In the following poem titled 'Oh, Truth! the poet poignantly asserts that truth is pure and sublime, and that its alliance with love makes it to dwell in heart. Truth is most admirable and vital aspect of life. The poem gives such an impression.

Going through the poems one after the other one finds that poet makes a successful attempt to provide solace to a pensive reader, and to entertain with serene thoughts which provide a moral force to life in general. His thoughts are impregnated with serenity and simplicity. The poems also reflect poet's own personality through his subtle and sombre expressions, as one finds in his views about 'Man's Ambitions'. The poem gives an inkling about poet's admirable imagination when he visualises the demerits or being ambitious in life and reveals how ambition proves to be a source of vanity and tells upon future at stake.

Another poem in the anthology titled 'Death The Teacher' makes one to turn to God with a 'holy heart'. Even in remorse one can seek solace through allegiance to God. Again, the poet most beautifully expresses himself in the last lines of the poem as under:

O man! love God and do realise  
 That all that is created should finally die  
 To dust we return, never to rise;  
 For eternity, there are we destined to lie.

In love of God and realisation of the reality of death one finds the supremacy of nature which is often overlooked by we humans in this materialistic world which is endowed with urges throughout the life. Reading this poem more than once one finds that the poem has the touch of 'sufi-ism and is impregnated with wisdom and humility. Likewise, all the poems have been found to be thought-provoking and revealing in a most interesting manner. One finds poet's sharp acumen of intellect in the following lines from the poem 'Labour Sans Luck' –

Nature has designed its own ways  
To gift its game to the one who chooses,  
Though one might slog for days and days  
The fruits of labour, luck often refuses.

Indeed, destiny is supreme. Unless one finds luck favourable labour becomes a source of greater hope with more strenuous efforts to meet the desired end.

The smaller poems in the book make great revelations proving thereby that with few but selective words we can make the world move without much labour as we find in the poem 'Marriage on the Rocks'. I quote the whole poem here –

Shattered are the dreams!  
The Past and Present are gone  
Darkness sets at noon!  
A marriage made in heaven  
Is now on the rocks!  
The fragrance of rose  
Is converted to stench  
As love turns sour  
Like milk to yoghurt!"

Thus, with his serene and sober thoughts S.L. Peeran has endeared himself among the lovers of poetry. He deserves all accolades of laudation.

Courtesy Art and Poetry Today, April-June-2001

***In Golden Times – Bernard M. Jackson***

Imagination takes wings and soars  
To realms of oblivion and ecstasy.  
But Nature awaits not one's retirement  
To leisurely reflect and write its story. ("*Nature*")

The visitation of the Muse came rather late in S.L. Peeran's hard-working event-ful life, and his many years in the legal profession would seem to have previously subjugated his creative aspirations to a major extent. However, poetry, like the constant flow of a trickling mountain stream, will ever find a way, and can be expected to map out its own course. Since 1997, Peeran has been very active on the

poetry scene, and there can be no greater testimony to his immense talents and ability as a poet than that heartfelt tribute recorded by Dr. Krishna Srinivas in the 'Foreword' to this collection

He writes *Haiku* and *Tanka* with illumined vision. There is inner vibrancy, a matchless verbal incantation in his lyrics. They gleam as flames, intense and fine. They have visible brilliance. They have deep passionate and naturalness in all he writes.

Indeed, the sterling hallmarks of this fine collection really are passion and sincerity; and so many of these poems indicate a deeper sense of meditative, inward reflection

Truth being crystal clear,  
Needs no eulogy or praise,

Its effulgence and brightness it showers  
On loving and compassionate souls, ("*Wooing Truth*")

In his poem, *Simplicity*, he asks, "Isn't Simplicity Divinity profound?/In it is sincerity found." It is this same flow of rhetoric

How can I keep my silence  
When I see so much of wrong around?  
It chills my consciousness in moments tense  
Provokes me to utter sayings profound.

Peeran rails against those who amass huge fortunes and 'state-of-the-arts' possessions for their own self-gratification; and in his poem, '*To A Stony Heart*', he gives extra emphasis to his anger by the simple repetition of a word at the end of each of the first four consecutive lines. In a shorter poem, '*His Own Prisoner*', the poet claims that a person who becomes materialistic, creates his own disastrous downfall

Give the man whatever he wants,  
Let him carry it around his neck  
Like iron shackles, pulling him down,  
Making him a prisoner of his own self. ("*His Own Prisoner*")

There are poems included that speak of a loving romance that, for some reason, has sadly ceased to be. The title of one of these poems, "Deserted Love" gives greater insight to the poem itself. An

overwhelming sadness prevails as the poet gives vent to anguish at loss of a loved-one”

O Love! Why did you desert me  
Under scalding sun?  
I'm parched and thirsty  
But no more there's shade, no more rain.  
And no more songs of birds to greet me. (*“Deserted Love”*)

Similarly in his “Pangs of Separation”, he again refers to this traumatic experience, which has brought in its wake an overwhelming sense of loneliness. And here the aspiring poet has conquered vital ground, for in addressing an issue of such personal magnitude, he has managed to strike a universal chord. This then is verse with which all can empathise

His “broken heart sings of love me more  
No more does he dream of a charm-filled life.  
Flowers no more seem to emit fragrance  
The garden around seems full of prickly thorns.  
*(“Pangs of Separation”)*

For those who love Haiku, they will find much here to reflect upon, for Peeran has also included an entire section, of 84 Haiku. These poems show the many facets of the poet's general philosophy and Sufist inspired thinking. Many of these poems, however, the purist would prefer to categories as Senru, but nevertheless, there is an interesting and varied selection for the avid reader of this particular genre. Peeran's absorbing maiden collection is brought to a close with a broad selection of Tanka Verse of varying quality; the better ones being those with deeper spiritual significance.

Inspirational Music  
Music of the ageless times  
Candle of the life  
To enlighten heart and soul  
And sear to heavenly goal

S.L. Peeran in his revealing Preface, makes reference to a well – known poem “On the Grass Hopper and the Cricket”, by the 19<sup>th</sup> Century English poet, John Keats. Thereby he “bolsters his belief that, insofar as the Grasshopper must frequent its natural habitat

and the Cricket is “born to sing, “by that same token, poets may equally be expected to eulogise wherever opportunity allows, in the certain knowledge that their voices will be heard. There are many poems within this collection that will surely please. Those who have had occasion to read Peeran’s later collections, will be impressed by signs of considerable earlier development in this, maiden collection’

Courtesy Poet June-2002

### ***In Golden Times* – Dr. Ramesh Kumar Gupta**

S.L. Peeran’s *In Golden Times* is a beautiful collection of 101 poems, 2 Quatrains, 84 Haiku and 23 Tanka. Its ‘Foreword’ speaks a lot about the title of the book. Here, I feel it essential to mention a reputed name in the cosmos of poetry and Editor-in-Chief of Poet, Dr. Krishna Srinivas who quotes “the Muse in Peeran has blossomed into many splendoured exuberance in this collection of poems”.

In this collection Peeran’s keen observation of, and reaction at every simple and serious event around him is given a poetic expression which is apt to be caught sight of. The poet is now oppressed with the degraded values of life and puts a question in “Golden Times”:

“Oh can we get back those golden times  
.....  
When science was not meant for destruction,  
When human feelings included ‘compassion’?  
Oh can we get back those golden times  
When Peace was amidst us all the time?”

The poet is seriously concerned about the dual and deceptive role of politicians:

Deceptive are their faces,  
like a mirage,  
Hiding the traits of diabolic figures.  
With eyes trained to spot prey, like eagles,  
They wear whites to cover black souls within!  
(Politicians)

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They wear whites to cover black souls within!  
(Politicians)

On this wise, lawyers too are not deprived of his critical approach:

“In black flowing gowns,  
with white bands and  
Collars, with sharp eyes  
wherein cunningness abounds.” (Lawyers)

In “Life’s Story” and “My Life” Peeran’s moral consciousness gives an advice presenting each and every dimension of life:

“Life is a tale of meetings and partings,  
Of woes, sorrows, and afflictions,  
Pleasures, joys, mirth and laughter,  
Regrets, repentance, remembrances,

Fading memories, future fears,  
Hatred and harrowing experiences,  
Hearts’ outpourings, mental outbursts,  
Trials, turmoil’s, tears and tensions.” (Life’s Story)

That is why, he says that “My life is full of unfulfilled dreams” (My Life). The poet portrays his views on life devoid of values and liveliness. He resents at the oppression and injustice done to the weak and meek:

“Voice of the meek ones are suppressed.  
They are hardly allowed to take a fresh breath.  
Those that dare are cruelly oppressed  
And ruthlessly dealt a painful death” (Might and Right)

Once upon a time, the poet was unaware of the real meaning of life but no sooner than he came to know the grace of life, he averred: “I now learnt to tune my mind” (Trials and Tribulations).

To him, “To flourish or flounder day by day./Simple living makes life a treasure” (I A Crow)...

In “Human Life” the poet reveals the real state as well as the basic values of life:

Life is for supreme sacrifice  
On the altar of the Ever Living  
To protect the weak and meek  
That's 'Life' for a human-being.

The present 'situation is cantankerous so he believes that an equilibrium can be achieved only if we sacrifice our lives to protect the weak and meek human beings.

The poet hits a nail on the head about the 'truth' that “Truth pursued with sincerity and humility/Showers its spiritual grace and bliss./Truth is complete only with Love,/Compassion, Mercy, Charity and Justice/Truth is eternal and surpasses/All barriers and is beyond nothingness./Truth is infinite and dwells in hearts/Pure and simple, humble and kind” (Woing Truth).

As a staunch follower of Truth and Reality of life, the poet is morally and socially conscious as well: “How can I keep my silence/When my mind is tortured with bitterness/On watching throttling of good sense;/And Man sleeping into utter darkness?” (Silence).

With his pure and personal experience of life Peeran turns as a compassionate instructor: “You must accept people as they are, Not expecting all their traits to please you. To create and maintain healthy relations.

You should maintain your cool with dignity,  
With silence and calmness as golden aids,  
Like time, Forgiveness is a great 'healer'  
A balm to soothe pain and to heal wounds.

(“Forgive Them For They Know Not”)

The poet has unflinching faith in humanity so he dives deep into the values of life like love, peace, truth, tolerance, justice, coherence and love of Nature. Peeran seems to be strongly

suggesting that nothing in the world can curb or prevent Love: “Meandering thoughts/Dampen the spirit,/Shackles of iron/Or walls of brick/Cannot curb or/Prevent Love/Pure and sublime” (Love).

Peeran’s Haiku and Tanka evince different metrical forms with illumined vision. His language is very simple and style direct. His poems have a rich variety with apparent splendour. Sic, there is “Passionate naturalness in all he writes.”

Courtesy The Green Lotus, April-June-2001

***In Golden Times – Prof. R. Bhagwan Singh***

The collection of one hundred and one poems, Haikus and Tankas entitled *In Golden Times* by S.L. Peeran is a specimen of poetry designed to delight, console and sustain humanity more so in hard times than in golden times. The poet makes no bones about his predilection for versifying when he declares that he has just shed his sicknesses on human failings and sufferings. He claims “to be a victim of this human failing” and has “allowed (my) his urgings to pen in verses.” Naturally he offers himself a vast canvas of the contemporary scenario and an inner world of human agony and pathos. The incongruities and contradictions in human affairs shock him and disillusion him. Hence, in ‘Silence’ he writes;

How can I keep my silence  
When I see so much of wrong around?  
It chills my conscious in moments tense;  
Provokes me to utter sayings profound.

Peeran is sick of corrupt people In “A Corrupt Person” he indicts such human species and calls it “a contagious disease threatening mankind” (p. 38) So are the politicians. “Deceptive are their faces, like a mirage” and “they wear whites to cover black souls within!” (Politicians p. 76). Similarly “Fake doctors are really dangerous” (p.76). Man’s ambition has robbed nature of its beauty and calm to his ultimate loss. Thus while he poses as an intellectual, his mean mentality exposes itself. The poet at times feels so despondent that he laments.



There's no meeting ground at all  
Nothing in common, no emotional bond.  
The fragrant flower of Love has withered.  
The binding cord of Love is broken (p. 53)

However, the poet has put in certain age-old beliefs and spiritual values to sustain our morale. Thus "simple living makes life a treasure" (p.26) and "Life is for giving, as much as for/Taking of energy from sun/Bliss from moon, existence/From rivers rain and Nature" (Human Life p.36) The poet's optimism is unequivocal. In "Times Shall Change" he writes,

So times do also change like seasons;  
Evil shall give way to goodness and reason,  
W here reason falters, patience should prevail  
Life's ship should be decked with HOPE as its sail.

*In Golden Times* has some Haikus, Tankas and quatrains which are remarkable for homely images and sublime thought. However, whereas the title *In Golden Times* suggests exuberance of modern science and its positive contribution to human welfare, the collection is mum. The present era deserves credit at least for democratic ideas and decent living. Anyway, Peeran's poetry shows maturity of thought and ease and felicity of expression.

Courtesy: *Cyber Literature*, Volume 7 and 8 June-Dec-2001

*In Golden Moments*

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***In Golden Moments – Dr. S.Radhamani***

I consider it my fortuitous and fortunate occasion of privilege and memorable opportunity to write a foreword to poetical collections titled, *In Golden Moments* by S.L. Peeran. S.L. Peeran's *In Golden Moments* comprising 103 poems indeed is a compendium of his profound observation of so much of wide themes such as Love, Death, Sleep, Penury, Loneliness, Isolation, Ennui, God, Godliness. At a time when materialism is rampant, selfishness is taking luminous proportions, S.L. Peeran, analyses in a lucid manner simultaneously the crude stark realities perpetrated by the stigma of the society on the down-trodden and oppressed:

Life is meaningless for the wretched  
They lack sense and strength to fight or revolt  
Multitudes suffer with them, parched  
None possesses a will to change or to bolt  
("Chill Penury and Poverty")

His poems bring to light avidly the poet's keen sense of observation, which lead to sententious remarks.

But black deeds of evil men leave no trace.

Elsewhere S.L. Peeran reiterates, "With the maker of the man having the last say", when in this world, caught in the quagmire of untold suffering and agonising moments, a true-friend should save us from perdition. His poem "Friendship" emphasizes not merely the sanguine points of true friendship but also paves the way for attaining "the zenith of inner peace".

In this war-torn modern world, man is perpetually at loggerheads within his own self. A thorough study of man is imperative and inevitable at this juncture. His poems titled, "Man the destroyer", "Man's existence", have revealed how best the noted poet could at once observe and study human nature at its best, exposing the human follies of the existential dilemma into man is ensnared, as a result of the collapse of the moral values.

You, a destroyer of values, customs, ethics, and morals  
A volcano from Mother Earth erupting

With my poetic association with S.L. Peeran in many poetry workshops, I can safely vouchsafe that he is not only a well-established poet, widely published and anthologised, despite his busy schedule in holding a responsible post, but also a forthright, cultured person of refined manners. He has proved the dictum, 'style is the man'. His own words ..... from his poem, "A Good Company",

our deep culture of kind words  
Were like a pure running stream  
To soothe my senses and cool  
My eyes and enlighten my soul

"Are a clear manifesto of his attitude and deportment. Some of his poems, "A man of patience", "A Citizen of the World", "A person par excellence"-serve as a contrast to the number "A Satan" and "Future Talk". On the whole philosophy is ingrained in his poems which reveal the time-bonded saying, for the confused, bemused beings:

Faith in yourselves, faith in  
Goodness, faith that you  
Can change and change for better.

On the whole, "In Golden Moments", with a wider range of themes, with most of the poems in rhyming structure, mostly bereft of imagery, leaves ample testimony to the fact that each and every word in every poem is the best offshoot of his poetic interaction "In Golden Moments". The book should transcend the barriers of time, I wish the poet all success. The book will find a permanent place in the annals of English literature.

***In Golden Moments* – Bernard M. Jackson**

Isn't charity "beyond filial relationship?  
 To cut across all barriers, of colour and race  
 Beyond self, but with warmth and cheer,  
 Isn't it. like a diamond reflecting glorious colours? ("*Charity*")

S.L. Peeran, a Judicial Member of Customs, Excise and Gold (Control) Appellate Tribunal Chennai, entered the World Poetry scene comparatively late in life, but in many way his verse offerings are so very familiar: indeed, he has been readily welcomed and encouraged by such eminent magazine editors as Dr. Krishna Srinivas (*Poet* magazine) Dr. H. Tulsi (*Metverse Muse*), Dr. M. Fakhruddin (Poets International) and other notably litterateurs. His first work, *In Golden Time*, was published by *The Home of Letters*, Bhubaneswar, and was very well received by critics and poets, alike. One might well wonder how such a poet is able to so quickly establish himself among fellow-poets (writers of many years standing); and the answer lies in the fact that the very hallmark of his poetry is a characteristic brand of optimism born of positive thinking, for here is a poet in pursuit of his ideals:

Every flower speaks of a grand design,  
 That goes beyond the worldly.  
 Every leaf reveals a symmetry  
 Reflecting the glory of nature.  
 Every tree reflects the passing time,  
 Nature – ever on search for a greater grandeur. ("*Nature*")

In this shorter poem, which is here quoted in its entirety, the poet is not merely speaking of the beauties of Nature; the imagery clearly reflects God's greater design for Humanity itself. Furthermore, there are many examples in the included poems to demonstrate both the positive and the negative aspects of Man's nature and general disposition. Like some seer from ancient Greece, Peeran observes and comments appropriately on the world situation as he sees it to be. Not only that, but he offers sound advice:

You need to have a clear mind  
 And should know what you want from life.  
 A lot of things happen

Around you, but you need to  
Be alert all the time, lest you  
Go overboard with the sensations  
Bickerings, scandals, scams  
Criticism, condemnations and quarrels. ("*Be Optimistic*")

In another poem, he outlines, the qualities that make a gentleman, and succinctly ascribes these qualities to all sections of society. On the other hand, he gives authoritative warning to Mankind as a whole:

Your arguments are triggering  
Passions, hate anger,  
Uncontrolled emotions, smashing  
All social norms, ("*Man, The Destroyer*")

Many of Peeran's poems hark back to an earlier age when, as a youth, he was enraptured by the charm and beauty of various young ladies of former acquaintance. Here we find wholesome attraction and genuine regard for the virginal integrity of young womanhood, and in his poem "*A Woman*", he addresses with powerful rhetoric society's gross misuse of the fairer sex:

Is Woman a commodity?  
Or a hosiery?  
Can you not admire her beauty,  
Her bravery and calm? ("*A Woman*")

Complementing this noble standpoint are a number of sensitively worded love poems, several recalling those poignant past affinities and attractions. The collection is brought to a sparkling close in didactic mode with a superbly edited section of 47 pieces of short verse, each characterised by Peeran's inimitable brand of appealing simplicity

Sun shines for ever  
on minds  
pure and simple

A delightful collection by a relatively new writer who combines sincerity with craftsmanship. A fine command of English.

Courtesy: *Poet*, April-2002

*A Search from Within*

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*A Search from Within – Dr. I.H. Rizvi*

S.L. Peeran is a poet with a mission. Having unshakable faith in God, he believes that darkness will disappear, sorrows will vanish and goodness will shine forever. It is not that he is not conscious of the darkness around, of the evil expanding its boundaries, of terrorism showing its demon-like teeth and of the destructive forces hovering around. However, he is sure, like Browning, that “God’s in heaven” and if all is not right with the world, it will be right soon. He believes in the supremacy of the Supreme Being, in His mercy and His call for the merger of the soul. God is ‘Divine Light, Mercy and Compassion’.

The poet’s faith in mysticism, Sufi-ism and spiritualism has confirmed him as a poet of faith and hope, a poet with a healing touch and a reminder to man of his duty towards himself, life, world, faith and God. His poetry is the poetry of man and of all-embracing shades of life. His Haiku poems present life in various shades and they cover life from end to end – love, peace, politics, fragrance, flowers, birds, tears, money, wine, time, dreams, aspirations, hopes, man-woman relationship, injustice, courage, all figure in his Haiku. Here is ‘God’s plenty’.

According to the poet, love is ‘a celestial gift to mankind’ and from the top of the hill one gets the view of the fullness of life. The poet laments that, instead of giving freedom to a child, we put a heavy load of books on him. ‘Love is the child of man’ and innocent love in childhood is the best slice of life. His poem ‘Man

And Nature' refers to the dawn of Islam, its message, the sense of unity and show of courage against all odds. He believes that truth and falsehood stand on opposite poles and lying holds the sway in most cases but it cannot vanish the glory of truth. An imposing, showy and ostentatious man is a hateful and ugly person, according to the poet.

Peeran thinks that modern busy life with shortage of everything is a curse, while hardworking men earning bread with the sweat of their brow are blessed with peace at heart. He indulges in direct moralising in many poems like "Gather Knowledge" and "Trample Your Ego". "Light Within" enlightens the soul, but anger and lust shut out the heavenly light. He strikes an optimistic note in many poems. He wishes to "let the reflections of his master shine in the mirror of his heart. Places of worship are holy springs and a source of inspiration and ecstasy – "Holy Springs Overcome Hurdles" conveys a message of hope. Wherever the poet finds injustice, it pinches the heart of the poet. – "Be Discreet in Approach".

The poet does not wish to add to the misery and confusion by complaining, for systems are in conflict and disharmony with each other. – "Complain, To Whose Avail". "Poojas And Homas For Shanti" throws light on the Hindu customs of offerings for the departed soul. The dark fire of "Kama" has an ill effect on man. – "Fire of Kama".

Melancholy note may be discovered at many places in the collection. Sorrow touches the poet's heart at sad and pitiable sights. The poet expresses deep grief at the death of dear ones in "Death Of Close Ones". The sorrowful plight of a man who has lost everything has been presented in "Dawn of Madness". The sad lot of a damsel who is deserted by her lover after he has spoilt her chastity has been described in a way, which touches our hearts. Autumn has ushered in her life. The poem has lovely ending.

The dark side of life is also death with by the poet. The dark 'one' hidden in a person betrays him – "A Betrayer". The artfulness of 'adeceptive lady' is exposed in the poem of that name.

Disrespectful behaviour of persons is responsible for 'love fast' among them – "Love Lost". "Yearnings of a Soul" reflects yearning for the lost beloved in quite touching words.

However, life moves on as Nature does. It sets 'milestones to reach safely to the goal'. – 'Life's Goal'. Time is 'a wonderful cycle' and 'keeps moving on and on in multiple colours with various hues forever,' and it is an infinite process. 'The King Of the Forest' deals with the majesty of the lion.

The poet preaches the feelings of universal brotherhood. According to him, everyone should instill 'a filial feeling of oneness of bliss' among the people. – "Let Us Worship".

"Agni-Fire" is a very nice poem in which fire speaks of its constructive role for human beings as also of its power to strike against evil. In "Water, Water – Everywhere", water also speaks of its all-embracing might. The role of wind is spoken of in "I Am Wind". "Dust thou art and to dust returnest" is the theme of "Dust Unto Dust". "Cheer Up" is an optimistic poem and "Spring Time" presents the joy of life. In the bargain of life a person hopes for gain alone, but the bubble bursts soon. – "Is Life A Bargain".

'Breath In And Breath Out' throws light on the value of meditation.

'Soar Higher And Higher' inspires man to soar on wings of love's glory.

S.L. Peeran has deep faith in love, beauty, charm, light, hope, goodness, sincerity, piety, innocence, grace, sympathy, pity and faith. He is deeply struck by the Cupid's dart. To him separation from the beloved is unbearable.

The poet is 'a boat without sails' without his love. He laments over his miserable condition and feels utter despair in separation from her. According to him, love is an all-embracing power and its song is the sweetest song. A number of poems on the theme of love speak of love's sweetness, glory, healing power, joy, longing, separation, meeting and fulfillment. Love is the divine light which cures all ills of life and purifies the heart. "Sanity".



However, as always, the poet shows unshakable faith in God in “O Chosen One” and “Mercy And Compassion”.

Some titles of the poems in the collection are very poetic like “Let Love And Beauty Reign Again”. The Wordsworthian thought that Nature sympathises with man is presented in the poem “A Street Boy”. There are many mystical poems like “Zenith”, “Liberation” sings of the glory of God while “Daily Supplication” presents pantheistic thoughts.

Peeran warns man not to destroy himself by nuclear power:

“Destroy yourself”. His heart is lacerated at the sight of notorious hyenas, wolves, vultures and other destructive elements. He is also conscious of the approach of the “ultimate reality” in the poem “Reaching The Shores”. I feel S.L. Peeran is like a swimmer with his eyes towards heaven and with full confidence in his power to swim, with the help of mystical and philosophical oars and with hope to reach the shores one day.

### **Bernard M. Jackson on *A Search from Within***

Come, Come, let us fill our vacuums  
In heart, in mind and in our souls  
With love, affection and warmth  
Illumine with million lights of knowledge. (“*Purify Ourselve*”)

In his informative ‘Preface’, S.L. Peeran, poet and mystic, tells us that “Poetry is a powerful form of expression of yearnings of the inner consciousness and soul of a mystic, a sufi or a yogi.” – Certainly, many poets in other areas of the world have, in recent years, sensed a new universal spiritual awakening and, despite differences in religious beliefs, we are united in those finer motivations of the soul. Exemplary features of Peeran’s poetry are his abounding love for God’s created world, together with a glowing sincerity, born of a certain childlike wonderment

Sincerity touches the heart  
Touches everyone indeed  
Touches infinity surely  
Sincerity is pure and simple. (“*Sincerity*”)

The simplicity of this poet's versification is polarised by the sheer power of his delivery. I admire a writer whose poetry is imbued with passion, and here indeed is a man who speaks from the heart.

He finds his absolutes in his higher yearnings, for Love and Truth are facets of the same Divine revelation. When Peeran reflects on such matters, he is not preaching, but merely clarifying those perceptions that are common to us all:

You need a good seed and soil  
 For a good plant to grow.  
 It needs to be nurtured with toil,  
 Protected by sweat of the brow. ("*A Master To Nurture Love*")

It is often said that 'One should never judge a book by its cover', but in this case I feel we may safely do so. The cover illustration, itself is a masterpiece of symbolic representation, pinpointing with such clarity the underlying aims, motivation and ethos of this collection, as a whole. I would very much like to extend my congratulations to the artist responsible. Of course, the title of the book, *A Search From Within*, obviously indicates a return to roots. Peeran has been blessed with a happy childhood, and in his poem, 'My Mother', the poet pays tribute to his loving memories of her and the protective care with which she had nurtured him. There are love poems, too, but the 'Beloved' mentioned in those verses is surely not, as one might have expected, some exceptionally beautiful lady; rather this 'Beloved' is the very personification of the spirit of Love, itself, which Peeran maintains is bestowed upon the Just by the

'O Omnipotent One, The Creator'  
 "O praised one, the deliverer of all souls  
 Let my tears of love be my humble gift." ("*My Last Wish*")

Peeran firmly avers that one's love must be childlike, innocent and freely responsive, and here again he returns to his roots in that same meditative contemplation of this tremendous absolute in his life:

Go back, go back to the love  
You found in the sweet childhood.  
he lullabies and the kisses,  
The hugging and the patting  
The caressing and the outpourings. (*"Childhood Love"*)

In his concluding lines to this overly 14-line poem he declares

"Love, thou are the child of man,  
Pure, unspoilt flowing with blessings.

This poem recalls for me the words of Jesus Christ when he duly stated, "Unless you be as little children, you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." To one who has ever lived his life in comfort, and has apparently never known what it really means to live a life of destitution without adequate food and shelter it is of course all too easy to glamorise the life of one who literally lives on the streets; and Peeran, in his poem, "A Street Boy", while extolling the – freedom, joys and idyllic sense of timelessness that only a miracle to such an existence" might bring, has nevertheless failed to mention the hardships, squalor and sense of utter rejection, or overwhelming hopelessness that a child in such a position might face. As a poem, "A Street Boy", is well-written and almost lyrical in quality, but its portrayal falls a little short of credibility. The vast majority of included poems, on the other hand, greatly appealed, and the poet/author is to be congratulated for the general high quality of his work. This collection is brought to a sparkling close with an extensive section featuring an amazing 156 Haiku poems. And adding even greater lustre to an already fine publication, Dr. I.H. Rizvi (Poet/Editor of *Canopy*) delivers a scholarly commentary on Sufist poetry, in his enlightened Foreword to this book.

Courtesy: Poet, Aug-2002

### **J. Gordon Hindley on *A Search From Within***

When I met the poet, S.L. Peeran, my pleasure in his writing was confirmed. Here was no person who, like Wordsworth, could father an illegitimate child, then, as a long absent father, upon seeing his child again, pour out an affectation of deep sincerity for the

admiration of the world. Here is a writer who said what he meant and meant every word of it from the inner most core of his being. That sincerity to which so few can aspire was obvious in his person, self-evident perhaps to those who, like Peeran have fed on the words of Moulana Jalal ud din Rumi that most expressive of sufis.

From early schooling at St. Joseph's College at Bangalore, S.L. Peeran moved through the Government Law College and the National Institute of Social Sciences, which admirably prepared him for work with personnel and industrial law; he becoming, after some years of law practising as Professor of Law at the Heavener Law College; from which he was elevated to his present position as the judicial member of our Customs, Excise and Gold (Control) Appellate Tribunal, first in New Delhi and now at Madras. This dedication, and the field of it – the precision of thought, insight and logic required – prepared his ready and fertile mind for the greater task in hand. Peeran says that, even in his St. Joseph's days, though they were not his main subjects, his teachers nurtured and distilled in him his abiding love for Urdu and English verse. This love, it seems, is a familial trait: he saying that his grandfather and those before him, sophisticatedly inclined, owned private collections of Persian and Urdu verse. Like Moulana Rumi, who met Shamsi Tabriz, his instructor, after his 60 year, Peeran by his own confession came late to verse. In his 48<sup>th</sup> year, he began to write, first in Urdu then in English.

I mention this literary pedigree because it reveals the material grounding, expressed as a family tradition, love of learning, responsibility of temperaments and inherent warmth and compassion for all manner of the disabled, that is the absolute and unwavering prerequisite for any artist – anywhere – who is to become or to be the voice of the observant and aspiring amongst us.

We have only to add the sincerity and fervour prerequisite for total commitment, and what we have before us is a poet; poet concerned with the tumult and pains and doubts of our daily living, only – and I repeat only – insofar as these, by their very negation, point up the presence and overriding experience of life as it can be

lived – as it can be experienced – by those amongst us who choose to be committed, and then follow up that conviction in body, mind, heart, and in the essential spirit.

Such a writer is S.L. Peeran. I have his manuscripts, and copies of the books he has published. I now review his “*A Search From Within*” which is in my hands as I write.

This is not the verse to exhibit by quoting this line or that out of context. Here we are savouring and looking at both – essence and the whole; so I quote two verses in full, then add my summary.

The wintery fog, the snowy weather;  
the dry sultry and parching summers;  
the stormy cyclones, tempests;  
the overflowing rivers inundating me.

the drought has created famine:  
not a drop of water to drink,  
to quench the dried-out tongue;-  
but my lips haven't failed to sign thy praise.  
Oh my soul, burn and burn...  
someday, somewhere, love will thrive.

We are all millions of zeros but,  
all of us lining together besides the great only one,  
have gained great value.

The great One is all – alone –  
but we millions of zeros  
by praising and singing paeans  
for that one, have gained glory.

Many petals are held by a single stalk  
to form a beautiful flower;  
for nectar and fragrance,  
to delight all with its beauty.

Love emits sweet scent  
for all to enjoy its bliss.

I am an Englishman writing in English. As such, if I have insight, I am drawn to the compassion and maturity of Peeran's writing. I find that the 107 pages of short verse that make up the first part of “*A Search From Within*” encompass almost every well-

meaning feeling and sentiment we have and, as such, are as wide-ranging as a Book of Psalms; – and are equally comforting. I therefore recommend these verses as a bedside reading: the reading of them will give much hope and comfort. Every verse is an appeal, and begs us to respond. It is easy to do so.

My only lament is the very Indian syntax. I have read S.L. Peeran's verses at Festivals in Britain. They have an immediate and the desired impact but, with a change of word here and there, and a syntactical word-shift without changing either the impact or the meaning, both impact and meaning could be made more clear. Indian readers and hearers of this verse may not have this problem. I give but one example:

The darkness grows and grows in eerie silence;  
Without, the cold silent moon in the blue sky'  
Twinkling stars are covered with a blanket of dark clouds.

This is an evocation of a late Rajput or Moghul painting of dusk or dawn determined by the fullness or the crescent of the moon. But the sky is not blue or if it is almost black; – and the painter's mixing of day and night (a curious convention) is misplaced here where that convention does not exist.

So, perhaps, I can beg the poet to be as exact in his scrutiny of the 'outside world' as he is in his judicial, keen and always appropriate appreciation in depth of our human plight and growth.

S.L. Peeran is a worthy lakhshana or signpost of the best in all of us and in Indian English Writing.

I recommend *A Search From Within* to all. They will not be disappointed.

I now come to the final section of S.L. Peeran's book. It is of 156 Haiku, some whimsical, some critical, and some profound. All follow, easily and adroitly, the 5-7-5 syllabic requirement, so admonishing with scholarly restraint those who cannot write a haiku correctly pretending they know better; – and there is a haiku for almost every mood and occasion, from the most bitter to the glad. I quote but one of these. It encapsulates the book:

Remove mind's tension  
Sing songs of heart's contentment  
To remain in joy

We can be thankful for such writing.

Courtesy Poet, March-2002 (J. G. Hindley)  
Also published in *Journal of Poetry Society of India*

### ***A Search from within* – Srinivasa Rangaswami**

Poet S. L. Peeran has come up with this, his third collection of poems '*A Search from Within*', closely following on his *In Golden Times* and '*In Golden Moments*', with four more in the wings. The volume is graced with a Foreword by Dr Iftikhar Husain Rizvi, Ex-Principal and Professor of English and the distinguished Editor of CANOPY.

When we approach Peeran's poetry we are on holy ground. With a pilgrim of deep piety, utter humility and sincerity, infused with pure love and compassion for all of mankind, joyous in the certainty of faith that goodness and truth will ultimately prevail over darkness arid evil, and ever blissful with a heart brimming over with yearning for union with the Universal Soul.

As with the Alwars (the Vaishnavite saints) the Sufi masters, Peeran's poetry too represents the outpourings of the deepest inner stirrings"-the pangs and tribulations and the joyous glimmerings" – of the restless soul striving towards godhead. The devotee immersed in god consciousness feels overwhelmed by the thought of his own utter insignificance in the presence of the ALL GLORIOUS and breaks into rhapsodic utterances, vainly trying to comprehend the uncontainable myriad attributes of the Divine. So it is with Peeran, to whom the noble one, the magnanimous one, the brave one, the loving one, the unblemished one, the most virtuous is all but He, the light, of the universe. HE is our succour, our benefactor, our redeemer, our reliever, our deliverer.

To Peeran, as to the Alwars, God is 'the beloved' separation from whom is unthinkable. 'Oh my Ever-lasting Love/my every

breath is for Thee, sings the Poet. What would he not do for his beloved!:

I cultivated dry and parching lands  
 Irrigated them with my sweat and tears  
 I picked the choicest fragrant roses  
 The sweetest fruits for my beloved to taste.  
 I wove and wove the finest cloth  
 With designs and decorations of various hues  
 Bedecked with jewels and precious stones  
 To present as gifts for my beloved to wear.  
 I yearned and yearned, with hopes and longings  
 Burnt my candle of life for my beloved's grace.

In his self-consuming love for the beloved, the votary would declare:

Let me circumambulate thee  
 Sing paeans in love of thee  
 Like a moth, burn my wings  
 In my mad love forever.

To our Poet, 'Love is the elixir of life'. To him the joyful spirit and loving heart are the same. You need to nurture the plant to grow in you. If you sincerely seek, you will find the doors of love always open. Love subdues all trials. Soar higher and higher, let love's glory engulf you; let us purify ourselves with the cool streams of love; come, let us fill our vacuums in heart, in mind and in our souls with love, affection, warmth, the Poet would exhort. Love is the pathway to salvation.

Nature, the Poet knew, is but a manifestation of the All-pervading Lord. He sings:

On the bud's spreading petals emitting fragrance  
 Bees collecting nectar,  
 birds nestling and singing  
 Thou art seen everywhere, O faceless One!

Does this not remind us of the *bhakta* (one of the Alvars?) who went to gather flowers for the offering, but stood in bewilderment wondering how he could pluck the flower when he beheld the very Lord's presence therein. Are we not reminded of



Poet Bharathi's ecstatic utterance: In the wings of the black crow,/0  
Nandalala, thine swarthy mien I see.

For the Poet, Nature is entwined with the Divine. There is a Wordsworthian reverence in his approach to Nature. To be one with it is a state of bliss for him. Even his spiritual statements are clothed in imagery from Nature. "Many petals are held by a, SINGLE STALK, to form a beautiful flower", implying that we are all just petals; and need the Single Stalk to become complete, a beautiful flower.

All things fall in their places, in true perspective, for the realised soul. And nothing can dislodge it from the centrality of its rootedness. It knows that grief and loss are only means to purify the heart. It is at peace with all of God's creation. It has no complaint, grouse or grievance. It can with equanimity even 'bear the discordant/chimes, out of tune melodies/watch disarray, confusion, chaos unabated'. To the illumined one, our Poet, 'all religions and revelations are only the rays of a single central sun! All the *avatara purushas* and saints and seers who have walked upon this earth have proclaimed the same truth, shown the same sunlit path.

There is 'God's plenty' in this volume, as Dr Rizvi rightly points out, spanning the wide range of human concern, But, ultimately, the burden of the song is the same. They all hymn in praise of the timeless virtues and the eternal verities – frontierless love, faith, sincerity, selfless service, purity of heart, dis position to eschew the evils of desire, and ceaseless steadfast striving towards the final goal of union with the Oversoul. In Daily Supplication the Poet fervently addresses the Lord:

Now my goals are set, my mind is clear  
My sails are ready to take me forever  
beyond the horizons... to the rainbows of love.  
My burning love, my zeal, my hopes,

My dreams, my yearnings will not fail me  
Thou shalt guide me for ever and ever  
To reach the shores of ecstasy and bliss.

In My Last Wish he comes up with this supreme prayer:

When my time comes to shed this mortal coil  
To close my eyes forever and to breathe the last,  
Then let me sigh with thy name on my lips.  
O praised one, the deliverer of all souls  
Let my tears of love be my humble gift;  
Let me present thee with my stricken heart  
With its wounds and pangs of separation.  
My beloved I yearned for thee all my life  
Now, I lie immersed deep in your thoughts.

This is Peeran, the poet and the man. The Poet reminds us of the higher destiny of poetry, as one meant to awaken and lead us on to an awareness of the true meaning, purpose and goals of our existence,

Courtesy: *Poet* June-2002

*A Ray of Light*

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*A Ray of Light* – Dr. C.L. Khatri

It has been in pleasure to go through S. L. Peeran's manuscript of 'A Ray of Light' and to pen down my personal response to it more as a reader than as a critic. S.L. Peeran is a seasoned poet with a clear vision of life, unsoiled, unaffected by the western cultural onslaught. In this anthology as in his earlier ones he comes out as one of the few poets in Indian English poetry who has overcome the lingering wasteland sensibilities looming large around us. Certainly the sufist impact on him keeps him smiling in his lines of verse. Even in a poem like "Turmoils of life" the final note is of triumph. In this volume calm, serene and brooding atmosphere prevails upon the occasional sentimental outburst of anger and protest with an ultimate optimism. He does protest in poems like "Ah Conscience!", "Ah Callousness!", "Look it", "Tyrannical Living", "Perils and Dangers" and in some other poems. He is fully alive and super sensitive to the unhealthy situations around him. So he can't be called a Romantic escapist, a charge often levelled against the first generation of Indian English poets like Aurobindo and Tagore. For example, in "Ah Conscience!" Peeran has an ironic dig at the use or rather misuse of the term 'conscience'. It has a political undertone also:

The white's rule over blacks and brown,  
was justified on the "Voice of Conscience"  
A rebel leader speaks of Conscience Vote.....(27)

Again “Ah Callousness!” gives a realistic account of our city life thick with, “the impassivity and inertia” that gives rise to chaotic situation in which we have “Garbage dumped all over..... Muddy potholes, open manholes/Wandering abandoned animals on street.... “. He does lament elsewhere, too. But he never lapses into sentimentalism.

Peeran is essentially a poet of faith, love, compassion and inner wisdom. The present anthology is an exploration of light with a sufist mission to spread the light of the finer sensibilities imbued in our religions. In this way poetry serves as his vehicle. The title poem “A Ray of Light” projects KAABA as a perennial source of light that illumines our soul. ‘Spread light’ is a beautiful poem of *udbodhan* that derives positive meaning out of our bitter experiences.

Your life’s experience –  
 Bitter, sour and tense,  
 Or sweet, like honey  
 In rain, sun and shade.  
 Has taught you wisdom  
 Shown you God’s kingdom  
 To illumine your soul and mind  
 Lit candles, to spread light around

Peeran’s poetry can safely be placed in the Bhakti tradition. He advocates, “Submission to seek His Grace” (P1) and then prays to Lord for light:

O Lord! I seek Thy beaming light  
 for I am desolate and I yearn for Three (P 56)

Like Bhakta he stresses on love, faith, surrender to Him and his God is kind, merciful, beneficent, omnipotent and they are attributes of *Sagun Brahm*. However, he does not idolise God as a Bhakta in Hindu tradition does but the over flowing love and other attributes remain the same. In “Magnetic Attraction” the dichotomy of illusion and reality, Sagun and Nirgun in the concept of God has come out: “I know you have a charming face” and then

‘I know you are Faceless, Nameless/Formless, Unfathomable, Inconceivable/Yet, I know you, yet, I know you.....” (p.34). In

“Hallmarks For Civilisation” Peeran raises some questions on this dichotomy. It is wonderfully resolved in a verse of *Isha Upanishad*:

*Tatejati tanaejati tadtare tadvantike:  
Tatantarasya sarvasya tatu sarvasya asya bahyatah*

That entity of the self-God, moves, and that again by Itself does not move. It means in Itself. It is motionless but It seems to move. Again that seems to be far away, since it is unattainable by the ignorant. That is very near indeed – *tadvantike* – to the men of knowledge – It being their self, That is inside. The self that is within all” – of all this world consisting of name, form and activity. But that (tat) is also *sarvasya asya bahyatah*, is outside all because. It is all pervasive like space; and it is inside because it is pure intelligence.

Sufist concept comes close to it and for the poet the goal of life is ‘To merge and be one in solitude’ (p.3) and “To free forever from the shackles of every kind” and he partakes in the glory of a teacher saint and prophets. He takes a dig at the sacrificial practices in religion in ‘Acts of Compassion’.

“Sanctimonious sacrifices of animals  
Done on the altar of Everliving Deity...  
Is it today a sign and symbol  
Or pelf and power, of show and ego? (p.27)

He pleads for “acts of compassion that pleases HIM”.

Peeran’s poetry, however, seems to me less philosophic and more moralistic and prescriptive of ethical values. He advocates stoic courage, love, faith, benevolence, worship, mercy tolerance, charity, forgiveness, rule of law and the like.

At times he lapses into plain statement of moral value and general good. His poems are by and large direct, straightforward and inornate and simple. The tone is urbane and appealing to our conscience. The purpose of his poetry is “To teach, preach and enlighten one and all”.

“Shed Rivers of Blood” is full of wide ranging references from Hindu, Islam and Christian religious books. It shows his scholarship and secular credential.

There is hardly any aspect of life that he has not touched in these 95 poems, 74 Haiku and 27 Tanka. His socio-political and above all human concerns are well eked out in many of his verses. However, the same spirit runs through his Haiku and Tanka. He has comfortably succeeded in giving poetic forms to his thoughts and musings. Peeran has succeeded in carving out his place in Indian English Poetry with his four poetry collections of substantial size and many more to come.

“Foreword” in *A Ray of Light* 2002 Biz Buzz Bengaluru.

### ***A Ray of Light* – Bernard M. Jackson**

Life is full of light and shade.  
Joys and sorrows intertwine  
Like seasons to change from time to time  
To make a full circle complete. (“*Joys And Sorrows*”)

The true measure of a poet’s worth is not to be reckoned by the total copies of his collection that a hard-working publisher manages to sell, nor can it be gauged by the number of literary magazine publications in which his respective poems are duly featured. We have, each of us, read poetry from time to time, poetry that we declare to be memorable and quite outstanding. And it is, perhaps, within this genre that we find the versifications of S.L. Peeran. Several of India’s leading critics have already lavished praise on his earlier collection, *In Golden Moments*, a collection, incidentally, that I have favourably reviewed. His present endeavour, *A Ray of Light*, is a remarkable work by anyone’s standards.

Dr. Chhote Lai Khatri (Poet, Critic and Editor – *Cyber Literature*) in his excellent Foreword tells us:

Peeran is essentially a poet of faith, love, compassion and inner wisdom. The present anthology is an exploration of light with a Sufic mission to spread the light of the fine sensibilities imbued in our religions. In this way poetry serves as his vehicle.

Certainly, those few words serve admirably well to sum up Peeran's work. The present collection is dedicated to his grandfather and great-grand-father in recognition of their tremendous services and generosity to the poorer, less-privileged members of society, in various parts of India. Indeed, there is, included, a beautiful longer poem in tribute to his late grandfather, a poem which is part-laudatory and part-biographical but even more than that, it is simply brimming with the enormity of Peeran's loving affection.

Peeran, in his introduction, modestly apologises for his apparent shortcomings in English syntax, but I must point out (as an English poet,) that I find his phraseology, use of imagery and the metric construction of his verses to be of a very high order.

Most of his poems reflect his views on life generally:

Life is like going to war.  
You need to choose strong sturdy soldiers;  
Give them the best of physical training  
To combat with strategic support. ("Life is War")

Paradoxically, of course, Peeran is not here extolling the actual advantages of modern warfare, for he is a man wholly motivated by principles of ahimsa. In this, and a number of other poems, the poet is telling us that we must cultivate and practise worthwhile virtues and skills so that we may steadfastly address temptations, sinfulness and the overwhelming corruption so prevalent in the world of today:

Say what you want to say  
In a loud clear way.  
Let it be audible to one and all,  
Let it be a clarion call. ("Spread Light")

Yet another poem dealing with the light of revelation is "Lead Me To The Light", an especially beautiful poem in the form of a prayer, and somewhat reminiscent of those exquisite psalms, found in the Bible – It is here that Peeran shows his universality as a poet, for these are spiritual aspirations which members of any of the world's great religions can readily embrace. His love poetry, too, is very moving, for he addresses those verses with sincerity and direct

simplicity, with which others may easily identify and duly empathise:

The sweetness in you  
Has turned into a lovely spring,  
With fragrant flowers all around  
To remind me of your deep love. (“How to Meet You”)

In the latter poem, the poet’s expressed love is seen to be at counterpoint with an underlying sadness – for possibly the object of his affections had died, or has more recently moved on into another phase of life-situation. There are other poems which focus this poet’s meditative attention: Topics such as – Childhood, Death, Social Injustice, and Public Corruption; and, for good measure, a number of poems of a did active nature, each exhorting us to lead better lives. – For this is surest route to international peace, love and justice...

In the final pages of this fine collection there are sections of *Haiku* and *Tanka*, respectively. Many of these shorter poems, too, are didactic in approach, and are authoritative in their delivery. S.L. Peeran is a poet with a mission; his very verse reverberates with ceaseless outpourings of love for humanity. It is primarily, these qualities that elevate Indo-English poets of today to the international status and recognition that they truly deserve. This is a collection that I wholeheartedly recommend to poetry – lovers everywhere. May Peeran’s *A Ray of Light* continue to shine for many years in the realms of India’s great heritage of literature.

Courtesy: *Poet*, April-2003

### ***A Ray of Light* – Dr. R. Rabindranath Menon.**

S.L. Peeran, the author of “A Ray of Light” has already won a name as an Indian poet writing in English, and he has other works to his credit. It is however the first time this reviewer has seen a book of his, (my fault) and it impresses me as coming from a man of idealism, conviction, and imagination. *A Ray of Light* is in effect a string of lightnings from the poet’s brainstorm. Most of the poems strike as the products of intellectual analysis rather than



emotional exuberances, though instances of the latter do appear to disturb the serenity of the prevailing overall mood. I shall amplify this statement as the review proceeds further. Another outstanding feature is that there is a green thread of sincerity and outspokenness running right through the warp and woof of Peeran's poetry. However hard a poet may try to get out of his poems, a bit of him will peep through, and though I haven't met him, the picture I get of him is that here is a simple, sincere, frank, god-fearing and poetic soul, perhaps a little too emotional at times, but maintaining his peace and poise most of the time.

"Childhood Moments", reflects a true picture of the reminiscences of his earlier days. No frills, no reference to any concentrate incident, just some flashbacks which nevertheless tell us much; brief skeletal touches. Peeran seems to be a man of few words, and his verbal paintings rely on collateral sights, representative symbols and images that however have a power of expression beyond the normal pale. The first poem is a good example. It is a poem springing from faith, and yet confirmed by sights of emotions and acts of others, through other's eyes and feelings, without any personal declarations of faith or throbbing outpourings from a seeking heart, except in the last two lines where the poet succinctly concludes: – 'Love's crystalline purity, in a ray of light/Showering beauty, illumining the 'soul's bright'.

What he sees or what he imagines he sees, purely external symbols, tell us of the firm faith that lights his heart as well as of millions. To my mind, this is a novel method of describing a House of God. It is even more effective than a personal and devotional declaration of faith. Though the poet has not directly and exclusively titled this poem with the title of the book, I am inclined to consider it as the title poem. Yet I wonder whether the use of 'soul's bright' is a misprint for 'soul bright', because the former is strictly speaking ungrammatical even within the liberal bounds of poetic license. Personal feelings of an intense and intimate nature shine in a long poem: "A Tribute" (p.6), which is a paean of praise for his illustrious ancestors. An enjoyable childhood in enviable surroundings, good teachers and fine education, a sheltered life,

prosperous and brilliant ancestry – all these factors come out through deft touches in short poems with an autobiographical scent. No direct references. Peeran is a master of the oblique. He is an idealist who visualises things, as they should be, in a world full of grim realities which when faced at times fill him with blind rage.

In a critique of this sort, the good as well as the not so good needs to be talked about. In spite of the sheltered background, and personal success, Peeran has an overpowering feeling for the underdog brimming out of his heart that goes out shouting in the streets to do things he would dare not when restored to moments of calm and sanity. 'Loot it' p. 18 is such a poem. The 'I' in it is just symbolical. It is not the 'I' of the cultured, responsible and peace-loving Peeran. It shows the poet's participatory eagerness. Ensnared in a high, comfortable government job, and endowed with a disciplined and distinguished ancestry and living a law-abiding life redeemed with love, devotion and the finer things of life, he could never face that condition described in the poem, and even if he did, he would not care to commit robbery or rioting to cure it, and 'loot it' out as he says: – "In a moment of fit and anger,/In desperation, I break the window-panes/Of shops, cars, and buses, loot them,/Grab them and rob the rich". We may let him off on the plea of poetic license, but this loose thinking is not in tune with the poet and needs to be pointed out as an aberration. It is the but raging anger of the idealist when he condescends to the terrible 'realities of living in the nether regions of earth. And in poems like 'Creation', (p.72), the poet poses questions sans answers, presenting an enigma which serves no purpose, and I am at a loss to understand what the poet aims at. And lastly, I am afraid Peeran's poems tend to be rather prosaic. In these days of Free Verse, when the poetic discipline has been destroyed in the name of modernity, and obfuscation's of what one has to say is the rule, it is refreshing to note clarity as the hallmark of Peeran's poetry, but a little more rhythm, a little more of what I shall refer to as poetic syntax, some conformity to form, even though with smart deviations, I would like to see in Peeran's poems. As each poet worth his name progresses, he carves out a distinctive style, and because Peeran has everything

else. I hope that before he hardens in to a pattern his own, this suggestion will serve to adorn his output. It is this humble reviewer's view that poetry must have the discipline of prose and the rhythm and resonance of music, besides a concentration of thought and illustration by images. Peeran has the talent, the inclination and the perseverance. It is a great thing that a busy civil servant like him finds time and leisure to engage himself in poetry, which is twice blessed, blessing him that gives and him that takes. In poems like 'Hallmarks of Civilisation', (p.45), Peeran sees the oneness of all religions like Islam, Christianity and Hinduism. And there are poems like Magnetic Attraction, (p. 37), where perhaps a kind of mystic DEVI concept works in to weave the 'Saguna and Nirguna' as well as 'Saroopa' and 'Aroopa' patterns of God in Hinduism. Obviously he has a liberal outlook with secular credentials, sharpened by a wide spectrum of reading.

This critique will not be complete without a glowing reference to the bunches of fine Haiku and Tankas given at the end of the book. The poet achieves an intimacy, concentration and sparkling therein, and produces succinct, interesting pieces replete with quotable quotes. Normally a rhyme scheme embellishes these lines, but Peeran seems to have no nose for that. And there are places where he deviates from the discipline of the prescribed form. On the whole, '*A Ray of Light*' is a readable, commendable piece of creative contribution to Indian English Poetry which shows the poet's talent for reflective writing. I wish the poet even greater success in his future creations.

Courtesy *Metverse Muse*, June-2003

*In Silent Moment*

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***In Silent Moment* – Dr. Manas Bakshi**

S.L. Peeran who is a judicial member of Customs, Excise and Gold (Control) Appellate Tribunal, Chennai, made a mark in the world of Indo-English poetry with his maiden venture *In Golden Times* in 2001. His latest collections 'A Ray of light' and *In Silent Moments* both published in 2002, from two different publications are proof enough of his talent and tenacity budding everyday in myriad dimensions of his poetic search.

To begin with, what strikes one most as revealing in Peeran's poetry is his distinct approach to the complexities of modern life rapped in present day society, to the artificial still fascinating traits of living, to "humanity and servitude/In patience and contentment' and, all this, dealt with a sophisticated philosophical outlook." That's why Peeran can articulate "The seed bears within, the plant of a rose/or a plant bearing a fruit sour./So also a person born is heavenly,/or carries traits to lead him to hell." (P54, *In Silent Moments*). We find its resonance in another poem

'when he refuses to bow before he Almighty/He is lost in a purgatory blinds' (p.23).

Reality casts its impact on Peeran as much as ideological ingredients. But Peeran knows the art to strike a balance between the two. This is so because thought ramification is a quality that has largely advanced so that ideas that pervaded his' earlier works do not fade away into limbo in his now poetical works, but develop

new vistas. As a sequel, subtle concepts pertinent today's socio-economic undercurrent become more dominant in his recent poetry for instance, "Cry baby cry, wail and sleep/For hunger has been very deep/you cry for milk and for bread/your poor mother is away for work/There is none to shed a tear/Nor share a pint of while milk" (p.75) or "Chill penury and justice burdened/Soaring sky rocketing prices/of consumer items. Now blood is cheaper/. Hungry child searches for food in dust bins' (p55, A Ray of Light)

Not only as a poet but also as a human being, Peeran never deviates from his stand-point to commitment to society. He is vocal 'about the odds and evils of our social system that produces 'Sultans of Present Day' and For them living in a large palatial house/In aristocracy in style with wealth/Is the only known way" of living a life/. To keep their thoughts secretive, tight lipped. And – who are they? In another fine poem, he pinpoints "Veerappan" and says 'I have outbeated Chambal Raja Gabbar Singh/Rani Phoolan Devi." Robinhoods of any ghats/I fool the police and the 'armed forces/Modern gadgets can't trace even my hair" (p.47, A Ray of, Light)

Undoubtedly, Peeran has used the supple responsiveness of the language to catch various moods and moments varying situation-both fruitful and inane. Sometimes stilted, ponderous outpourings his poetry is inspiring if not stimulating. You need proper protective/Safe guards and safety valves/Sava your souls. Equip yourselves; You need gum boots to walk on marshy lands (p.12) Peeran loves nature and beauty "The wintry chill freezes my bones and marrow/I shudder to think of it in summer, when the heat boils and my sweat flows/I think of cool spring with scented flowers" (p.39, *In Silent Moments*).

And this Love is not without his faith in humanism "Give, while the joys of life are bubbling/Share, while the sun's rays are shinning Love, while the fragrance of flowers fills the air"(p.59)

Peeran can say all this because he believes in the Supreme Power which everybody can feel if he looks for peace from within "Look to the inner-voice Its light is eternal/Its joys are multiple/Its

grace is divine” (P38) Busy man today, more material indeed, hardly he has time to “Purify the mind with crystal thoughts/’Honey-tongued glorify the Lord/with his guidance tread your path Melodious songs thrill your heart” (p.17).

Perhaps at this juncture when human values decline, faith fades out and love is not ‘A thinning in me,/a twinkling in eyes/And million cells in me, get pulled towards your love.’ Peeran cautions us against a situation – “Sinners of the world/Shake your greasy hands in joy/Sun is coming down. “In short, Peeran’s probing mind explores several areas of human concern and consternation and writes with such dexterity sincerity and devotion that his poetry becomes vibrant, his expression becomes candid. More so, because Peeran is not afraid of calling a spade a spade despite being a high government official.

Courtesy: *Bridge in Making*, May-Aug-2003

### ***In Silent Moments* – Dr. Srinivasa Rangaswami**

S.L. Peeran, a Judicial Member of the Customs, Excise and Gold (Control) Appellate Tribunal, is a fascinating combination of a humane, God-loving soul of rare refinement and sensitivity, suffused with Sufistic thoughts and enriched and mellowed by wide experience of life, garnered from a habit of deep reflection and detached observation, especially from the vantage point of his high judicial off ice. “Seek peace, love, goodwill/In calm stillness of the night/Deep meditation”, says Peeran somewhere. *In Silent Moments* obviously is the outcome of such meditation, when the mind is stilled and deep truths glow, from the depths of one’s being, on the horizon.

Poetry is an incantation of the soul, celebration of the abiding varieties of our human existence. It mirrors a perception of the world peculiar to each poet. What invests the present collection with special significance is the exciting fact that it affords us a glimpse of its author’s unique, colourful creative presence. Poetry is not merely putting together some clever lines. It is, like falling in love, a serious and blissful proposition. And Peeran’s poetry is born

out of the confrontation of his whole being with Reality – with the luminous truths of life as well as its manifestations. As the poet himself says, his poems are born from inner turmoils, inner sorrows, inner questionings, inner joys, inner frustrations and ecstasies. Speaking at a Seminar in Bangalore sometime ago, Poet Gordon Hindley observed:

I define poetry as that utterance which, apparently presenting a particular – an individual – thing or event, in fact emphasizes the universal experience within which the particular thing or event occurs. True poetry thus leads us beyond the personal towards an even more immediate yet greater awareness. It brings about an awakening; an enriching of our nature.

And proceeding to cite some specimens of poetry which according to him accomplished this, the speaker quoted among others some of Peeran's verses. Can there be a better tribute paid to a poet?

Peeran is a delectable fusion of a serene elevated soul with the sensitivity and sensuousness of an aesthetic being. A genuine reverence and wonder for Nature and an all-enveloping love run through all his utterances. With moving faith he voices his fervent hope:

Somewhere, someone, some day  
Will sow the seeds of affection  
To bloom as fragrant flowers  
To fill the gardens of love.

Prayerfully he wishes "Let the streams of love/Flow within, to cleanse the being."

A deep piety marked by virtuousness is the Poet's view of an ideal life. He sings:

Life led with righteous living  
In humanity and servitude  
In patience and contentment  
Enjoys honeyed fruits of heaven.

This state of joyous innocence represents to me the quintessence of Poet Peeran. Peeran's voice is not one of angry protest; nor is he given to haranguing his erring fellowmen. He is one of a genuine lover of humanity, in anguish over what he sees around him in the country and the world in our day. "Somewhere, someone, someday/Will hear my lonely sad voice", is all his hope. As a God-immersed soul, he knows:

When the swords are out  
And you are required  
To pass through untrodden path,  
When the bugles have been blown  
And your enemies are out  
When the dark clouds hover  
Without any silver lining,  
With gathering storms and tempests  
Lightning thunder and tornadoes  
When your heart has melted  
And courage has given in

It is the same flair for flashing vivid full-blown visuals that one finds in the description of the primitive man in *Back to Fold With Zest* and in the long four-page poem *Birth And Growth For Total Merger* which parades in rapid succession life in all its stages – from the moment of pre-natal conception to the final attainment of communion with the Supreme Being. This striking feature you meet with, in fact, all over in this volume.

The crop of Haiku and Tankas figuring in this book speak of the command the poet has over these art forms. Particularly the haiku are a treasure trove of priceless pearls. These precious vignettes of life glisten like self-illuminating pearls. The poet has captured the soul of this genre in his compositions. As the master-practitioner of this Japanese art form. Dr. Mohd. Fakhruddin pithily puts it, "what is below the surface is important in haiku – the words float on the surface, the emotions below". The haiku presented go over the whole spectrum of life experience and human emotions. To sample a few, a haiku runs: 'Life is a mirage/Storms blowing of dry leaves, twigs/To oblivion'. Another sorrows: 'Humanity weeps at/A mad scientist's creation/Atom bombs,



cloning.' Yet another talks of 'Parents in night clubs/Teenagers in dancing halls/Pubs for more taxes'. Still another speaks of 'The onset of youth/The eternal fire brewing/Yearning for the flesh'. The sensuous poet comes up with this, another gem: 'When eyes shut, lips sealed/Storms, turmoils of life subside/Become motionless'. The judicial persona in the poet alerts: 'Hold the pans even/With judicial decorum/Save democracy'.

To quote but one tanka:  
Beautiful garden  
Jewel of heaven on earth  
It was here, here, here:  
Ah: Shalimar: lost beauty

Peeran is a mellowed individual, in consuming love with life with all its beauty – and yes, its ugliness as well. A haiku of his speaks of a moth:

A candle flickers  
A moth circumbulates, burns  
In ever deep love.

One is left wondering whether the author of this book here is not speaking of himself!

*A Call from Unknown*

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***A Call from Unknown– Dr. R.K.Singh***

When S.L. Peeran approached me to write a Foreword to his latest collection, I could not convince myself that I was competent to preface, what Krishna Srinivas mentions, the many-splendoured exuberance” of his Muse. I also feared would end up repeating what I had already pointed out while reviewing his earlier collection(s).

That the poet is critical, philosophical, reflective and interpretative of his milieu and influences; that he is an idealist and has a sense of commitment; that he stands for values like love, truth, tolerance, charity, justice, peace, harmony, humility, and healthy relationships are some of the characteristics too obvious to be ignored. So, what is new that I could say about the poems in *A Call From the Unknown*? It is his spiritual realisations.

Marked by historical, mythical and spiritual continuity, Peeran’s narratives of praise and thanksgiving – ‘Test of Love’, ‘Birth of Moses’, ‘Birth of Jesus’, and ‘Birth of Prophet Muhammad’ – fill up a gap in Indian English poetry. We have long poems on mythical/religious figures of Hindus but none on Muslim faith, except perhaps one by Krishna Srinivas, Muhammad: A long poem on Islam (1983). Peeran seeks to show the essential continuity in the religions of Moses, Christ and Muhammad and fulfillment of God’s promise and prophecy about His manifestations at different intervals. In fact, the poems on Moses and Christ serve as a perspective to the poem on Muhammad, “a manifestation of

ultimate truth”, who appeared to lay the foundation for love, equality, justice, humanity and compassion, preaching unity of mankind, universal brotherhood, universal love, peace and harmony.

Peeran as a seeker of Truth understands that the divine Avatars on Earth have been the true educators of humankind. Without their guidance, the human race could not have raised itself above the level of the animal. And, if we forget the teachings of Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Moses, Christ or Muhammad, we will simply descend to the laws of the jungle.

Our pas this story is full of instances to prove this point. Whenever people practised love, justice, truthfulness and other human virtues as taught by Divine Souls, they have not only found personal peace and happiness but have been able to live in harmony with others, achieving both spiritual and material progress. As soon as these essential qualities have been forsaken, prejudice, greed and selfishness have taken hold of people’s heart, and the inevitable consequence has been war, poverty and downfall of the society as a whole.

Peeran reminds us that Prophets like Moses, Christ and Muhammad have been the mediums of God’s infinite love, mercy and grace for human kind. They all appeared at different times in different parts of the world and teach the same eternal truths. They are one. Prophet Muhammad reveals in the Qur’an: “I am all the Prophets”. They are, in reality, one and the same because each is a pure channel through which grace of God has reached human kind.

The poet also understands that spiritual laws such as love for God and service to one’s fellowman, trust and hope in God and obedience to His commands, truthfulness, honesty, sincerity and humility are bedrocks of Dharma, the very foundation upon which depends the progress of our soul on its journey towards our Creator. They cannot change.

Hence Peeran’s appreciative search for Buddha’s middle path, Mahavira’s ahimsa, love and grace, Ashoka’s charity, Rama’s

valour, Krishna's truthfulness, Nanak's brotherhood, and Muhammad's grace, "to see the shining Truth" and redeem himself.

As a devout Muslim, Peeran's emphasis is on the inner experience, inner life, inner realisation. His meditative mind scans memory, with a sense of gratitude for the constancy with which Love asserts itself again and again in moments of trial and crisis (of. 'Test of Love', 'Intense Love' etc.) He rediscovers himself through the redeemer's touch just as he synthesises past experiences in the present. Apparently he may seem to give an expose of the truth of Ultimate Reality, or world, but what is significant is the way he raises certain questions of social relevance and poetically makes out his answers.

For example, read his poem "My Religion":

Yes, I do have a religion  
 I do practise it  
 Say my 'Namaz'  
 Turn towards 'Kaaba' Recite 'Kalima'  
 Do 'Zikr'  
 Observe 'fasting' Give 'Filtr', 'zakat'  
 Yearn for circumambulation  
 Around the Holy 'Kaaba'  
 But my rites, my symbols Are acts of love  
 To foster oneness  
 To increase my yearnings  
 To look upon mankind  
 As children of Adam and Eve  
 Not for creating apathy  
 Discernment and Distraction  
 For cataclysmic schism  
 For disharmony and strife

Peeran composes his poems in "slow measured rhythmic tones", conveying the eternal message of Allah, the lone Creator, Guide, giver, Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Ever Compassionate and Merciful, who, through His Prophet, reveals the Holy Book to purify the soul and teach civility, as also regulates social and community life of his followers.

But the poet also appears as a Sufi, who is at home in all religions; he is in the world and yet not of it, free from ambitions, greed, intellectual pride and prejudice. Like a mystic poet, he devotes himself to understanding and reflecting the central mystery, with trust in simple wisdom; like a spiritual poet he conjoins thought and meditation, work and play, action and inaction, and seeks affinity with the mystical current so that he could be transformed by it. In his poems, every thought has an action; and understanding comes through love and faith in the divine, with trust in His Grace. His consciousness rises to the highest he is capable of and he experiences the divinity in himself.

The moralist in Peeran warns people not to be 'left out', 'wasted out', or 'lose opportunities' but learn Truth, seek peace within, enliven their spirit. He expresses his concern about the rising nuclear threat, people's refusal to be humble and kind, and readily yielding to ego, power, vanity, haughtiness, treachery, and "becoming a victim of their own cage". In one of his reflections he pleads: "Let us fight back/Our selfish in difference/And extend help/To men in distress". He sounds critical of the widespread hypocrisy and insincerity, and pleads for simplicity, courage of conviction, and earning "respect through character".

Most people need to recognise the enemy within, the taboos, superstitions, prejudices, jealousies, desires, hates, and all those egocentric behavioural "shackles and chains" that burn life "like a candle from both ends". Like a sage musician poet, Peeran sounds the Death's Trumpet and warns: "Alas, alas, the time is lost/The white dove with stalk of peace/Now engaged with wings clipped/The road of peace lies drowned in sea of turmoil". The poet is moved by the misery and suffering of millions of destitutes just as he is aware of life's paradoxes. His humanity revolts to notice:

Man has braved for space odyssey  
 To land on moon, mars and journey beyond  
 But failed to catch Veerappan, the dreaded bandit  
 End rigging, horse trading, scams, water shortage.

His every day experiences of encounters with vainglorious civil servants, exploiters of the poor and needy, polluters of nature's beauty, disrupters of communal harmony, betrayers of love, and all those who deny "our humble citizens (for) a peaceful living "make him realise: "Silence is a means of salvation/An alternative to sure devastation".

The poems in the volume reflect a burst of the divine, a deeper personal experience of divinity from the Unknown, through struggles for fulfillment of various desires, ambitions and enterprises, and realisation inside that it is only in love that one can find fulfillment. It is ultimately the all-encompassing Love that emerges "like a full moon shining white" and one tastes "the manna, dew and honey". Sympathetic and sensitive readers should find the poems of Peeran inspiring and uplifting.

#### **After Word to *A Call from Unknown* by M.S. Venkata Ramaiah**

Whenever I dwell in thoughts in search of meanings for certain terminologies with personal experience attached to it, the same and face immediately that flashes on my mind's screen is of Mr. S.L. Peeran. One always gets delighted while discussing or conversing with him. His profound knowledge, deep studies, deeper analysis, unassuming nature and eagerness to place before the other like-minded person, the whole thought process taking shape of well moulded, well-meaning words rhythmically, makes the later naturally dumbfounded. His body, mind and intellect always synchronise to allow the processes in his mind to arrive at pure synthesis, such that the thoughts delivered are of fine fabric. What all the knowledge can give a person could be, seen in him, in his simplicity, gentleness and respectful cordiality. He is able to maintain a balance between the professional growth and the steep rising capability to think and express, both taking place at an appreciable pace. One will like the 'darshan' of his contentment in life and pure offerings of highly matured thoughts pouring irresistibly. He picturises the poems with an unseen camera with appropriate words which arrange themselves as though the order

was pre-set. Thus he has the gift of making fortunate discoveries with all sincerity.

These confirm while going through more than one hundred poems appearing in this collection. The entire range of 'Navarathanas' are found in these poems. Some are gems, some are pearls, some are rubies and so on. Well-knit perceptions on the Great Prophets have made the collection to attain sanctity with appealing expositions in his typical style. Much more poetic excellences from him are sure to enlighten the poetry lovers in the future. And it is my wish too.

***A Call from The Unknown* – Bernard M. Jackson**

We need hopes to overcome failures,  
Desolate feelings and to turn our blues  
To overcome the bitter taste of defeat;  
To maintain the garden of virtues (Hopes and Dreams)

Immersed in the philosophy of Sufist theological precepts, S.L. Peeran has emerged from the dying embers of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Indian English poetry, like a veritable phoenix. Here, indeed, is a poet with a sense of mission, a writer imbued with an all-pervading spirituality which is neither doctrinaire nor controversial, and yet is forthright and whole hearted in facing up to the shortfalls and deficiencies so glaringly apparent in our modern-day materialistic society. Peeran's poetical works, though published fairly late in life, when compared with writings of contemporary writers, have nevertheless been published in rapid succession during the last few years ("*A Call From The Unknown*" is his 6<sup>th</sup> collection) and few poets in India have succeeded in drawing such universal praise from notable critics and review writers in so short a space of time. As Dr. R.K. Singh has incisively commented, when reviewing for POET. The poet is critical, philosophical, and reflective of his milieu and influences."

It is precisely these qualities that endear a writer of this calibre to his readers, for here is a journeying soul in search of Truth:

One has to undergo severe  
 Mental and physical sufferings  
 Agony and turmoils in life  
 Before arriving at the Truth  
 A testing time, a period  
 Of severe anguish and pain (Peace Within)

In his poem, 'My Religion'. Peeran spells out in clear terms the liturgical practices of his own religion, but stresses that he takes an essentially global view of humanity, as a whole, stemming from the fact that the whole of Mankind is united in the bond of familial relationship, in that we are the seed of Adam. So he tells us, his rites and symbols are 'acts of love to foster oneness':

Not for creating apathy  
 Discernment and Distraction:  
 For cataclysmic schism:  
 For disharmony and strife (My Religion)

Peeran is unusual as a poet in that his own artistic perception of the world he knows and loves is not ascribed to colour and corresponding romanticism, but rather to appraisal and apportionment in degrees of light and shade. Light, he tells us, is brightness and energy, the very unifying force of creation, and the positive manifestation of God's awareness of all things. But in the wake of light, there is ever shadow; so that where there is Good there is always the threat of Evil:

The brighter the light  
 The darker is the shadow.  
 Mightier a person  
 Greater is his problem (Smooth Life)

In yet another poem ('Light and Shade') he promulgates the universality of this profound theory, still further:

Where there is creation there is destruction  
 Where there is life there is death  
 Where there is system there is chaos  
 Where there is light there is shadow  
 Where there is desire there is hatred  
 There there is blessing there is curse (Light and shade)



This beautiful poem must, of course, be studied in its entirety for, introspectively, many will see here a true complement to the Christian prayer of St. Francis of Assisi – now quoted by peoples of all religions because of its superb, yet simple, humanitarian wider-spread implications.

I was greatly impressed with Peeran's poems on the 'Birth Of Moses'. 'Birth of Jesus' and 'Birth of Mohammed', respectively for beyond the confines of doctrinaire teaching, his did active outpourings in verse set out to proclaim a divine purpose in life and a global sense of spiritual realisation which needs to be readdressed by peoples of all religions for the common good of the family of Man.

Prof. Dr. R. K. Singh in his excellent Foreward to this remarkable collection tells us:

'Peeran as seeker of Truth, understands that the divine Avatars on Earth have been the true educators of humankind. Without their guidance, the human race could not have itself above the level of the animal.'

The far-sighted spiritual perceptions of S. L. Peeran have been instantly recognised and fervently encouraged by a growing number 'of influential poetry magazine editors throughout India; and M. S. Venkata Ramaiah, Editor of Bizz Buzz (and publisher of this fine work) pays fitting tribute (In his Afterword) to Peeran's unflagging zeal and ability as a part of distinction. Here is spirituality in poetry, the like of which is seldom witnessed in the British contemporary verse of today. This sixth collection surely ranks as Peeran's greatest literary achievement to date. Acclaim for Peeran's poetry rests with his readers; the compelling power of his words will endear his works to many in the years that lie ahead.

Courtesy: *Cyber Literature* Volume xiv No-2 Dec-2004

### ***A Call from Unknown– Srinivasa Rangaswami***

A Call from the Unknown is the sixth and the latest collection of poems by Shri S.L. Peeran, whose prodigious output – of six

volumes of poems in just over two years – must be the envy of many a poet writing today. This collection, like all his previous ones, is in the nature of spontaneous, uninhibited outpourings from the poet's heart, a prism reflecting the many hues of his core personality – his deep, unwavering faith in the Supreme Power, his passion for communion with that power as an ever-present yearning, a central consciousness that sees everything in Nature as so many manifestations of the Omnipresent Being, an unshakeable belief in the virtues of purity, love, humility and virtuous living, eschewing conceit, greed, chicanery, deceit and double-dealing so common in the present day world. Like Tukaram, Kabir and other God-intoxicated souls, Peeran sings out his heart.

Shri Peeran is a devout Muslim and, like all true followers of every faith, sees his path, as one among several, all leading to the same Ultimate Goal. “Yes, I do have a religion, I do practice it. But my rites, my symbols/Are acts of love to foster oneness, “the Poet proclaims with transparent sincerity.

In the advent of Moses, Jesus, Prophet Mohammed and other avatar purushas at intervals through centuries, Peeran sees the infinite Mercy of the Lord and the fulfillment of His promise to manifest himself, as occasions arise, to restore order in society and redeem mankind. The long tracts lucidly recounting the context of appearance and the essentials of the teachings of these Divine Messengers constitute a significant section of the present volume.

In Peeran's poetry what stands out all the time is Peeran himself – the gentle humane soul, suffused with pure love, ardent love, for the Merciful Creator and frontierless love of all mankind. Even in the hour of tribulation, the true bhakta could only see the grace of God, a reminder of His intense love and compassion for his devotee. “I loved you, I remembered you,/You were my succor, my Redeemer,” he cries out, in deep gratitude, “when I lost hopes from all,” he repeats elsewhere “A divine voice gave strength and guided me”.

The poet is a man of love, with his own dreams. He would be content to be the lone ranger, the long adventurer, the lone man of

love, sailing all alone, treading his own lonely path, ready to face the storms and tempests on the way. His love looks for no return, is not possessive, or demanding. His prayer is:

“Give me the love, that isn’t selfish,  
That isn’t demanding;  
that isn’t jealous,  
That is ever pure and sublime.”

“Let us fight back the hatred that fills the heart and mind,” he would exhort, “Let us fight back our selfish indifference and extend help to men in distress”. Love is a candle of hope to show light towards eternal life.

‘Our greatest enemy is ourselves,’ the Poet reminds us, ‘Our beliefs, our rites, our” icons,/our behaviour, our taboos,/our superstitions, our manners,/our ego, our anger, our jealousies,/our lust, our desires, our hates.’ ‘Let as cast away (these), break away from these shackles and chains,’ the Poet would plead, to ‘release our hearts from them/to enable the springs of love/to flow.’

Peeran is not Utopian. He knows life is a picture of light and shadow where love and hatred, joy and grief, orderliness and chaos, growth and decay, wealth and poverty, honesty and corruption, co-exist. Still there is hope. You can’t shut the light that pierces the surrounding darkness. A life of piety, humility, of truthful living should see you sail through smoothly, the Poet would seem to assure his fellowmen.

Life has its own quota of disappointments and disillusionments, in love and human relationships. The Poet has met them. And much more. We find the responses of a sensitive observant being to life around in the form of reflections on a variety of subjects and human situations, or well-meant words of caution or advice, all the time harping upon the abiding virtues and values that should alone lead to the right path and true happiness. ‘Return to His fold’ is the Poet’s recurring and ultimate message to his fellowmen. ‘Look up to the Lord, the Merciful... grieve not, curse not, be patient, turn your heart to pure love, seek His Grace, you

shall find solace, peace of mind and wisdom,' he tells the errant prodigals.

The Poet is not fascinated by those who appear like meteorites, shine for a while, only to disappear from the horizon and merge with darkness. His identification is with the lowliest of lowly, 'the impoverished, poor wretched souls'. He speaks in their voice: "Our bodies smell/with unkempt hair/torn patched clothes/diseased bodies... But world's richest do not/tempt us to steal/nor our anger to kill/nor jealousy to harm... A divine light dwells/in our hearts/to console, give solace/to be at peace...."

Finally, Sliri Peeran's poetry raises the question "What is the true mission of Poetry, or rather, its truer destiny?". It is, to my mind, to remind us of the richness of our priceless human inheritance, to awaken us to the meaning and purpose of human existence and its ultimate destination. Inasmuch as Peeran, by his life and his poetry, seeks to do this, he is worth listening to.

Courtesy: *Poet* July-2004

*New Frontiers*

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***New Frontiers – Dr. M. Fakhruddin***

Poetry is an expression of strong feelings that gets unleashed from within as an insuppressible energy. Poet uses words to express himself as clearly as possible, as simple and effectively as he could, using metaphor or simile or syntax. Brevity compresses the thought and usage of images, symbolism makes the contents of the chosen subject powerful.

A poet evolves his own mode of expression through words. Words play an important role in writing poetry in the language of poet's choice like the paint and brush for a painter, the voice for a singer, the body movement and facial expressions for a dancer.

Poets who master the art of using words see even what letter a word has as various letters have quite different emotional connotations-s shows hatred, disgust, I and v soft affection.

If the poet knows the craft of writing poetry in various structural forms and different styles of expression, then he chooses one and makes his poetry not only classically melodious but also universally accepted pattern.

The command over the language and the experience of life helps the poet inculcate powerful insights in his poetry as and when a thought or a chain of thoughts on a particular theme flashes to him layer after layer like the layers of sunlight. Above them all, inspiration triggers a poet's imagination and takes him beyond oblivion or makes him fly across the realms of fantasy.

If the poet possesses the power of intuition, consciously or unconsciously he chooses such words which imbibe magical effect in the minds of the readers or shall we say in the minds of the hearers?

S.L. Peeran is bi-lingual poet. He writes in Urdu and in English very effectively. He is yet another Poets International's discovery. Years ago, when I found his poetry in Urdu thought-provoking, a casual suggestion was made to him to write in English for worldwide readership. He immediately switched over to English and wrote hundreds of poems and acquired a distinction of an author of six books of poetry so far!

I was rather delighted and honoured, when he requested me to write the Foreword to his seventh volume *New Frontiers*. I have been reading and publishing his poems, in 'Poets International', right from the day he started writing poetry in English. You can easily find Sufism in his verses. He has carved out a style for himself. His expressions are very simple but powerful. The usage of syntax and rhyme scheme in his poems create an impact in the minds of the readers. Naturally, he gives more importance to the content than the structural form while expressing his thoughts. His poetry in this particular volume covers a very wide range of subjects portraying not only life's vicissitudes, persons of myriad colours, master and servant relationship, dawn of enlightenment, ego to zero, but also love and unspoken words.

He is a keen observer, and analyses the spoken words whenever he meets men who matters:

No, he isn't a crazy man or ill of mind  
He is too conscious and perfectly sane  
He is on a high intellectual plane  
With a broad prophetic vision.

Life is learning and knowledge is power. The poet reveals how to discover new vistas:

To discover new vistas of knowledge,  
To work and tread on fresh paths,  
To lay in calmness, when storm blows

And for patience and virtues to overwhelm you.

Speaking about evil people who hide truth, the poet says:  
The truth is hidden, camouflaged  
I am likened to chameleons, changing colours  
Some call me a croton plant sans flowers  
Some compare me to a vicious snake.

His attempt in writing Japanese traditional verses such as 'Haiku' and 'Tanka' deserves appreciation.

Man in high places  
White snow on high altitudes

Melt in hot seasons.

This haiku has not only 17 syllables in 5,7,5 form but also has zen element in it. In addition, the usage of symbolic words such as 'high places', 'snow', 'melt' has made the contents more meaningful.

Likewise, the tanka too is written structurally perfect and the content in each of the tanka is powerful:

Spring time is playtime  
Fragrance emitting in air  
To cheer frozen hearts.  
Roses, roses everywhere  
Delight the hearts of lovers

I hope the readers will find this book very interesting and mesmerising from beginning till end.

### ***New Frontiers – Dr. Shujaat Hussain***

Peeran's poetry is a catalogue of splendours and excellences.

Dr. Krishna Srinivas says that Asia is the birth place of poetry. The first word AUM-familiarly known as OM-was born in India and Asia has birthed immortal epics-Ramayana, Mahabharata, Gita, Bible, Holy Qur'an and other Scriptures – containing all unexcelled excellences of Eastern Mysticism. These epics have deep and indelible impression on the minds of the Asians. There is

obvious impact of the Holy Qur'an on the writing of S.L. Peeran. Every sincere seeker of the truth, would like to listen to what the great Asian poet and scholar S. L. Peeran says in his book *New Frontiers*. Its voice is from the soul which travels from the mind to the heart then touches the soul gently which purifies and stirs conscience to work for the noble cause.

Not only the Holy Qur'an but the Ramayana has also deep impression on his poetry. What the Ramayana teaches us exactly the same message Peeran's poetry conveys and enlightens us about the abstract and abstruse principles of advaita philosophy, moral and ethical values, duties, and ideals in individual, social and political life.

Real poetry is the inner voice of entire mankind. "It is", says Carlyle, "not only a criticism of life, it is the very truth of life-very essence of man's noble quest for reaching the kingdom of Eternal Bliss". "Poetry is the voice of man's soul", said Swinburne. And Bridges cried out with great wonder, "Poetry is God, and God is poetry!"

It is the most important function of poetry to induce in us a sense of the significance and the meaningfulness of life. C. E. M. Joad quotes Radhakrishnan in *The Counter Attack from the East*: "We know how to fly in air" like birds, we know how to swim in water like fishes, but we do not know how to live on earth". Poetry enshrines and immortalises these ideas and ideals which urge us "to live and to love". Poetry invokes in us the ideas of the larger beauty, justice, and charity of the universe. Poets give us the power to know, to love, to appreciate and to understand the life and the world in a new way.

We find these ideas and ideals in theory and practice by S.L. Peeran who is a scholar and one of the bi-lingual poets in the field of English and Urdu poetry. *New Frontiers* consists of 93 poems and 17 Haiku, are the mirror of his sublime thoughts There are seven books to his credit A master of mighty pen that leaves indelible imprint, immaculate images on each and every page that will keep on reminding us to the centuries to come. Its universality speaks its



longevity. In the real sense, this book is a store of his wisdom brought by toil and study and the skilful delineation of his observation and laden with treasure for every mental want.

Most of the critics of poetry say that the poets have put their mind and heart in the poetry but here it is quite fantastic that S. L. Peeran's practice is, "poetry is the voice of man's soul".

Should I call him a poet? Yes, of course, in the strict sense of the term I call S. L. Peeran a poet because he is at once more sensitive, with a wider range of feeling; and is better in expressing what he feels, and move others to share their feelings. What has Robert Browning said is suited to Peeran.

What does it all mean, poet? Well. Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell What we felt only: you expressed You hold things beautiful the best, And pace them in rhyme so, side by side.

He is really such a great poet who makes the readers feel what he feels himself about a thing when he writes. It is appreciable because while reading him the readers begin to feel something, the very inspiration which had stirred the mind of the poet. The readers feel, as it were, lifts up the heights of feeling and imagination possessed by him and the readers share in his vision. For examples, when Shelley laments: "I fall upon the thorns of life, I bleed!" The readers begin to search their own wounds and become Peeran for the moment the readers read his poetry.

Poems like *Alas! Mighty Terror!*, *Strike Of Terror And Grief*, *End Of Tyranny* and *Ah! Gujarat!* are the perfect example of the feelings that the readers share:

A few lines from *Alas! Mighty Terror*: The tallest tower of the  
might on globe  
Crumbling down like a pack of cards,  
Lo, the free flying p/gion of peace  
Caught in fire, turning to ashes.

The following lines stir the mind, touch the soul and definitely heart rending:

Outbreak of pestilence,  
 diseases, flood of refugees  
 The jewel of peace,  
 shattered to smithereens.  
 Humanity thrown asunder everywhere.  
 Garden of love turned to sandy dunes.  
 The firm grip of vise holding tight.

Peeran has woven his poetry with beads like love, peace, hope, compassion, sympathy, kindness, grace, beauty, violence, terror, grief, harmony, fraternity, humanity, integrity, enlightenment, callousness, mercy, devil, and humility, suggestion, prayer, suffering, exploitation, harassment and torture.

“A New Message” contains marvellous tone and texture. It guarantees new horizon of culture. Leave behind what has happened so far. Look beyond it and cultivate a new and congenial culture with spirits, aim and ambitions of open minds, new light and enthusiasm. As the “Thunder” speaks in the poem “Wasteland” of T.S. Eliot likewise “The Heaven Thus Speak” in Peeran’s poem:

Enliven the spirits, with aim  
 And ambitions of open minds  
 Allow new light to enter yourselves  
 Drive away darkness  
 Unite frontiers of love  
 Under able leadership  
 With love, zeal, enthusiasm  
 You can create a real new world,  
 That is not an Utopia,  
 But, where you fulfil your dreams.

God gives a sign, by thunder bringing rain. And the message of the thunder is three fold. Da, Dayadh ram, Damyata-self-surrender, sympathy, self-control. These three are the ways to salvation. Here when heaven speaks, definitely heavenly blessings are to be showered. But the ways and means he suggests are to be strictly followed.

“Soften Hearts for Tranquility” is a grace of Peeran wherein he evaluates love and therefore it reflects the properties which are the ingredients of the following lines:

Love is a rare fragrance  
That emanates from sweet hearts  
Love tolerates, forgives, sympathises  
Shows compassion and is all embracing.

Speech is silver and silence is gold that is the message in the poem *Unspoken Words*. Have a look at:

Their silence speaks in million words  
Unspoken words leave their own trail,  
Like Buddha dangling in solitude.

As we know God has blessed men innumerable things such as beauty, brain, wealth, health, strength, popularity, gift of the gab and longevity etc. but in view of Peeran blessed are those as he says in “Blessed Hearts Amidst Life’s Chaos”:

Blessed are the men with light of wisdom  
With clear paths to tread softly  
With sweet words and serene mind  
Without malice in their lovely hearts.

There is a fascinating portrayal of the people in the poem *A Knave* who have occupied the centre stage. They do not believe in virtues so they are bent upon to take the buttress of “malice, wickedness, chicanery, cunningness, have become cruel, sly, secretive, bereft of sincerity and honesty, cheat anyone at a drop of hat and spin tales to mesmerise. They have become devout of the principle of “by hook or by crook” to remain in power. However, that is not the end of the roads of virtues. Virtuosity subdues evil crafts. Peeran discovers new and novel idea that is practicable and creditable while facing the situation like *A Knave*.

To lay in calmness, when storm blows  
And for patience and virtues to overwhelm you.  
The only golden rule  
To shun being enemy of your own soul.  
To rule over your own self with controls  
Is to drown passions and anger in nothingness.

“Faith” is the mirror of his faith. It is fair and unflinching that is the asset of his creation and I have reason to believe that his poem attains eternal quality. Atheism is quashed and believers enjoy. Following lines are to be remembered before going to mosque, temple, church or gurdwara:

That is pure and sublime  
That is truthful and just  
It is that which sees and judges  
That Who loves and cares  
That Omnipresent-but invisible  
That one Who kindles the heart  
Look within yourselves and find-Him.

His themes of the poems show that he does not write poetry for pleasure and publicity. There is a purpose which compels him day in and day out to write. He writes poetry to propagate positive aspects which are good and useful to mankind. Under the shadow of it one can lead a happy life. And what may be more than this in the world where demons i.e. Super Power with nuclear warheads has captured the land, seas and space and from where monitoring movements of human beings.

“Poor Rustics” is a paradoxical poem in nature. He describes the qualities that the poor inherit those are awkward and to be called rustic but truthfulness lies with them. What a great virtue it is! He God in heaven like it. It doesn't matter they are without knowledge, mannerless and poor. It is important at the time when their business and work is evaluated and considered of worthiness.

“Wonderful Place” is a poem wherein Peeran has tried to present his own world of work place to live in. How should it be? What will be happened there? He opines that let it be there as it is. There must be consideration of gold as a gold, ash as an ash, evil as an evil and fool as a fool. The sky must be above the head and the earth under the feet. Then the course will automatically be smooth and pleasing. Partiality and prejudice spoils the game. The following lines are worth observing:

Where brilliance is noticed.  
And hard work is rewarded.  
Let there be streams of joys flowing  
Let there be creams of virtue growing.

He is a very keen observer. When he finds against human beings and what is dangerous for the country, he sits not idle, on the contrary he becomes ferocious and fearlessly expresses his views through his poetry. His heart bleeds seeing the deterioration that is taking place in the country. Nothing seems possible. Progress cannot be made. Let us see present scenario in the following lines:

Is it possible for you to breath fresh air?  
In a country polluted with corruption,  
Deep in mire, sans peace and culture,  
Wherein every corner, a devil waits to tease.

Peeran's poetry is a precious gift to the suppressed and exploited persons to emerge as victorious in the manner that "A man can be destroyed but cannot be defeated". This principle and norm of lives will rejuvenate and will be able to defeat the devils on the earth.

Poetry has, thus, a unique value in brightening an strengthening life. As a tonic that invigorates the withered soul of an individual in his unceasing struggle in his materialistic world, as a soul, as a product of sheer beauty for perennial delight, and as a beacon to what is transcendent, poetry has a function which can be discharged by nothing else in the world. Without it the soul of man will have lost something Peeran's poetry is a catalogue of splendours and excellences because it deals with love, peace, hope, fraternity, harmony, delight, wisdom, beauty, prosperity and what is good and useful to human beings. Moreover, the elements that make poetry grand are found in abundance such as symbols, images, lyricism, simile, metaphor, rhyme, melody, rhythm, spontaneity, men, women and power of auditory imagination, both for beauty and sound and richness of connotation and human feelings and thought in astonishing style. Whatever he depicts and delineates it becomes alive. Besides, Peeran's view is similar to W.H. Hudson, "The world's great poets have always recognised that

poetry is out of life, belongs to life, exists for life". Matthew Arnold supports this view that "the greatness of a poet lies in his power application of ideals of life, to the question, how to live". What exactly demands the function of poetry that emanates from the poetry of S.L. Peeran. The readers and the lovers of poetry take them as sumptuous dish and they nourishes it. The readers require stamina and skill to dive deep into his realm and find the pearls in his poetry. The Shakespeare of India, Mohammed Fakhruddin in Foreword of this book has rightly said that the readers will find this book mesmerising and his approach is positive and generous minded. Definitely the ideal reader will recognise the merits of this book. There is much more in this book as it is a full display of the united force of study and genius of a great accumulation of materials. No scholar will afford to ignore this book.

The beneficiaries of this book are human beings. An intelligent reading of this will create, re-affirm and re-enforce faith in the life on earth holy and heavenly and will not only earn the divine blessings for himself/herself but will also be a blessing to the world when even two minds do not yoke together to work for the betterment of themselves.

The passionate reading of *New Frontiers* attracts, astounds and in the end enforces reverence. Thus his works will go on exercising through the ages its most potent influence. Sincere reading of this book provides those dynamic principles of life and the practical ethics for the daily conduct of life suited to the whole world.

### ***New Frontiers* – Patricia Prime**

*New Frontiers* is S.L. Peeran's seventh collection of poems in English, and demonstrates in detail what was already evident – a master hand at the art. It's pretty fine volume of complex and skilful poetry, with a good ear attuned to some fine idea throughout.

The book begins with a foreword by Dr. M. Fakhruddin (Editor. *Poets International*) in which he states. "You can easily find Sufism in his verses. He has carved out a style for himself. His

expressions are very simple but powerful”. Peeran himself offers a preface in which he quotes from several reviews of work, from Dr. I.H. Rizvi, Dr. C.L. Khatri, to Dr. K. Srinivas, among others.

However, I’m not completely enthused by everything in this 100 – page offering. As usual in much Indian English Poetry some of the material is in need of at least to my ear and eyes, another draft or two, but the majority of the collection more than compensates for those poems where – the command of English lets the work down. But this slightest of caveats can be put aside and we can turn to the strengths of the poetry.

As the title suggests (at least on one level) many of these poems are essentially about those moments, fissures or boundaries which may be said to define the essence of living fully within human consciousness, both rationally and emotionally. For Peeran, these *New Frontiers*, borders between settled and unsettled countries, present a space of becoming or quickening.

In poetic values this is conveyed mostly, in Peeran’s case, by way he thinks of and through metaphor, allied to distinctive rhythmic structures. And while he plays here and there with the literalising of the meaning of metaphor, he never merely literalisms, and never merely finishes a metrical effect for the sake of form. Peeran’s shifts of meaning via metaphor do take us to new spaces, for example in the opening poem “Lost Genius”

Oh! His grief and woes are oceanic deep  
Quite different from ordinary anguishes  
It is too difficult for one to understand  
Pathos and distress reaching its zenith

It is in such poems where this is best achieved that Peeran’s voice is most impressive.

So while he literally takes us in the space of a few pages from “memory’s lane”, “tales of miseries and sufferings”, “the ruins of bygone times” to “a cool running stream”, “the warmth of your heart”, and “the joys emanating from completion of duty”, he manages poetically to translate us to a realm where these common places of everyday life, through and feeling, are newly comprehended.

Moreover, in many of his poems I felt myself strikingly focussed on ideas becoming, quickening, if you like, into emotion. So in "To Tortured Souls".

Tyranny, terror and torture  
Millions sent to gas chambers  
Burnt alive, slaughtered, killed,  
Driven away ruthlessly, mercilessly.

The poet asks who will wash away the emotions of torture, death and the sins of the perpetrators. The fine poem "Unspoken Words" creates mood of extraordinary fascination with the poor and illiterate modulating into a brooding unease about how precarious life can be:

They limp like the ships of the desert  
Like Bedouins gazing Nature  
Collecting manna and nectar in wilderness  
And holding as pearls in their closed heart.

These ideas are not new to poetry, but the modulation of moods is highly effective, and arresting. Strong too are the poems where quotidian events, often involving terror, grief, lack of the will to live, cheerless moments, are related only to demonstrate a series of sliding emotional shades, some of which challenge normal relationships, as in the poem "Dried Up".

The love's rose now withered  
I sit still in silence, in a darkened room  
The pangs of love have broken my heart  
Its magic has dried me up fully.

The poets individuality emerges through his intense personal involvement and open, if at times ambivalent, emotion.

To sow the seeds of love to bear fruits'  
One needs to soften the hearts with trust  
O love! With thy tenderness and softness  
Release my pangs, mirth and covetousness

("Redeem From Turmoils")

He also introduces a quietly ironic contrast between the India of his memory and the place he occupies in the world today. The



fateful rivers and places of his homeland still pre occupy his consciousness, even as he writes about “the newfound lands”, “Europe and USA” and the brotherhood of man:

I am from the West  
Having come to the East  
To unite together  
The North and the South (“Let’s Join Hands”)

There is too, an acutely subtle awareness of being in the present where we all belong “To share joys and woes/With one and all, poor and rich,/To be a succour to the needy/Always ready to lend a helping hand”. Peeran’s vote is an example of the kind of voice urgently need to listen to. In times of conflict like those today it is more often than not the poets who speak the truth.

What is fascinating about *New Frontier* is its testimony to the ability of the poet to capture so much of the essence of life in such a short direct acquaintance. More importantly this collection is the story of one man’s journey, from the position of interested observer to that of engaged and passionate participant in a discourse on history, culture and, ultimately, human warmth and love.

Courtesy: *Poet*, July-2005

### ***New Frontiers* – Bernard M. Jackson**

Look within yourselves to enlighten your being  
Seekers are finders; while sailing in deep ocean  
Curb the meandering mind to stillness  
Unperturbed with pin-pricks of friends and foes  
Swim deeply in the depths of your oceanic self

(“*Shine In The Dark Skies*”)

It is indeed a mystifying paradox that universal love and worship of the Almighty Creator has only led to deeper divisions in the spiritual thinking of Mankind, whereas genuine, simple love and concern for our fellow men, women and children has brought us to a closer – bonding unity, embracing all common aspects of Humanity. The inescapable fact of Creation is that we are (regardless of race, caste, colour and nationality) all members of the

same human family. I make particular mention of this, because of poets of the world from the very microcosm of a better existence; a world united in love, peace and fellowship – A World where we may truly celebrate the binding force of our extensive family life together.

Within the framework of this mature approach we find the poetry and didactic guidelines of a rising Indian poet, Bangalore writer S.L. Peeran, a popular figure of great integrity, learning and literary accomplishment whose inspired work has initiated the publication of an astonishing number of poetry collections in recent years. This is all the more praise worthy since Shri Peeran-did not decide to enter the poetry arena until the onset of middle aged years. In one of my earlier reviews I referred to S.L Peeran as follows:

‘Immersed in the philosophy of Sufist theological percepts, S.L. Peeran has emerged from the dying embers of 20th Century Indian English poetry like a veritable phoenix. Here, indeed, is a poet with a sense of mission, a writer imbued with an all – pervading spirituality which is neither doctrinaire nor controversial, and yet is forthright and wholehearted in facing up to the shortfalls and deficiencies so glaringly apparent in our modern – day materialistic society.’ From review of a call from unknown.

The title of his current collection *New Frontiers*, is well chosen, for his poetry explores the universal growing awareness of basic love of Humanity.

This fine collection is graced with quite a number of love poems and we can only conjecture as to the background circumstances leading to the fruition of such choice verses – Whether or not the poet is still deeply immersed in romantic events of many years ago, or perhaps an ongoing personal relationship.

Enwrap me in the blanket of love.  
Shower on me your affection  
Let the dark clouds wane,  
And bright light shine on us. (“Missing Love”)

And here you will notice Peeran's deployment of light and shade, a perceptive element of imagery extensively used to represent a range of mood and feelings, from despondency to the happiness of spiritual fulfilment. Peeran also makes excellent use of personification in his work, generally.

I am cool, running stream  
A torrential rainfall  
A waterfall  
From great heights. ("Rain And Rivers")

There is also, within this selection, his *Lament of a Shady Tree*, a longer poem with a wonderful teaching message, exhorting each and every one of us to treat trees with due respect, for they are the providers of many essentials and comforts for Mankind. A tremendous amount of thought has been exercised in the preparation of this delightful poem, and perhaps I may be excused for declaring it to be my favourite within the collection, as a whole.

The reflective nature of S.L. Peeran's poetry, together with his fine choice of word and phrase, all makes for enjoyable reading. For good measure, the collection is completed with a short selection of *Haiku* and *Tanka* verse.

Courtesy: Poet, June-2005

*Fountain of Hopes*

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***Fountain of Hopes – Dr.D.C.Chambial***

Introduction and a humble appreciation to *Fountains of Hopes* by Sri S.V Ramachandra Rao I hold that poetry creates an intense, inspired experience in language chosen and arranged to fashion a specific emotional response through its meaning, sound, and cadence. Mr. Peeran has been writing verses in English since long and has written to date seven volumes of his collections. He is widely published and acclaimed poet. Dr. Krishna Srinivas, himself a poet of world repute, finds in Peeran's poetic philosophy a parallel with that of William Blake's poetic philosophy. Mr. Gordon Hindley calls him "a worthy Lakshana or sign post of the best in all of us and in the Indian English poetry." For Patricia Prime, he is "a master hand at the art." And Bernard M. Jackson finds in his poetry "sincerity with craftsmanship".

In comparison to all these stalwarts in the domain of poetry criticism, I find myself a little diffident and incompetent to comment upon Peeran's poetry; yet I have no courage to repulse his request. The present book, 8th in the sequence of his poetic output, has poems embracing varied themes: from "Building castles in dreams" to "Tears", "slippery love" to "glittering love", "absence rings" to "Eternity", poems written on the eves of new year's – 2003 to 2006; poems lamenting the wicked deeds of "Talibans" and horrendous, blood-curdling spectacles left by the "Tsunami". In his poems, he resonates between hope and despair (though he calls his poems *Fountains of Hopes*); celebrates and laments; is glad and sad;

meditates upon “war and peace” and “truth and beauty”; sometimes nostalgic and then rejoices in Indian “unity in diversity”. These poems cater to various tastes and moods not only of the poet but also of the readers.

The poems are topical in consonance with the mood of the poet at its best in his moments of imaginative gleamings from the moods of the inspired world. The poet partakes them with his readers: it is here a poet moves into the minds of his readers and lets them experience, for themselves, the same joy and sorrow, hope and despair that he has felt in his moments of ecstasy.

I congratulate Mr. Peeran, and hope this collection will also be welcomed by the readers, for this venture. I wish him still greater success and would like to remind him of Robert Browning’s advice.

“Grow old along with me  
The best is yet to be.

***Fountains of Hopes – S.V. Ramachandra Rao***

“Believe the poem; not the poet”, is a well-known saying, drawing attention to the written poem and the poetic word, and dismissing the detailed prosaic confessions of the poets, written as their introductions, prefaces, forewords, after words, appendices, notes and so on. It is in such a mood of confession that I put forth some much sustained thoughts which have troubled me and “preoccupied” my time, awake and asleep.

Those who are familiar with the world of the “occult” know the evolutionary levels of the ritualistic religious, the practised spirituality and the inexplicable and mysterious mysticism. This evolving trend is also true of poeatastry, verse and poetry. The poetaster evolves into the versifier, the versifier evolves into the writer or composer of poetry and becomes the evolved poet. It is this heightened conscious ness functioning effectively in the poetic mode that the reader is looking for, to get the aesthetic delight from the read experience.

This brings us to the most important element of poetry, the content or the subject matter. Poetry cannot survive being just jingle, verbosity, a puzzle of words, a circus or jugglery. The content or subject matter gives the message, “is” the message, through the poetic medium. Here I would like to confess that the anxieties, anguishes and despairs of our present times have much influenced my life. This I also find true of the verse of S.L. Peeran. No modern poet can afford to live in an ivory tower escaping from reality, building castles in the air and gathering mere dust. We need to deal with the various cruel aspects of world matters. And what more appropriate a mood, tone and attitude to deal with reality than that of HOPE? Therefore, S.L. Peeran has taken the liberty and the poetic license to coin a (hopefully) new word – “HOPES”. Hope is an abstract noun always used in the singular. It cannot be seen, as it is abstract, but we can “feel” it, develop it, (with sustained effort) and see its many faceted manifestations. “Hopes”, in plural, expresses a further positive thinking, it implies an enthusiasm necessary for the present modern times. “Hopes” is not one, but many. It is a panacea for all ills, all problems of the world.

Water (and “fountains”) are symbolic of life itself. It is a life force. Therefore, *Fountains of Hopes* is an epitome of enthusiasm, positivity and patience.

The protagonist in the poem “Glittering Love” (and quite logically, the poet S.L. Peeran) is an ardent votary of love with an attitude of humility submission and supplication.

Let me bow and place my brow  
On the altar, where love oozes.

In “Pass On”, he wishes to be “a pilgrim in a caravan” but the punch line is in the last line where “hungry children’s cry rends the chill air”.

“Mastani Ma” – The Green One is an interesting account of a real life woman saint, who lives an ascetic life in Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh. Her hopeful advice is:

In low tone, she blessed me with sagely advice.  
To be true to Lord and recite His Names.  
To love all His creatures with Compassion.  
To shun being enemy of my soul.

In tune with the title of the collection bringing us to a hopeful frame of mind.

In “Raining Fire and Brimstone”, the poet dares to question the Creator:

O Heaven! Were is Thy promised Mercy?  
Thou art Stupendous and Tremendous!  
Does Thou destroy what Thou create?  
To raise new gardens, with new hopes  
To give fresh lease to a decaying land?

These lines are preceded by an account of “mighty brothers” bullying their “younger ones”. The questioning attitude of the poet shows his shocked mood at terrible happenings of the cruel world and brings out his true nature of asking for protection and divine justice.

A slow and detailed reading of poem after poem sometimes belies the title of the book and gives the reader a depressing and dismal account of phenomena quite acceptably based on reality. In the poem “Dive Down”, the “deep subconscious mind” is expressed in the metaphor:

“The soaring skylark dives down  
To be hunted and encaged  
The short lived freedom, mirth and joys  
Gets drowned in mire”

The last line expresses the dismal condition of the subconscious mind. The main thought is about the forefathers and their desolatory living in parched lands. It is their difficulties (unmindful of the blistering fiery sun) that has such a tremendous effect on the subconscious mind that it is capable of bringing the person to stark reality, when he is immersed in “heavenly pleasures”, “mirth and joys”. It is a rare poem of in-depth psychology and therefore, noteworthy.

This struggle between hopes and despairs is not the only mainstream of the exceptional collection of poems. The various hues, moods, anguishes, hopes, disappointments, joys of union, sorrow of parting and separation and other aspects of romantic and other types of love occur on and off in the book, proving the poet to be an ardent devotee and genuine votary of love. This is one of his important poetic strengths and the poignant lines sometimes cause much contemplation and often bring tears to the readers eyes. For example, “Absence rings” is about lost love.

Ah! Where now the warmth of my beloved.

The absence of the beloved is touchingly brought out by the last stanza:

Spring has dawned sans fragrance  
 The gardens are all desolate  
 The nightingale's sweet songs are missing  
 My beloved's absence adds to my woes

The very next poem “slippery love” continues the mood of sorrow-

Yes, we sing tearful songs.  
 Songs to cheer the desolate heart.

The above line “Songs to cheer the desolate heart” is not only about “slippery love” but is an epitome of the real message of the title of the book *Fountains of Hopes*. “Songs to cheer” suggests positive hope, “The desolate heart” indicates a sad and cruel condition of romantic reality “Where now the silvery lining?” and “Whither the fragrance of rose?” asks the disappointed lover.

The concern for feminine protection and the gallant attitude of a chivalrous heart and mind (of the poet) is depicted with sharp images in “Amidst Vultures”.

Time itself is an important idea and image in many poems. “Dismal future”, “Bells of oblivion” are some such.

Though the depressing details of the cruel world like war, terrorism, violence, natural calamities, unrequited or disappointed



love and so on are often presented in striking but depressing detail; S.L. Peeran is essentially a positive thinking, genuine poet of hope and enthusiasm as is shown by the lines:

Let's give a break  
To this unending chain of blues (“Let's give a break”)

The positive attitudes of the poet is effectively and clearly brought out in the poem on the motherland “Mera Bharat Mahan” and especially in the lines: –

O! Bharat Mahan  
Thou have lived from antiquity  
Thou shall live for eternity.

The title poem *Fountains of Hopes* has striking images. The first line is not a mere exaggeration but a desperate poet's hope for the impossible. Blood shed moves his heart to want to sow stars:

Oh! Only could I sow stars  
Moons on the galaxies,  
Where, now is littered with blood.

This is an exceptional poem of positive images, juxtaposed by negative images or vice versa. The poet is concerned about “blood shed”, “turbulent floods”, “love-starved generation”, “flaming deserts” and “decaying souls”. He wishes to “sow rainbows, roses”, “create founts”, “bring fragrance” and so on.

S. L. Peeran's poetic technique is successful as in the above poem. If prolific writing is one poetic virtue, variety of themes is another. Bombarded by the dismaying news of the cruel world, the poet sharpens his sensibility aesthetic ally and poetically seeks solutions and comforts. One such poem is ‘A Cry in misery’ where the call of the valleys calls him to nothingness. Bereft of attitudes, he dismisses the hope, while he is surrounded by “blues and black”:

“while blues and black surround me.”

The next poem is a major effort, which attempts successfully to bring into a concise and effective poetic experience, the essence of a professional life-time. The protagonist is a judge recounting the

extremes of the experience, the travails and turbulence of the times, the ebb and flow of life itself as seen from a warrior's perspective. The poet is a judge and a warrior reminding us of the legendary Ulysses, the Greek hero. Note the lines.

Where sturdy warriors met with shining swords.  
Where bloody battles were fought and kingdoms lost.

The poet is remembering the battles that were fought, but he is himself a warrior. Entire episodes of the past flash in the background, creating an effect to be remembered. The place is Delhi and New Delhi. The entire ethos of the historical and important place is sketched with a magical effect giving much detail. The poem can be read and re-read for enjoyment. The gratitude is expressed for a "beloved colleague on his retirement".

We are happy to note that these earnest judges are obedient to God.

To draw from our bosoms just rulings.

The rulings are from the heart, the seat of emotion and not from the head that confuses. A Piscean by birth, the poet is strongly and correctly emotional, when necessary, adding to the poetic content increasingly. A Piscean virtue, emotion, is strong in content and effectively used throughout the verse of S. L. Peeran. I would like to recommend a reading of all his eighth volumes of verse for a fulfillment of this emotional purpose – an essential and strengthening feature of poetry.

The imaginative poet in S. L. Peeran is capable of shedding his identity – a kind of escape from his personality to unusual roles, masks, outpourings, and statements. He takes on the voice of a new character time and again, which makes an interesting feature of his poetry. The eight volumes gives a variety of roles. On such role is the "Voice of a martyr". The sad line is:

Destiny will judge me right one day  
The suffering of the innocent is brought out.

A staunch advocate of sobriety and honest living, S. L. Peeran longs for “A pint of happiness”, when thousands are clamouring for beer. This alertness of mind is a repetitive image brought out in objects. Words upon words are cascading with an effulgence impossible to believe. S. L. Peeran is a poet who by his sincerity of purpose, brings out much contemplation and often tears to the eyes. Recommended as good bed-time reading by a respected British critic Gordon Hindley, S.L. Peeran’s verse is a considerable phenomenon. The verse is terse, when necessary. At times it is astonishing, shocking, almost. Verse after verse intensifies the effect, not without dismay, at times. S.L. Peeran is much influenced by “The Poets Pen” and the sanctity of the written word. All the sacredness of the purpose of writing is well understood, by the poet; whose family is full of saints. It may be predicted, by a study of his verse, that his much compassionate heart, moved by the happenings of the world, will soon guide him to a pure sainthood. Endowed with a good heart and mind, he is sure to evolve into a higher poet, worth watching.

Critic ism should not concern itself with pointing out flaws, whether syntactical or semantic; or any other. It should concern itself with primarily recognising the sincere purpose of the poet; his concerns; the intensity of emotion; the genuineness of his mind and the humanity of his heart.

Observe the images of S.L. Peeran. His concerns manifest in striking images, poem after poem. He has allowed the poetic thought to grow in his mind before writing it. He is crying out for help. We sympathise with him as his fellow readers. We heave a sigh of relief. We thank God for taking us closer to reality. We postpone the book for another reading to illumine the mind. Erstwhileness is in itself a much considerable virtue and poetic talent develops slowly. We talk of “growth” of a poet and that is what is happening to S.L. Peeran. Literature is an experience of art and growth is its purpose. Evolution is the result.

The higher effects are achieved by poetry, especially if it is sincere and obedient to God. S.L. Peeran is a good person; an

honest man; a learned judge; with a good heart and correct understanding of his duty to God. All these can be surmised by understanding his poetic efforts correctly. The genuineness of purpose is brought out effectively in poem after poem.

We are appalled by the effect he creates sometimes. A votary of only that which is right and correct; is against everything which is an immoral, incorrect or unjust. Any just judge is like that and to our benefit S. L. Peeran is a poet too. This servant of God is sure to go a long way in his pursuit of truth. His interests are worldwide, his concerns, human. His heart is golden and his mind is pure. He has a simplicity of nature which is endearing. It is goodness, he is interested in; and virtue is his hallmark. He is capable of lifting us to divine heights and bringing sorrow at the condition of man. He is aware of his duty to God and this makes us admire him. Because of his poetry we have a better world. Another poem using the word “hope” is “A Ray of Hope”. The speaker is an old man on the threshold of death. He says:

My Lord, my succour,  
My candle is now to burn out

He prays for the future generation: “I look up now for fresh dreams”. Woman is worshipped in many countries as “mother”. The goddess triumphs:

Ultimate triumph to womanhood  
Who bears hardship with a cheerful smile.

“Recorded moments” is a psychological poem. “But mind records all and all, to yearn and recall”. The poet remembers many details from his life and presents them with detailed images that astound. The poem shows the working of the human mind – how we remember precious incidents, anecdotes, objects. The ups and downs of love is also shown.

Hysteric laments on passing away of dear ones.  
Haunting dreams of forlorn love, lost promises.  
Glimmering unions, passionless splendours,  
Erotic songs, secret messages to weave hearts with love.

The poet is aware, probably unconsciously, of mystic realms. He has respect for evolved beings and their obedience to God. He is aware of the advantages of the non-speech state or condition and therefore the title of the poem is “Silences”.

Rishies, yogis, mahatmas meditate in silence.  
To go higher up in secret galleries to meet the Divine.

Detailed studies have been done about “landscape” in poetry. S.L. Peeran’s heart has place for the entire cosmos!

“To tranquilise my heart,/subside the storms within.” – from the poem, “Mighty Fear”. In “Transformation”, the poet’s “heart” is enveloped with “blanket of pathos”. The terrible happenings of the world make the poet cry out, but with hope, for a complete, positive, corrective, transformation.

Let’s weave hearts with virtues of love  
Transform rivers of blood to milk of human kindness

The poem “Quatrains” shows clearly the development of erotic love in a positive manner.

A stranger with a roving eye  
Enticing the young beauty in her youth  
Seducing her with smooth butter words  
To tickle her flame and the urge

The second stanza shows the extent of romantic sorrow in their lives.

The tears that swell like floods  
When blues, afflict are to cleanse the being.

“Cleans the being” indicates the cathartic effect that is brought about by the “tears that swell like floods”. The intensities of romantic love are well understood. An epitome comprising the essence of *Fountains of Hopes* is:

While walking on marshy lands barefoot  
While living in sultry seasons  
While floating in surreal dreams  
We yearn for golden times to dawn on us

Another positive title and content is in the poem “Happy Times” which brings out the need to improve the human condition, after listing some of the correctable realities.

Hopes are clearly shown by the lines:

Let's wipe the tears of sorrows from every eye,  
Let none go to bed hungry, live bare sans clothes.

The above two lines clearly prove that the poet S.L. Peeran need not become the richest man of the world to give charity. He is much richer than the richest man of the world by his capacity for world prayer. He is so magnanimous, generous and giving a person that by virtue of his capacity for correct prayers, he is giving us the possibility of a better world; through his poetry. It is this kind of thinking and praying that brings about a tremendous respect and reverence for the appreciable mind of “S.L. Peeran”. A different kind of poem “New Found Life” is a justifiable criticism of the limitations of the computer and the computer age. God is the creator of beauty and makes man to marvel at it. He is also the creator of the computer, which has “ensnared” man in a closed room taking him away from the splendours, joys and soothing effect of nature:

Nature's beauty, its colour, its charm  
Receding in one's background  
Away from mind and heart  
Body stiffened like hard-board glued to chair.

S.L. Peeran is a complete pacifist at heart, pointing out the horrors of war, and the need for peace. Respect for God, obedience to God and need to pray for and achieve peace permanently in this world, are important preoccupations and themes in his admirable poetry. “War and Peace” is such a poem. He has a futuristic positivity, which makes his poetic out-pourings worthy of serious consideration.

The purpose of poetry is to evolve our nature from the animalistic to the Divine. The mind should be entertained and the heart should become content. The senses should achieve an

aesthetic satisfaction and peace. The sensibility for poetic appreciation should be correctly satisfied. Diction and vocabulary should be precise, novel and exact – The correct word in the correct place. Images must be appropriate and as striking as possible. Poetic effects must be created with correct emphasis on meaning and content. The subject matter must be treated poetically, unlike in prose. The stances; roles; voices; masks and so on must be primarily for achieving the basic poetic purpose only. Exaggeration and hyperbole is allowed, as are all figures of speech; not for itself or its novelty, but for a pre-thought and much considered underlying poetic effect and poetic message.

All these above positive features are true in many ways in the prolific poetry of S. L. Peeran.

The poet observes that there is much to learn from:

the bygone pages of history  
Of bloodshed, animosity, hatred.

In the poem “Shut the Trap”. He questions the need for uttering the truth when so many mistake the purpose. He dares to say that “I shall stand my ground” in spite of the danger of being mistaken for “A Charlie, a buffoon, a mad cap?”.

This poem shows that verbosity is not one of the poetic ills of the poet, but outspokenness is one of his virtues.

“Dreams of Merger” is a poem which shows the “sweet dreams” – “the unpolluted ones “. It is a poem about merger, union, coitus:

The lovely maiden in her imagination,  
Swirls with her lover, dreams of merger  
The widow piously preserves her memories  
Lamenting daily on the loss of joys and glees.

The purpose of the poem and its main content is “To bring hearts, minds and bodies closer and closer.”

The next poem is about jingle and music, necessary to create a lovely day and fill its spaces and vacuums. An ordinary day may

become an important one. The poet exhorts us to change a simple day into a memorable one:

Let the magic of this day forever,  
Change the course of our life.  
And thousand melodies thrill us forever.

This capacity to change the ordinary into the extraordinary is a strength of the poet. The poem “pleasure and pain” shows the limitations of impermanent pomp and pelf. This is compared to “Alexander, Caesar, Hitler and Stalin”. A psychological explanation for this is given by the line. “But this very self, the inverted one, creates all this.” The poem questions “pomp” itself and dismisses it logically. “Cold Waves” is a poem about someone dear, departing. The human drama is unfolded with great detail: “Out bursts of deep affectional traumas.”

The passing of the dear one makes the mourning crowd to come closer:

Oh! Look, how all assemble, cuddle,  
Shake, furtively, forgetting  
Bitterness, coming closer, hugging.  
Seeking each other to console.  
To lift the sagging spirits.

The working of the poet’s mind is shown in “My Poems”. The first kind of poem brings about a negative response. The second kind of poem pleases the Rashtrapathi (President) A.P.J. Abdul Kalam himself.

The poet confesses:

Poets don’t bear rancor nor spite.  
Poems are to mesmerise readers  
In chosen words with similes.

The next poem “To a departed friend” wins over admiration for the departed soul. He is an extraordinary person with many virtues. Line after line, every line speaks about his virtues and helpful nature. He achieves this by making his only aim, to please His Lord, by working for His fellowmen. It is poems like this, which shows the poet’s capacity to appreciate, the appreciable in



society. A good Samaritan, the departed friend sets a good example of a well-lived life.

“To ourselves” is a poem which shows that “We create our own islands” “without own demarcated boundaries”;

Our own satellites and stars,  
To go round in its orbits”.  
We dance to our own tunes:  
“We have our own melodies.  
To sing our own songs.  
To please and soothen our own ears.  
We dance to our own tunes.

In the next poem “Help Please”, “A Mahatma” is spoken about. The poet says that he is “foxy and cunning” and “undependable”.

The world is a snare, tempting man to become rich through “dubious means “. But the poet is a “white collared man with values”. He holds on to the “plank” of correctness and obedience to God from “drowning” in the “temptations galore” of the wrong path – which he does not want to tread.

A powerful poem – “Spread of Pollution” speaks about the failure of international relations. Countries fail in achieving harmony. The bridges are symbolic of the cultural bonds between nations. The meaninglessness of terror is highlighted. The world becomes complex, complicated. Small pox and AIDS pose their danger along with hepatitis and sexually transmitted diseases. The situation of international turmoil perturbs even the sacred, secret marriage bed of the protagonist by its own illogical logic; showing the dangers of such unresolved tensions:

Where to sow the seeds of love?  
When the bed is polluted and marshy!

The poems on the uncontrollable terror of terrorism which is unleashed in different parts of the world causing an unwanted, seeming revival of the terrible conditions as were found at the times of the “crusades”, the “Balkan war”, “the first world war”, “Hitler” and “the second world war”. The protagonist wants to point out that those who advocate a cleansing correction of the terrorised

world are themselves either corrupt or polluted in many ways and need correction in the first place.

The “Unseen hand of Mercy” is a positive poem which speaks about the hope of positive protection for all of creation. The unseen hand of mercy and love is that of God, the creator and human beings themselves. The poem uses exaggeration with good effect bringing about the magnitude of existence, human and otherwise:

Each one is a universe by themselves.  
 Revolving around them their own Sun, Moon  
 And surrounded by million stars.  
 They raise their own multi-coloured flags.

The last two lines of the second stanza:

Some good taking place all the time,  
 And nature unfailingly bestowing its bounties

and the last two lines of the third stanza.

The combined strength of the good  
 Can subdue any wrong that may arise.

Speak about a positive future. This is another poem whose content and theme is in keeping with the title of the collection of poems – *Fountains of Hopes*.

A significant poem “Withering Moments” speaks imaginatively and realistically about the healing power of two loving hearts:

When two loving hearts meet,  
 Age old prejudices and hates  
 Of colour, race and religion would  
 Melt away like cold frozen ice.

“The Warmth” of the loving hearts – “the glowing fire within” – “Bring joy, pleasure, loving memories”. To cherish and make life worth living. How time is transformed when there is love in the heart is shown in the line:

Every moment is an ounce of gold.

Next the sorrow of separation is also brought out:

“Unabated tears from ocean of feelings,  
Washing away forever the sweet memories.

It is a noteworthy poem worth pondering over. An orthodox mind and what it goes through in the changing modern times is brought out in the poem, “Modern Times”. The first three lines of the poem show the true nature of the poet and also the protagonist. His sincerity is noteworthy and wins our respect for his personality:

Let’s keep our hand on our heart.  
And utter the truth, by being  
True to our salt and to our Mother India.

The travails of a changing scenario is effectively brought out:

Old dogmas disappearing and melting  
Like snow and ozone layer./Faith and love reaching its nadir.

The rest of the poem highlights the sordid realities of daily life. The bohemian conditions of a “poppy culture” is reason for despair and concern of the poet. In “Truth and Beauty”;

The petty men with their power  
Control the minds of slavish persons;  
Spreading their tentacles  
And network, throwing a web  
Around all-encompassing nature;  
For their whim, their pleasures.

The most important question of the book of poems is asked here:

Can the vision of everlasting goodness  
Descend in our actions, in our lives.

The poet prays that our thoughts should be freed from “cults, fetishes, passions”. The high statement is in the last three lines

Let the shining Truth and Beauty  
Capture and enthrall us forever.  
To take us beyond the realms of ecstasy.

Another hopeful poem “Hope for the lost ones” speaks about the outer and inner worlds. Like the Buddhist teachings, the poet points out the meaninglessness of over-emphasis on outward phenomena and the need for caring for the inner self and its grief’s and sorrows. Based on an essay, “A free Man’s worship”, by the world famous thinker and philosopher, Bertrand Russel, the poem begins impressively thus: –

The struggle for private happiness.  
 To achieve temporary desires.  
 To burn with passion for external things,  
 To catch the slippery power,  
 Is the bane of the Modern Man

The need to free the mind from the wanton tyranny that rule the outward life is highlighted. The important question is asked:

Can we lighten sorrows, grief?  
 By the balm of sympathy.  
 To give to sufferers, the oppressed.  
 The pure joy of a never tiring affection;  
 To strengthen failing courage.  
 To instill faith in hours of despair?

The very possibility and positive purpose of the use of words, whether spoken or written, read or listened is questioned in the last two lines:

Can the spark of divine fire, be kindled  
 In the hearts, with brave words?

Much more than the other “hopeful” poems quoted and analysed; this poem “Hope for the lost ones” epitomises the title of the book, *Fountains of Hopes*, and brings out the hopeful positive nature of the poem S. L. Peeran and his significant poetry.

The last two poems of the collection are “Happy New Year” poems of the years 2005 and 2006. In the first “2005”, the joys of the disciple’s surrender to the All-Knowing Master is brought out throughout the poem. Such a surrender, made in a humble way, makes everyday like a new year’s day – celebratory and joyous; – ridding all sorrows and making the “heart glow like a crystal”. The

mind becomes purified and the world itself is aglow. The celestial gift of much sought after peace becomes easily available.

Every living second is prevailed by joy and ecstasy. Life moves smoothly with “fragrance of love”. Day in and day out; at sun rise and full moon; at all times, unlimited happiness is achieved. Thus this poem shows the many-fold advantages of a humble and total surrender by the disciple to the Divine Master.

In the last poem of the collection the year 2006 is welcomed. Another very hopeful poem, it is like an incantation for peace, beauty, love and plenty. Note the line, “The withering age holds in its bosom, hope” it summarises the positive poet’s hopeful attitudes for the future. The very “civilised modern times” and “Great Nations” are presented hopefully:

Civilised modern times would overcome man’s grief.  
Great nations with ever ennobling thoughts, nurture  
Protect poor men in distress and pain.

The poet prays that (ageless beauty and) love shower on mankind various gifts – gold, silver and full granaries – thus praying for a good harvest. This poem shows that Peeran has a positive mind.

The seven “Haiku” deserve reading and re-reading for their successful effect. Within the limitation of seventeen syllables and various Haiku rules, correct imagery has to be used with brevity and sharpness. Some are based on the Zen tradition which does not insist on a seventeen syllabic order.

To sum it all up – an interesting collection of poems with a variety of themes and subjects, brought about with all the possible enthusiasm and genuine sincerity of a growing poet, showing promise for the future. We have to concentrate on the concerns of the poet to understand and appreciate him fully – by a slow and sympathetic reading of his poetic efforts.

A purely intellectual effort to “hoo-ha” and “pooh-pooh” varying levels and kinds of written creativity – whether poetastry; verse or poetry, will help us to achieve nothing of consequence.

Though, it might be argued, that genuine respect for a poet's mind may slowly grow into sustained appreciation, worthy praise and deserving recognition; it need not become sheer adulation for whatever reason. Appreciation in an unbiased and an unprejudiced fashion is always better than negative criticism.

It is with such a perspective that we should assess the first eight volumes of Peeran's verse and look forward to his future poetry.

### ***Fountains of Hopes* – Patricia Prime**

On the back of this slim handsome book are quotes from established poets. Dr. Krishna Srinivas writes: "Like Blake, Peeran sees the world in a grain of sand and Eternity in an hour", which is mainly true and food for thought, and Dr. R.K. Singh says: "The poet is critical, philosophical, reflective and interpretive of his milieu and influences", which is sincere and thoughtful.

The Foreword is by Dr. D C. Chambial, Editor of *Poetcrit*, who comments that Peeran's poems lament "the wicked deeds of 'Talibans' and horrendous, blood curdling spectacles left by the 'Tsunami'... he celebrates and laments; is glad and sad; meditates upon 'war and peace' and 'truth and beauty'; sometimes nostalgic and then rejoices in Indian 'unity in diversity'. Truly, an all-enveloping scenario, that caters for many moods and experiences.

In his lengthy "Introduction and a humble appreciation" Dr. S. V. Ramachandra Rao, Lecturer in English states "To sum it all up

An interesting collection of poems, with a variety of themes and subjects, brought about with all the possible enthusiasm and genuine sincerity of a growing poet, showing promise for the future. We have to concentrate on the concerns of the poet to understand and appreciate him fully – by a slow and sympathetic reading of his poetic efforts.

The poet himself, in his "Preface" says his hope is that "my poems will appeal to the sensibility of the poets, critics and lay readers." This latest collection (Peeran's eighth) is a work of a poet confident that his craft will sustain whatever he demands of it in the

way of modes: the short, spare poem, the long-lined discursive or descriptive poem, the quatrain with a witty twist, the haiku.

The poems are spare. In the modern manner, some lines are short and uneven, giving the reader the rhythm, sometimes the excitement, other times the choppy nervousness of the persona. At other times the poems are more fully developed with longer flowing lines and phrases. The poems are in the poet's own voice: "I am concerned, worried/With furrows on forehead" ("Let's Build Castles in Dreams"); "But a single glance/Of love, surpasses the dreary moments" (*Glittering Love*). There are poems about a centurion lady saint, "big mighty brothers", thoughts of fore-bearers, relationships, love, and much more.

Some poems are strong, if by that we mean taut and visually sharp, while at the same time being intensely lyrical. They have long rhythmical lines, such as we see in the poem "'Mastani Ma' – The Green One":

She spoke softly to say about herself.  
Of her penance on three hundred sixty hills.  
Showed us a room with pebbles of various colours,  
Collected from each hill, where she sat in prayers.

They are individual. There are a lot of undefinable echoes here and it would be surprising if some influences didn't show. The echoes I hear may be rhythms from the Romantic poets. In fact, one of my favourite poems in this collection is "Welcoming 2003":

We picked fragrant roses of love  
Adorned the vases with lotuses.  
Spread the sweetness of Jasmines  
Decorated thresholds with mango leaves,  
With rangoli patterned designs on floors.

Days and Nights were filled with dreams.  
Satiated all our senses with pleasures.  
Faced boldly every grave moment.  
Braved storms, betrayals of friends, foes.  
Shed pearls of tears on loss of loved one.

A kind of uninvited, metaphysical longing seeps through the best poems. A section from “A Cry in Misery” is a good example:

The silence of the valleys  
 Have come to greet me.  
 The icy mute tombs beckon me  
 The chilly winds of snow bound mountains  
 Enrap me, to shudder for warmth, comfort.

This is a well of great depth, ready for exploration by Peeran’s poetic psyche. If tapped correctly it will be a source of exciting poetry.

The best poetry in *Fountains of Hopes* is strong in its authority. For example, the traditional images of fellowship and admiration for a colleague are blown away by heartfelt images like these from “Together We Bloomed”:

Sooner and later the throbbing metropolis,  
 Engulfed us, took us in its mighty arms.  
 Put us on a high pedestal, where men  
 With learned length and thundering sound.  
 Enarmed us with lightning speed,  
 The flowing wisdom.  
 Showered their shiny pearls  
 Gathered from fathomless seas.  
 Spread the fragrance,  
 Scent from chosen perfumes.  
 To draw from our bosoms just rulings.

It takes a strong will to make such individual statements. Not all the poems work this well. On the opposite page is a poem indicative of a style that occurs occasionally throughout the book, a weak statement struggling to be a poem, and in the end just being words shaped without illumination:

What if I have to face,  
 Storms tempests, tumults,  
 Brimstones, brick bats, fire.  
 I may lose my limb.  
 My skin may get scourged,  
 Burnt, maimed, exposed to vultures. (“A Voice of a Martyr”)



This approach has its dangers. A skeletal strength of syntax must be created before such prosaic words can succeed.

When we come to “Cool Streams” and “Amidst Vultures”, we see Peeran at his best. On the one hand, the theme is fully developed, a portrait of father and son that is warm and sensitive without sentimentality; on the other, a portrait of a woman from whom “Destiny has snatched her purdah”. In one of the longest poems in the collection, “Hope for the lost race”, Peeran develops the picture with sustained subtlety and shows his concern for “Modern Man” by inference and allusion:

Can we lighten sorrows, grief?  
By the balm of sympathy.  
To give to sufferers, the oppressed.  
The pure joy of a never tiring affection;  
To strengthen failing courage.  
To instill faith in hours of despair.

A sardonic gaze may well seem the best way of contemplating a world view, and it does occur occasionally in Peeran’s work, as when he ponders the “War on Terror “ in “O Taliban”: – “Compassion that should ooze from the heart./But hatred like hemlock does the body apart./You call them ‘Kafir’ bound for hell./While you grow opium to sell.” Likewise when he views fear in “Mighty Fear”: “Fear like a mighty venomous snake,/Encoils my past memory./To block my pristine sight./To create illusions, deliriums.” Or the devastation, chaos and tragedy of a tsunami, in “Oh, Tsunami!”:

Tsunami, you bear within your bosom  
Oceanic tears, you destroy the body,  
heart and rend the mind to pieces.

But generally the tonal quality of these poems is more complex: for Peeran, this fallen and barbarous world nonetheless, and sometimes paradoxically, offers riches of colour and texture to be translated into sensuous images. These often link the natural and the human world: “While walking on marshy lands bare foot”, “While life moves on in time and seconds”, “Nature’s beauty, its

colour, its charm”, transform life. Above all, they offer homage to the vitality that is not to be cancelled out by any counter-reality.

In many of these poems, Peeran’s writing is assured, there is variety of style, effective use of symbolism and touches of humour. Here is a poet who has developed his own style of thinking but who is still experimenting with different ways of using language. He has a great deal to say to us, and there is more we may look forward to.

A section of haiku ends the collection: in it the poet reflects on nature, with its images given in a fine clear style:

The moth flirts around  
The flickering candle  
Withering petals

A dew on a leaf  
To melt away soon in air  
On first glimpse of rays

While Peeran’s poems certainly offer moments of immediate pleasure, they generally ask for reflective reading; those who offer it will be rewarded.

Courtesy: *Bridge in Making*, 44<sup>th</sup> Number winter issue-2006

### ***Fountains of Hopes* – Srinivasa Rangaswami**

With an exuberant sparkling jacket, reflective of the upward-looking joyous spirit of the author, *Fountains of Hopes* is S.L. Peeran’s latest offering. With eight collections of poems in less than around six years, Peeran’s art can be said to have created a record of sorts as the most prolific author in the poetic world! A Foreword by Dr D.C. Chambial, the learned Editor of *Poetcrit*, and a 22-page appreciative assessment of Dr Peeran’s poetry by a longtime friend and admirer of the author, Shri Ramachandra Rao, introduce the collection.

Peeran is a Poet of positivism, of hope, and his poetry a celebration of life in its multi-visaged splendour – in its myriad moods of joy, sorrow, sordidness, happiness, wonder, wisdom, exultation and exaltation. Peeran’s poetry is a river of words, of

thoughts, where, most of the time, the Poet cannot hold himself to stop, to pause and ponder, to weigh words against the rushing tide of his emotions-his upsurging emotions from the grounds well of his core beliefs, virtues and values, his piety, held close to his heart all his life. We have to go along with the tide, getting reminded all the way of Peeran, the Man – the kindly compassionate soul, mellowed by the vicissitudes of his life, enriched by his wide-stretching experience of men and matters, the aesthetic being sweetened by his ever-thirsting yearning for communion with his beloved Maker. Here we are on a special ground, different plane, face to face with a godly being, suffused with love for all humanity, an aesthetic tender being of rare refinement, beloved of all who happen to know him, blessed to know him.

In the title poem *Fountains of Hopes* the Poet expresses his ardent wish:

(If) only could I sow rainbows, roses  
Create founts in the flaming deserts  
Bring fragrance to the decaying souls.

True patriotism, it is said, is founded on positive level or one's country, love for what one values most in his country. For all the sordid scenes he has been witnessing around him, the Poet's love for, and faith in the destiny of his country, would remain undimmed. Poet Peeran, while talking about his country, would not recount the country's past glory, or its achievements in the modern day in terms of improvements in infrastructure or economic growth instead, he would dwell on other things. He would say:

Let me speak  
Of our unity in diversity  
Of our spiritual values, diverse literature,  
Of our religious tolerance  
Of our spicy foods, films, music and dance,  
Of our colourful dresses, head gears. – (“Mera Bharat Mahan”)

Like a martyr, clear-eyed about his goal and his mission, the Poet confidently declares:

I may be hooted, shunted.

Trampled down and silenced.  
I shall dare to save the wings  
Of the dove being trapped in thorny net.  
Destiny will judge me right one day. (“Voice of a Martyr”).

The Poet is wearied with the times. His dreams are shattered.  
At this hour, the illumined soul looks up to the Lord and prays:

I look up now to  
Thee my Lord, my Succour!  
My candle is now to burn out  
Yet I hope, I look up  
To the horizons beyond  
Where darkness fades,  
And light flashes its rays.  
Beckons me to reach out.

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I look up now for fresh dreams  
To pass on the legacy (to) a new era.

This should give a glimpse of the Poet and his uncommon poetry.

Courtesy *Poet*, Nov-2006

### ***Fountains of Hopes* – Dr. Manas Bakshi**

S.L. Peeran is one of the major poets in the realm of contemporary Indo-English poetry with as many as eight books already to his credit. From his first published collection of poems *In Golden Times* to the very recent *Fountains of Hopes*, Peeran has proved his distinct identity as a poet.

The book under review *Fountains of Hopes* containing some 65 poems and a few haiku has a variety of themes Social, Political, Ecological, as also Celestial. His poems reveal his outlook not only as a literary personality but also as a socially and politically conscious human being with his comprehensive grasping of the complex socio-economic system as we have. Peeran has well adopted the art of expressing himself with thoughts that are

reflective, emotions that are appealing and temper that is both sensitive and philosophical.

And this he does against a canvas full of complexities of modern living like arson and atrocities, poverty and deprivation, offence and injustice and so on. Peeran articulates when “A Voice Of A Martyr” is heard in the lines “what if I have to face Storms/, tempests, tumult/Brimstones, brick bats, fire/I may lose my limb”, when “Amidst Vultures” is found “destiny’s iron hands has snatched, her purdah/Now, she is exposed to vultures”, Peeran dives down to utter “My deep sub-conscious mind/Drenched with millennium/thoughts of my fore-bearers/of their desolatory living in parched lands” and laments in “Slippery Love” as a disgruntled lover “Yes, we sing tearful; songs/Songs to cheer the desolate heart/: But the passing shadows/Eclipse the bright round one/The dark clouds have all molted./Where now the silvery lining?”...These are just a few instances of Peeran’s intrinsic inscriptions abundant in the book.

As a matter of fact, in this particular book, Peeran seems deeply concerned about all that is happening around us, but the contemporary textures are more piquant than simply touching in his outpourings – “Love forsaken to deserted islands/Sea shells on shores hiding pain/The crushed dreams wailing in loneliness/Distant desperate eyes watch silence in melancholy” and he concludes “Rishies, Yogis, Mahatmas meditate in silence/To go higher up in secret galleries to meet the Divine” – in clear submission to the power that is Divine, Peeran’s mindset seems ushering in these lines. It reflects the spirit of an advocate of Sufism like Peeran. It brings forth Indianness in the cult of English poetry today.

Equally, Peeran is haunted by the horror of “Tsunami”

“Tsunami, you bear within your bosom/Oceanic tears, you destroy the body/Heart and rend the mind to pieces”, the terror of Taliban” “You call them, Kafir bound for hell/While you grow opium to sell/Brotherhood, a parochial term, you practise the apprehension of a Dismal Future when” The Volcanic

eruptions/Have melted the warm, “Relationships bridging gaps”. But there is hope, and to quote Peeran, there are *Fountains of Hopes*; “Let’s find shores bereft of saline waters/A place where brimstones don’t rain”. This is possible only when we can have faith in ourselves, only when, in tune with Peeran, we can avow “Let’s keep our hand on our heart/And utter the truth/By being true to our salt and to our Mother India”.

A book with several laudable poems, Nicely produced except for some printing errors (pages 15,17,32 etc), reasonably priced, the book deserves wide readership.

Courtesy: *Poet*, Feb-2007

### ***Fountains of Hopes* – Shiva Kant Jha**

Dr. Johnson said, with his characteristic perspicacity and crispness, that ‘the business of a poet...is to examine, not the individual but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances. He does not number the streaks of the tulip.’ In doing this business, Dr Peeran in his *Fountains of Hopes*, has shown ‘remarkable moral courage and richest plastic imagination. Most of the poems in this miscellany of his poems show without doubt that he is at the most conscious poet of our generation. Like Thomas Mann’s *Death in Venice*, the poems make us reflect on our civilisation, which glitters with sophistication, but is degenerate, decaying, and corrupt. The poet brings to our mind the Wallace syndrome, explained with force by Alfred Russel Wallace emanating in our high technological age from the worrisome malady emanating from fast changing technology and stagnant morality.

For quite some time, I have been thinking, in course drawing up the first draft of my book *The Cultural Crisis of Our Times*, about the pathology of our times. I find that my research and reflections are leading me to develop the same insight which made Dr Peeran express his criticism of our times in words so felicitous and images so sensuous and suggestive as these in the poem entitled ‘Modern Times’.

Lo! Day and night passing by –

Slipping into new zone of modernity,  
Mall culture, cell phones, plastic money,  
Condoms, junk food, single mothers,  
Gays, night dancing girls serving  
Wine teasing young minds for fun;  
With bonhomie and poppy culture all around.

The images and their sequential juxtaposition configure and choreograph before our mind's eye the process of our decadent civilisation where the irony, [to which W B Yeats referred in his 'Second Coming' ("The best lack all conviction, While the worst are full of passionate intensity")], is writ large, though shrouded under, to borrow the words of Sombart, 'oozing flood of commercialism' which is, through stealth and deception, dragging the Western civilisation down. In 'Raining Fire and Brimstone' he asks God a devastating question reminding one of the question Job had put to God in the Holy Bible's Book of Job. The poet asks:

"O Heaven Where is Thy promised Mercy?"

The poet has a song in his soul when he says 'I look up now for fresh dreams'. However, we reap only the consequences of our deeds. The poet says in 'Fountains of Hope':

Let's find shores bereft of saline waters.  
A place where brimstones don't rain.

These words echo what Lord Krishna had said in the Bhagavad-Gita. The poet adds new dimensions of thoughts given birth under our contemporary mores and circumstances. The Lord said:

*Atmaiva hyatmano bandhur*  
*Atmaiva ripur atmanah.*

We are ourselves our friends; we are ourselves our foes. It is this understanding, which led the poet to navigate through numerous themes of great contemporary relevance. In this high creative pursuit, the poet evaluates many ways, and measures many institutions of our times. He weighs them with insight; and where he finds them wanting, he responds to them with dexterity in the language of suggestions. Nevertheless, on a careful reading of the

poems, one experiences a dominant note and a supreme assertion in the poet's abiding HOPE. The Mahabharata says that it is futile to become sad for the sufferings that are common to most people. Prudent men always endeavour to find ways to get over them. It is worthwhile to recall what Horace had told Ulysses: 'never be overwhelmed by the tides of misfortune. The poet is right in saying 'Destiny will judge me right one day'. Hence, it is time to act. The parable of Penelope's web shows that Hope alone helped her survive her drudgery in order to achieve her objective: she lived and worked with Hope. All of us live, as Goethe says:

At the whirring loom of Time unawed  
I work the living mantle of God.

Ours is a great democracy. We can survive in glory only until Hope survives. Lord Bryce, after noting what ails democracy, observed:

“Hope, often disappointed but always renewed, is the anchor by which the ship that carries democracy and its fortunes will have to ride out this latest storm as it has ridden out many storms before.”

This collection of poems is well titled

What enthralled me most was the quality of the imagery in the poems. It is true that what images convey depends largely on 'our capacity to visualise'. A reader's observation post and his spiritual attainments determine the range and quality of poetic experience which imagery can communicate to him. However, the images of the poems are expressive and suggestive as they acquire meaning from the central thread in the poet's deep-felt thought. The poems evidence a sensuous shining forth of ideas with rich resonances that lasts long in the mind of a perceptive reader. Stock – responses do not mar the poetic excellence. Metaphors are not worn out. The poet moves in his poems from peak to peak after sojourning on plateaus: this is natural when one reflects the complex realities of our times, and responds to these with utmost good faith. It is remarkable that nowhere the poet is heuristic. He keeps his reader agile and reflective through the cavalcade of the poems. The poems



are highly readable. They deepen our perception, they delight us, and they inspire us. They prove that poetry is not dead in our locust-eaten years where the overweening commercialism is turning even human beings into commodities for sale. This reviewer hopes that the poet's oeuvre would receive wider appreciation world over.

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Courtesy: TaxIndiaonline.com

### ***Fountains of Hopes* – Ashok K. Khanna**

The above collection under report comprises of 67 pages blank verse poems of Dr S.L. Peeran, a prospective Indian English poet. Shall we say poems of *Fountains of Hopes* are poems of hope and despair. A poet is multi-tongued. And rightly like Milton laments over the 'Paradise Lost' and rejoices with the 'Paradise Regained.'" The collection has an apt foreword by Dr. D.C. Chambial (Maranda) who in turn also cites opinions of Dr. Krishna Srinivas, who finds Peeran's poetic philosophy parallel to that of William Blake and Bernard M. Jackson who find in Peeran's poetry's sincerity with craftsmanship' and the collection has also an introduction rather long analysing each and every poem by S.V. Ramachandra Rao. Doesn't a poem speak for itself? Some young critic might say this 24 pages long introduction avoidable, unnecessary. However, Dr. Peeran also has to his credit collections of poems titled: *In Golden Times* (2000), *In Golden Moments* (2000), *A Search from Within* (2002), *A Ray of Light* (2000), *In Silent Moments* (2000), *A Call from the unknown* (2003) *New Frontiers* (2005) and *Now Fountain of Hopes* (2006).

In 6 year, 8 Poetry collection. God! Had Peeran not expressed his feelings as profusely as done, he might have got ulcers in stomach. It would seem poetry has worked as therapy for him. Here a little digression. Some years back Dr. I.H. Rizvi (Bareilly) while

sending his collection titled 'Fettered Birds desired comments. The reviewer had then immediately replied that he (reviewer) thought that he (reviewer) was incompetent to offer comments to the poet (Rizvi) of 9 collections to his credit the reviewer feels like repeating the same big compliments for Dr Peeran as well.

We may cite titles of some of the poems (following the order of contents of collection) for discerning readers; sake viz; 'Let build us built Castles in dream', 'Glittering Love', 'Absence rings', 'slippery love', 'Mera Bharat Mahan', 'Welcoming 2003', 'Fountains of Hopes', "O Taliban", 'Eternity', 'War and peace', 'Oh Tsunami', 'Tears, Tears, Tears', 'Truth and Beauty', 'Hope for the lost ones', 'Happy New Year 2005' 'Welcoming 2006' etc.

Again for readers' sake, to give a little flavour, we may quote lines from a few poems as follows:

Let the shimmering Truth and Beauty  
 Capture and enthrall us forever..  
 To take us beyond the realms of ecstasy" (Truth and Beauty)  
 "Can the spark of divine fire, be kindled  
 In the hearts, with brave words? (Hope for the lost ones)

The withering age hold in its bosom, hope  
 .....  
 Let the New Year 2006 delight us.  
 Let ageless beauty and love, endlessly  
 Shower on mankind its bower of gifts  
 In gold, silver and granaries fill (Welcoming 2006)

The reviewer has had the privilege of reading many of his aforesaid 8 collections and receiving new year greetings/poems. Yes, there is content in Peeran's poetry coupled with excellent English. His poems have essence of Islam and Sufism. Some critic. might find Peeran's poetry as 'serious poetry, of a serious poet, for the serious readers'. He is consistently serious. But why should a man and especially a poet be consistent? How if Peeran had retained some bit of the child in his matured mind. How if he would have penned some romantic lyrics, youthful songs, metrical, musical verse. How if his poems contained humour, satire also.

Here in this context comes to mind poet John T. Whitmarsh and his poetry collection-titled 'Magic Light (2002)' seeped in subtle, English humour, satire, wit. Here again comes to mind what Robert Frost had said that the poetry begins in humour and ends in wisdom. Above all isn't humour an important rasa?. How about catching as mall folly of, a child, a comic situation or an hilarious lighter moment. For example simple, heart touching poems of elderly poet(ess) Ritsuko Kawasta (Tokyo) like Wonder Filled Walking, Chim-Cham's Poop, essential ingredient of good poetry. Though Peeran writes in English, maybe he thinks in Urdu. Then he should be knowing better what joy traditional/modern Urdu gazals and nazms give to the audience/readers.

Oh yes a few poems of Peeran have had been included in the Indo-Asian Literature also. For constraint of space, let the review be concluded rather inconclusively, with wishes that elderly Peeran's 'Selected Poems' come in the near future and his poetry be translated into as many Indian, Asian languages and finally in depth research done of his poetry at college, university level.

*In Rare Moments*

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***In Rare Moments – Dr Anna Latha Devi***

Poetry as art is a product of the human imagination and deeply, an honouring of the past, a perception of the present and a looking towards the future. It is a means of recording the poet's responses to the world and of bringing his feelings into consciousness so as to define them sharply and share them.

– George Marsh

Poet Peeran has created a special place for himself in the galaxy of Indian English poetry. It is indeed a pleasure to read Peeran's poems because though long or short, lyric or haiku, they are packed with thoughts to ponder. Matthew Arnold, the great critic of poetry has advocated in his Study of Poetry that there must be perfect blending of "matter and manner" or "subject and style", two essential qualities to make a perfect work of art. These are blended in such a way that Peeran's poems belong to the Great Order of Poetry. Moreover, the poems bear the stamp of Poet Peeran combined with uniqueness which can be termed as "Peeranisque", (if I am permitted to use the term).

As a reviewer of Poet Peeran maiden venture In Golden Times, a collection of poems, I claim it my honour and privilege to write an Introduction to his ninth collection of poems entitled *In Rare Moments*. From the first to the ninth, there is steady growth in the artistic mind of the poet and as a poet, Peeran has mellowed consistently and hence, highlights a balanced view of life and art, which is a rarity in modern poetry. Each poem speaks volumes of

the poet, his erudition, his scholarship and his experiences. Above all, I wonder when the learned Muse from Mount Parnassus inspires Poet Peeran to write for he being a Member-Judicial of an Appellate Tribunal holding high office.

The themes of the poems *In Rare Moments* are varied, but they can be fitted into two main categories, life and religion, the dual phases of Man's existence. The theme of life is subdivided into Man, his reminiscences and the part played by nature. Similarly religion has its subaltern themes like God and Heaven.

Life is precious to every human being. The way one lives it makes life a heaven or hell. In thought provoking poems about life Poet Peeran has drafted the significance, trials and tribulations of life. In the poem "Fight Battles", the poet pens a universal truth that desires and attachments with "wealth and pelf" lead to misery of living causing oceanic tears and harassing hiccups. Though the world is enticing with glitters and groves, man should battle against all oddities of life rather than sinking his head in shame. The Poet says.

Battles of life is worth being fought  
Than hang the head in shame [.....]

In "No More" the poet personifies life as a ship and emphasizes the ship of life has reached its shore in spite of storms and tempests. Hence, there is no need to worry for worldly safety and security. Peeran in his own firm way reveals how to "Sustain Life". The secret of sustaining life is only by loving God and prostrating at the feet of the Master. Life has its crashes and hurdles, still the love of God soothes and eases the burden of life.

A joy ride may end in a crash.  
A soaring kite may dash to the ground  
But the love for the Master sustains  
And eases the burden of life.

In "Miracles of Life", the poet spotlights the passage of time and seasons in the journey of life, learning to lisp from mothers and trade from father domesticity and procreation, all miracles of life

revolve round the Great Master, a great truth told in a simple way. “Your Glance” expresses the longing for love in life. Life sans love is “sultry and sweaty”. It is like salt in food and adds spice to life. Apparently, the poem may be a yearning for the love of the beloved but in its deeper level it is the poet’s intense sense of longing for God’s grace and glance. Happiness in this life is elusive is illustrated by means of shoreless ocean and sailess-ship.

“Longings” speaks of the rift between the poet and his unethereal beloved perhaps God. With interrogations the poet reveals his longing to please his beloved by being the soothing wind, illuminating light, fragrant rose and perfume of Arabia. Like the romantic poet Keats, Poet Peeran too expresses his longing of becoming a nightingale to sing forever songs of delight. With subtle irony, the poet expresses that human form is a mixture of both demonic and angelic qualities. It contains an echo from Wordsworth’s famous poem “Immortality Ode” where he speaks of how a child is born with innate heavenly shine but when it grows and moves towards west, the angelic instinct gets lost in the clash and clamour of the world. It is the wish of poet Peeran to cast aside the brutal instinct and surrendering completely to the light of God and rise anew like the immortal Phoenix as a spirit, sparkling and glittering with heavenly radiance is expressed in the poem “Rise Again”. The poet has high hopes on his fellow-beings and in his far sightedness he visualises the resurgence of Man. “Our Dogmatic Brothers” presents the faction among men. Division among men is the common factor in modern India. Mostly man forms groups because of religion. The poet feels that killing, dissenting, grouping in the name of religious faith shuns the path of knowledge which leads to the missing of the goal. The poet describes:

White cap, a symbol of purity, now hides black soul.  
Our brethren, shunning path of knowledge, missing the goal.

“Withering Heart” portrays the duality in man; on the one side of the heart, he has love and on the other hatred and grudge lacking the milk of human kindness which results in stone heartedness. Enmity ends in scurrilous writing, spoiling reputation and

threatening of murder, as man wears the demonic-hood. The poem “No Way” begins with a very common insignificant trivial incident of itch at the back and unable to reach the exact spot, searching for a sharp pencil or stick to cater to the need which echoes Robert Frost’s poems beginning with delight and ending in wisdom. Exactly in the Frostian way, Peeran takes the readers to the rear stage to wear the costumes of our taste to mimic friends, foes and self. After play acting, the actor returns homeward as he is panic stricken chased by phantoms and ghosts. The poet reveals the condition of man and equates him with an actor.

The theme in the poem “Nothing to Beat” is loneliness of man. Through many interrogations the poet is prompting the readers to find an answer for the loneliness. Through uncommon analogies like “Ulcers in mouth, blisters in foot, bloody tears and scourged skin”, the poet emphasizes loneliness. Man is lonely like flightless birds amidst hunters. “Shameless” picturises the state of man as a shameless creature. Whether a shower or a withered man, he has no shame to beg or borrow to make both ends meet and finally shame even has deserted him. “Twinkling Eyes” again reflects the state of man at the time of his old age and inability. This poem “Twinkling Eyes” starts with natural objects like moon, stars, cloud and ocean playing hide and seek like man’s condition. His legs and knees weakened, movements restricted, neck collared, back stiffened, vision blurred and so the spirit is dampened. Though there is no one to give solace, a call from Mother Teresa or Florence Nightingale blankets him with love raising his hopes, proving the common dictum “Hope springs eternal in Man’s heart”. “Rise and Fall” presents the way of the world, how man should toil with sweetness and delight because cunning means are sure to be defeated. Peeran wisely expresses:

Love needs sweetness and salt of life.  
Artful plumes are sure to fall.

In the satiric poem “For Killing Veerappan” Peeran dexterously employs a sting at the end exactly like Alexander Pope, a well-known satirist. Innocent poor suffered due to a moustached

man and men in uniform were lured with money. But a nation's strength lies upon men of honesty and integrity. "What next" laments the state of man when nature is against him in the form of tsunamis, quakes, tremors, pollutions and floods. It is quite true that currency is the sole enemy of man. Corruption everywhere is the butt of criticism in the poem "Currency – Sole Enemy". In all places corrupt people yearn for fifty and fifty and no hand is clean. In temples, in laundries, everywhere there is the cry of adjustment. Hence the poet assets:

The sole enemy of the day is money.  
The bull in the market is currency.

In "Memory" Peeran states that memory is a gift from God and loss of memory is divine disfavour. Adam would not have suffered and sinned if he had not forgotten his promise to the Lord. Man commits mistakes because of failure of memory.

The image of a mother is glorified in the poem "O, Mother". Every man has an attachment to his mother. The poet glorifies his mother and reveals his love and respect for her. Very fondly, he describes the motherly fragrance and her cool hand on his brow when sick. She is pearl in his tear drop. His first love is his mother and she is breath and health for him. Above all, she is the life star to guide him. In the modern age when children send their parents to old age homes, Peeran is great when he glorifies his mother.

In very few poems, Poet Peeran reminiscences on his childhood. The poet brings to limelight his past days in the poem "On Top of the World", when he had childhood dreams. The poet stands on a mountain peak with his two hands raised heavenwards, watching a foggy star shine in the azure sky with white moonlight. At this juncture, he feels as if he is in nudity before God erasing all foul thoughts from his mind, dazzled by the radiance of heavenly light. "Flowering Life" reveals how life is multi-faced with joys and sorrows. Rainy seasons please the farmers as their granaries become full. Moreover, lighter moments ease the tensions of life.



Allied with the theme of man and his life is the theme of virtue and vice. God has created Man in his own image as the crown and glory of His Creation, but he has degraded himself as Adam, the first man became a prey to the evil pranks of Satan bringing sin and suffering to the world.

“Anger” is a vice in everyman which often makes him dejected and frustrated. The poet gives a gist of ten common reasons for becoming angry. Some say anger leads to madness. The poet with his Islamic faith seeks Allah’s help for protecting him from getting angry. Another similar vice is lying which forms the core of the poem “Why people lie”. In a comic vein, the poet exempts children and madmen from lying, because they lie without intelligence. But every person with sanity should stand the test of not lying. “Duality” presents another vice of man who is keeping double standards. Only if man surrenders himself at the feet of God, his soul will be purified from the sin of duality.

[.....] on confused mind polytheism  
sets in as milk turning sour unless boiled.

Another allied vice is “Jealousy” which started with the jealousy of Satan on the first created man Adam. Peeran pleads that man should be devoid of this satanic quality. “Oh, Petty Passions” reveals how man’s mind should be freed from petty passions so that his thoughts are elevated to God in order to get His grace. “Flush Out” suggests how to clear the waves in body and mind. Antibiotics or purgatives kill diseases or purify the body and mind should be cleared of the vices with the help of divine grace.

In “What is Khulus”, Peeran points out the virtue of humbleness, proving the dictum “humbleness is godliness”. Humility is praiseworthy and according to the Bible, God is merciful to the humble. A humble person is adorned with simplicity, softness, gentleness and kindness. His speech is “honeyed tongue” and “he is gentle to the core” and “extremely good, good and good and full of love”.

Nature is part and parcel of man's existence and romantic poets of the ninth century England found pleasure in enjoying and spiritualising nature. Poet Peeran is also attracted by nature and nature becomes the back cloth for many of his poems in which human activities begin and end. He enjoys personifying nature and makes it a silent spectator or active participant in human actions. The pervading silence in nature is portrayed by poet Peeran in his poem "Oh, Deadly Silence". The music and melody of several birds including cacophony have become silent. The sounds and horns of screeching vehicles have halted. The varied sounds of lamentations, lathies and firing of guns become silent every night revealing the temporary stoppage of hectic activities, perhaps signifying the deadly silence. "Summer Blues" is a pen portrait of the scenes in summer when birds sing, flowers adorn trees, parching of lands and throats yearning for lemon water, water melons and cucumber, while jasmines spread fragrance lighting hopes in man. On the other hand in the "Moonless Nights" the poet seeks beauty in nature. He interrogates "Where is beauty?" Life is like nights without moon suggesting hardships, troubles, frowns and stiffness of life. The nectar in life is lost.

As a contrast to moonless nights, the poet longs for "sweet night" in the next poem. The pangs and pains that he has suffered during day can be hidden in the sweetness of the night. His longing is expressed in the opening lines of the poem thus:

Day time is worst time for me to hide the pain.  
My senses fail to do any work of profit.

In the poem "A Rare Gift" the poet spotlights nature's gift to man that is flowers. Lovely flowers of varied colours are pleasing to the butterflies, bees and ants suck nectar and help pollination. Flowers, fruits and even colourful leaves of crotons are celestial gift to mankind. In "Nature's Ways" the poet shows how grief's melt away as time passes on leaving a scar in the memory. The wheel of life turns and turns grinding every painful act to refine and make whole the life of man. It is nature's way to mix seed in dust and help it to sprout. Similarly nature devises means and ways to relieve

pain. Like Wordsworth, Poet Peeran is having faith in nature and its healing effect. Every little object in nature inspires Poet Peeran to give out a world of thought.

“Lingering Past” presents the game of nature. While bees store honey in combs, man steals it to satisfy his gluttony. Throughout the globe, this kind of robbing is going on. Modern culture has robbed the peace of man. The seasonal changes are presented in the poem “Take Away”. Winter passes away enabling the stiff bones to move sleepiness of winter changes giving place to noisy days. Life in the sea changes and fishermen go out fishing. Even the taxman is on the prowl ready to take even the cookies.

The first groups of Peeran’s poems centre on Man, his activities, vices and virtues, his interdependence and his relationship with nature. Poet Peeran with master strokes has drawn pen portraits with apt word images. Death as an end to life is subtly hinted in all the poems. The sting behind the vices may be eye opener to the readers with similar vices. No doubt Peeran’s speculations are the outcome of a matured poet who sees life without fear or favour.

The best poems *In Rare Moments* voice the firm faith of the poet in God and religion forming the second group of poems. He humbles himself at the feet of God seeking His manifold blessings and mercies. His poems are his own loud praises of God. Like the English Metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century, John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell and others, Poet Peeran too seeks the benevolent blessings of God at times of perils and pains and also shine and joys. He celebrates his wonderful communion with God and all these reveal the poet’s innate goodness and virtues as man. Though he is holding his powerful office and his doctorate degree, he is humble to the core and gentle and humane in his relationship with fellow beings. His sincerity and honesty in his work, his patience and tolerance in spite of hurdles and illness are rare virtues that God has bestowed upon him.

“Moharrum Tazias” bears a religious tone in its description of the religious procession with people drumming and dancing and

calling “Ya Hussain” help, help!” youth beating their chests, boys with green turbans carrying silver “panghas” and fakirs walking on burning coal. The family tailor Raju, whatever religion he may belong to, waits for this moment to make a vow for the health of his son and for an alliance for his cheeky daughter, revealing the religious tolerance.

In “Illumination” as the title suggests the poet pleads for the showering of light on the self and soul. He hopes that our nation may be lighted so that the darkness of the ages may vanish. The poet asserts:

You need million suns to lighten our nation.  
To drive away the darkness of the ages.

“Man Arafa Naf Sahu” is a poem expressing Sufism. As a religious and pious man, the poet expresses his praises to the Great Creator who has meticulously designed the exterior and interior of man with harmony and precision. The more one reflects on God, one is tempted to utter more praises to God.

All religious faiths centre around God. No doubt Poet Peeran also looks upon God (Allah) for his mercies and miracles. Many of his poems witness the firm faith of the poet on God. “All Round Welfare” embraces all religious faiths and reveals the fact that though there are little variations in the form of worship, all prostrate at the feet of God to be blessed by Him. In the poem “Allah’s Bounty”, he directly invokes his God Allah and seeks his blessings as his bounty is limitless. He is the Great Peeran (using a pun, and reminding his name) who lights the inner and outer being of man. Similarly, poet Peeran through his poems chases away ignorance and darkness of the people at large. His poems clear the cobwebs in the mind and enable to develop faith in God. Effective use of words like “Peeran O Peer Allah ta Alla lead the poem to heights.

All religious portray God as a symbol of love and mercy. In “What is Love” Peeran pleads for the mercy of God which alone can help man. He raises a question “Where does Allah Reside?”. The whole poem is full of interrogations. Finally he says that God

resides in a heart with compassion and total mercy. He is on the truthful tongue and clean charitable hands. He lives in every cell of the body. "Is Allah Everywhere" denotes that God is fathomless. The poem is highly religious and metaphysical. "Master Where" exposes the fact that God is with everyone. Every tongue should praise Him for his kindness through thick and thin. His light illumines the dark soul and so purity dawns and brightens his being.

The poet reflects on God's grace in the poem "Your Grace". Though God is invisible, the poet is often reminded of His grace and love. He wants God to guide him on the right path so that he may be detached from worldly attractions. He wants always to be a slave to God.

"Desolate Damsel" is a plea to the torn and tattered woman who are deflowered and left to decay, to turn to the real love of God. Though the earthly lover has betrayed the damsel, God will never betray his children and his portals are always open to one and all. The poem reminds Psalm 27:10 in the Bible. "When my father and my mother forsake me then the Lord will take care of me". "Master's Glory" suggests the heavenly bliss that the poet feels at his mater's glance. As God's glance and grace is enough for him he sends "Million Praises" to God. In "O, My Lord" the poet requests God to give him strength to love him. Human qualities like pride, anger and desires should not curtail him from loving God. He very honestly seeks God's blessings on his parents, teachers and children. In "Be Obedient" he seeks divine protection from evil. In "Great Being" through the image of a football, he expresses his desire to be tied to the Great Being that is God.

The poet feels that it is his bounden duty to seek the mercies of God "Sweetened Love" focuses on God's mercy as expressed through good men. "Mercy" is celestial gift to the submissive. In "New Life Anew" the poet says though tyrants create troubles, God's mercy brings new life.

The poet believes in eternal life and also in heaven and hell. In "Reach Moksha", the poet requests to bridle passion and to achieve eternal peace or Moksha. In the poem "Sakratul Mauth" too he

seeks eternal life. In “How to Reach Truth”, truth is compared to a steep mountain, slippery and difficult to climb. Only through the foundation of faith it can be reached. Truth is neither deceptive nor suspicious. It is hospitable and charitable and quick to forgive. One who is truthful will reach Eternal Light and Lord.

The title poem, I feel needs special mention. “Rare Moments” suggests special or precious moments in one’s life. In the poem the rare moment is the unification of two hearts to form one in the holy matrimony. This is considered as the most “pleasurable and precious experience”. The hearts are not united in wedlock but the two hearts have melted to form one when friends shower fragrant flowers. Such rare moments should be ever fresh in memory, preserved for ages. To the youth “Stealing the heart” will be a rare moment. Couples dancing to the tune of music may be a rare moment for them.

The poet has given a preposition to the phrase Rare Moments, making it *In Rare Moments* as the title of his ninth blossom of poetry. I presume, Poet Peeran too would have experienced “Rare Moments” in his life and in those rare moments at office or at home, he would have been inspired to compose poems. Anyway it is my wish that poet Peeran should experience rarest moments in life so that he may write many more bouquets of poems.

The 25 Haikus at the end adorn the collection of poems as small flowers sprinkled at the close of a ceremony. Haikus contain only three lines but carry a world of thought. The first line puts forth an idea, the second line elaborates it and the third line presents the universal truth. The Haikus contain variety of images – of animals, birds, flowers, sun, moon, stars and wind. All the 25 Haikus are crowns to the wise poet Peeran. I mean every word and this is not an exaggeration.

Poet Peeran employs a unique style and technique which can be called “Peeranisque” in order to make his poems impressive and effective. There is an ease and poise in his style and with simple ordinary words he creates beautiful word pictures. For example “pickle and honey with Ragi-balls” (No way), “Moon-eyed hoories”

(Nothing to beat), “music of life waning into silence” (What next), and “Wings of freedom” (New life anew).

Using interrogations in the poems is a technique used by Peeran. He asks but never gives a reply or expects an answer. All the questions are suggestive and the poet deliberately leaves them to the readers to find answers. The examples are “Can I be the wind to give you solace? Can I be the fragrance of a rose? Can I be that perfume of Arabia?” (Longings), “Are hopes and dreams mere mirages?” (Rise Again), “When will the closed door open?” (Your Glance), and “Where else can I find paradise?” (Master’s Glory).

Following the pattern of modern American and Canadian poets, Peeran too makes use of capitals in his poems to stress on important abstract nouns such as TRUTH, LOVE and MERCY. The ending of all the poems is significant because of the depth of thought. Some of the poems end in couplets bearing a universal truth or a wise counsel or a generalised fact. Examples are:

Divinity transcending in its own way (Miracles)

When man and nature are against you (What Next)

Who see, hear and are in ever submission (Mercy)

Couplets:

There is no loss, no gain, no joy, no pain  
Unburden your baggage, hold fast that Rope” (Reflection)

O Glory of the heaven and earth!  
Let millions of tongues praise Thee! (Million Praises)

Blessed are those who pass away blissfully.  
With His name on the lips and smiles (Sakratul Maouth)

Flowers and fruits and colourful leaves  
Forever a celestial gift for mankind. (A Rare Gift)

Poet Peeran is dexterous in his use of images. Common, ordinary and insignificant objects become powerful images with the master stroke of the literary artist, and making them apt in their

context. For example, “like a housefly”, “Indian mind is like stock exchange”, “bull dashing off”, “soften like butter”, and “summer thought prancing”. He uses special words related with Islamic faith like *Satan* (devil), *Iman* (faith) and always refers to Allah, the God of his faith. There are many echoes from the Bible and shadows of the great metaphysical and romantic poets.

To conclude, *In Rare Moments* one finds poems which are really praiseworthy bearing the stamp of poet Peeran. They are indeed valuable to life. They have deeper levels of meaning and readers can interpret them in their own way. In simple language, Poet Peeran injects deep thoughts. World would have been a second heaven if there is religious tolerance which is found in the poems of Peeran practiced all over the globe. The poet condemns factions and groups of all sorts among men in the name of religion or class but as a humanitarian Peeran advocates comradeship, companionship and fellowship among his fellow beings. The words of our former Prime Minister A. B. Vajpayee apt to quote here:

When he puts all his life in the balance Judges himself by his  
own touch stone, Adds it, all up, without money – What, then,  
does he say to himself That alone has worth, that alone is his  
truth.

### ***In Rare Moments* – Shiva Kant Jha**

WILL Durant was exploring to answer: What is the meaning or worth of human life? He wrote to persons like Winston Churchill, Albert Einstein, Mahatma Gandhi, and Rabindranath Tagore to get ideas from them whose credentials Will Durant thus explained in his letter to Bertrand Russell:

Perhaps the verdict of those who have lived is different from that of those who have merely thought. Spare me a moment to tell me what meaning life has for you, what help – if any religion gives you, what keeps you going, what are the sources of your inspiration and your energy, what is the goal or motive-force of your toil; where you find your consolations and your happiness, where in the last resort your treasure lies.



These lines abided in my mind while I went through S.L. Peeran's *In Rare Moments*. Peeran lived and worked, thought and reflected, and then he expressed himself in the poems-which present, not the reveries in the ivory-towers, but a critical insight in words and images with deep evocative resonances. This reviewer feels that if Alvin Krenan, the author of *The Death of Literature*, ever reads some of the poems in this collection of poems, he would surely desist from writing an obituary on the demise of poetry even in our locust-eaten years.

Dr Krishna Srinivas has quite perceptively observed, while writing on the 'Poetry Peeran'

He [Peeran] chooses his words to act as missiles that will explode  
in the reader's mind.

I would wholly endorse his comment, yet I would add a few words. Peeran's poems, at least some of them, possess that supreme quality of poetry which in Indian poetics and philosophy is called 'sphota' which literally means 'to bud out, to break out, to come out with energy and impact'. It is what flowers inside one's mind on reading a poem. And, once it happens, one is enriched and stimulated.

"Are hopes and dreams mere mirages?", the poet asks (at p2) Civilisations have grown in richness with a high quotient of dreams and hopes. It is through dreams that great ideas turn into visions before being concretised in life; it is hope which sustains us through life's crisscross. But now we see a great danger in this society of calculators, and sophisters as these nobler qualities are fading all around us. The poet has pithily expressed this tragic flaw of our times by a simple but profound observation: "Indian mind is like a stock-exchange." (at p. 4) The portrait of our plight is well expressed by the poet:

"Let's adjust, Let's adjust"

is the wholesome cry

Cut the corners, here,  
Cut it there, anywhere.

The sole enemy of the day is money  
The bull in the market is currency, (at p. 22)

If this be the state of our affairs, we are surely caught in the throes of the Seven Sins to which Mahatma Gandhi referred.

Politics without principles  
Wealth without work  
Commerce without morality  
Education without character  
Pleasure without conscience  
Worship without sacrifice.

Peeran's poems express a profound vision of life, and shows strong commitments to struggle to achieve what are the very 'human specifics'. It is not the Darwinian struggle to survive and grow in animal delight, but it is an evolution which is not bedeviled by the syndrome of an imbalance between the high technological growth and moral stagnation, if not degradation. The poet has well said:

Battles of life are worth being fought.  
Than hang the head in shame and be mocked, (at p.15)

The task is difficult, but it is the struggle to get over such difficulties which makes life worth living.

The poet's deeper reflections on life led him to discover the main culprit perpetrating all the ills of our days. The poet aptly says:

Waves of mind distorts  
The crystal-clear waters  
Of sublime soul, (at p. 25).

The poet is quite conscious of the fact of correction is uphill. He expresses his apprehension by saying: "You need million Suns to lighten our Nation."

All this makes the poet think that even God can be questioned on His work:

Being lonely, alone and desolate.  
Everyone wishes to melt away

And reach God to question him  
Where were they at fault? (p. 11)

Similar question had been asked by Job in the Book of Job. God's answer is very unsatisfactory. He silences Job by His majesty of light which is meant to make the poor man feel that he is congenitally incompetent to understand His ways. God's answer is no answer; or if it is, it is Fascist in style. When Bali asks Shri Rama certain inconvenient questions, He answers persuasively and at length. The poet has himself answered by describing us in these words of profoundest wisdom.

The poet, in effect, draws attention to a profound doctrine of revolution. One of his poems ends with:

Annal Huq': I am Truth, (at p. 48)

In fact, most of the poems leave in mind the sphota of Annal Huq which bring to mind these famous lines of Faiz Ahmed Faiz:

*Bas naam rahega Allah ka  
Jo ghayab bhi hai hazir bhi  
Jo manzar bhi hai, nazir bhi  
Uthege Annal Huq ka nara  
Jo mai bhi hon aur tum bhi ho  
Aur raaj karegi Khalq-e-Kuda  
Jo mai bhi hon aur tum bhi ho  
Hum dekhenge  
Lazim hai hum bhi dekhenge  
Hum dekhenge...!*

And when all is said, the poet sings the paean of 'straight paths' suggesting how much simple and easy it is if we just move on the straight line of justice! The poet says: 'Let my progeny walk on straight paths.' (p. 61). This reminds me what Earnest Barker had written to Albert Einstein: "If at your command, the straight lines have been banished from the universe, there is yet one straight line that always remains – the straight line of right and justice." Most of the poems by Peeran invite us to discover this straight lines of right and justice, and inspire us to tread on them with courage and imagination...

The poems in the collection under review have diverse themes, but they all seem to emanate from a root metaphor: the cultural crisis of our times morbidly begotten by the present-day consumerist culture. But in the poems, the ideas are not a set of dry bones. Their rhythm and images make them alive, and lead them to poetic richness. The reviewer wishes that Peeran should keep alive his interest in high creative pursuits. But when all is said, the reviewer quotes with approval what William Cowper said:

There is a pleasure in poetic pains Which only poets know.

Courtesy Taxindiaonline.com

### ***In Rare Moments* – Mahashweta Chaturvedi**

Dedicated to all the Poetry Lovers, the volume of the poems begins with the letters of Dr. Krishna Srinivas... “Herewith My Foreword”. When senses are renovated and cleansed, poems rise in them like foundation. Yeats had visitations of supernatural agencies when he wrote poems.....”

S.L. Peeran is one of the most skilled craftsman in Indian – English Poetry. The volume of Poems entitled *In Rare Moments* contains 72 poems and some Haikus along with S. L. Peeran’s publication.

A Ninth collection of poems entitled *In Rare Moments* contains poems of devotional, philosophical and social nature. In the words of the world Poet Krishna Srinivas – “Poetry Peeran is the poetry of eternal moments. Poet Peeran reveals the power and vitality that streams through creation. He chooses his words to act as missiles that will explode in the reader’s mind.”

Peeran is a social poet also, his blood boils at the sight of injustice, so cries down the crimes and injustices that prevail everywhere today. The able poet writes: (Ibid p.13)

Day in and day out being dogmatic  
Holding on to the profanity and ill feelings  
Like a housefly aimlessly moving around.  
Oblivious of the harm inflicting on others. (Ibid p.3)

Warning the audience, he says:

“The audience should know what is real.  
Then watch the puppets all through their life.  
The pickle and honey should taste well with Ragi-balls  
Sanity is trying to light lamps in chilly stormy nights.” (p.10)

According to the poet:

Battles of life are worth being fought.  
Than hang the head in shame and be mocked (p.15)

Enlightenment is needed to make the life meaningful. In the words of the poet Peeran

You need an enlightened Man like Buddha.  
A Prophet of immense light, “Noor”.  
To take you out of ages of decay  
And make you stand before the great Effulgence. (p.14)

Peeran sings the glory of the Lord, our Father by saying:

Allah’s bounty is limitless.  
It is His Mercy and Benevolence  
That such a Great Being should bestow  
His Grace on such Insignificant creatures like us (p.41)

Duality is curse on the human lives and man’s various traits challenge each other. He says:

The light of wisdom rarely dawns on minds,  
Unless the mind is stilled to oneness and purified (p.45)

The effect of the great Gayatri Mantra is seen everywhere in his poem “Duality”. The poet inspires us to search the Almighty within:

He is in every cell of body  
Where resides the love of  
Prophet Muhammad. (p.46)

The teachings of the great philosopher Socrates and the Upanishads are (known thyself, *Tamasthum ye nu pashyanti Dheera*) in his poems when he sings in his songs: –

My master’s glance is an intoxicating wine  
Taking me to oblivion and to heavenly abode  
Mirth and pleasures waning away

My soul soaring up above the world. (p.55)

Indeed, the poet Peeran has earned a niche in the reign of Indian English Poetry. Here, all the poems are varied and the 25 Haikus at the end adorn the collection of poems. He employs a unique style, diction and technique to make his poems inspiring and effective, bearing the stamp of poet Peeran.

Images in these poems come from the real world of our time. Indeed his muse diagnoses the diseased society as well as offers sweet pills of love, faith, courage, theism and generosity for its treatment. The cover design of the collection is very beautiful, printing too is nice.

Courtesy Bizz Buzz

### ***In Rare Moments* – Shaleen Kumar Singh**

The 9<sup>th</sup> collection of S.L. Peeran entitled *In Rare Moments* certainly is another volume that has strengthened his roots of poetic excellence in the soil of Indian English Poetry and spread the shoots and branches of glory in the world of literature. Mr. Peeran does not need any primary introduction to his poetry for an average reader of Indian English Journals could have hardly missed the chance of reading his poems. He is widely published and admired so Gordon Hindly had to say:

S.L. Peeran is a worthy lakshana or sign post of the best in all of us and in the Indian English writing. (Blurb)

So R.K. Singh observes in him:

The poet is critical philosophical and interpretative of his milieu and influence.

The book under the review is dedicated to all the poetry lovers of the globe. It has seventy four poems of different topics in which the poet has brilliantly scattered his poetic sensibility as well as intellectual thoughts into his poem so he can be considered both as a poet of emotion as well as heart. The letters of appreciation as motivation by Dr. K. Srinivas and the Foreword like article 'Poetry

Peeran is nothing but an outpouring of criticism. The chief characteristics of Peeran's poetry are society and social consciousness. K Srinivas observes him as:

Peeran has gained many distinctions and he is the right man to regain what all we have lost. He cries down the crimes and injustices that prevail everywhere today.(XIII)

But he is never grim or dishearten. Srinivas adds:

Like President Kalam and Daisaku Ikeda of Japan he visions a paradise that will come. (XIII)

The poem 'The End', 'Moharram Tazia', 'All Round Welfare', 'Currency-Sole Enemy', 'Read Moksha', 'For Killing Veerappan', 'Is Allah Everywhere', 'Where Does Allah Reside', 'What is Life', 'How to Reach Truth', 'Why people Lie', 'Duality', 'Grace', 'Jealousy', 'A Rare Gift', 'Be Obedient', and 'Some Haikus' are full of idealism and have a clear cut approach to morality, divinity and spirituality. The poet Peeran is a poet of teachings and preaching who often appears to be indulged more in the things which should be not in the things which are truly. Therefore, the poetry of Peeran can be termed totally the poetry of didacticism. Most of the poems of Peeran speak volumes of the Islam and its Sufi tradition. His poetry is the true explication of Sufism. A number of the titles of the poems are in the form of question like 'A number of the titles of the poems are in the form of the question like 'What Next?', 'What is Love?', 'How to Reach Truth?', 'Why People Lie?', 'What is Khulus?', 'Where does Allah Reside?', 'Is Allah Everywhere?' and 'Masters Where?' in which the poet initially commences the poem with question and after long chain of questions answers himself and tries to satisfy with his own logic. For example we may take the poem

'Where does Allah Reside?' in which Peeran interrogates:

Tell me where does Allah reside?  
In Kaaba, in Mosque, in Temple, in Church,  
In Dargas, in Maqbeeras, where? Where? (46)

And he continues his series of questions and concludes:

Know now my dear loving brother that  
He is in the mind with crystalline purity!  
He is in the heart with absolute compassion  
And total mercy!  
He is on the truthful tongue.  
He is in the eyes with shame.  
He is on the hands of charity.  
He is in every cell of body where resides the love of  
Prophet Mohammadi in true spirit. (46)

In an age of modernism when the higher values of life have withered and poetry could not even escape the batteries and assaults of declination and perversion when the concept of 'Art for Art's Sake' has taken the place of 'art for morality's sake', a ray of joy and happiness seems lurking somewhere when I journey through the poems of poet's like Peeran and in this blue and dark hour of ours, the poetry of the poets like Peeran confers a solace as well as affirms that at least some poets today have folded the candle of reform and they will continue to dedicate his life and poems to poetry and God.

At last I Wish to pay my profuse thanks and regards to Peeran for writing such a good collection and pray for his long life and his everlasting poetry.

Courtesy: *Poetry World*, Sep-2008



*In Sacred Moment*

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**Introduction to “*In Sacred Moment*” – Shujaat Hussain**

My beloved and reverend poet brother S. L. Peeran invited me to offer a few words on his forthcoming 10<sup>th</sup> new book of poetry titled *In Sacred Moments*. I would like to accept his benign invitation and deem it my honour and pleasure. This 10<sup>th</sup> book will be celebrated not only the touchstone of poetry, but also will help in cultivating humanistic atmosphere for leading lives in calm and tranquility.

Writing about S L Peeran is a delightful task for me though by no means it is an easy assignment to accomplish since earlier Padma Bhushan awardee, editors of different journals/periodicals and professors have already written foreword and introduction for his nine books namely *In Rare Moments*: 2007, *Fountains of Hopes*: 2006, *New Frontiers*: 2005, *A Call From The Unknown*: 2003, *In Silent Moments*: 2002, *A Search From Within*: 2002, *A Ray of Light*: 2002, *In Golden Moments*: 2001 and *In Golden Times*: 2000. I am still studying Plato, Aristotle, Addison, Johnson, Richards, Dryden, Arnold, Coleridge, Moulton, Scherer, Warton, and Eliot etc. When I write I want to be true and honest critic. It's my passion to ferret out Excellences instead of Imperfections. I regard it my principal duty to discover the concealed beauties of a writer, communicate to the world such things as worth their observations.

After flowing straight for a while, most rivers take a sudden turn. Likewise, literature does not invariably follow the straight path; when it takes a turn, that turn is called modern. We call it

*jadeed* in Urdu. He represents modern period with modern prevalent maladies and exquisitely forthwith essentially its remedial measures.

Wordsworth expressed in his own style the spirit of delight that he realised in nature. Shelley's was a Platonic contemplation, accompanied by a spirit of revolt against every kind of obstacle, political, religious or otherwise. Keats' poetry was wrought out of the meditation and creation of beauty. And now Peeran's poetry has taken shape because he lived through the tumultuous events of his country's history: internecine turmoil and tribulations such as Les Fleurs du Mal. He confronted the violence, anxiety and predicament of the modern moments with an ironic and iconic gaze. Thus in *Sacred Moments* comes into existence.

Earlier the English poets with whom we came into contact saw the universe in their own eyes and they molded it according to their individual desires. The universe of Wordsworth was specially, "Wordsworthian," of Shelley "Shelleyan," of Byron, "Byronic" and now of Peeran "Peeranian". We call it Peeranian because of his self-expression.

S L Peeran is an English poet, short story writer, editor of the *Sufi World* and winner of numerous accolades. Peeran's prophetic work will be considered seminal in the history of poetry because of its merits. His creative vision engenders symbolically rich corpus and embraces imagination. He is highly regarded today for his expressiveness and creativity, as well as the philosophical and mystical undercurrents that reside within his work. He is influenced by the Holy Scriptures like the Holy Qur'an wherein the entire code of living is categorically mentioned. He is of course a glorious contemporary luminary will achieve even higher position in the years to come. I think poetry is a gift from God so it attains a new height through his thought, word and structure. What it bears is a source of redemption.

Now the 10<sup>th</sup> book of Peeran will shortly be in the hands of readers. During this span of time he has acquired commendable learning, and is blessed with a high fancy, a civil and sharp wit; and with a natural elegance, both in his admirable behaviour, his sweet

tongue, and his powerful pen. In *Sacred Moments* reflects his great abilities, learning and virtue, his lots of affection to the people and his country. He appears to be a man of uncanny wisdom, of a unique confidence, of so zeal, and of so governed passions.

It is pen that is unfailing, unconquerable and the eternal weapon of the excellence that has been imparted to Peeran by Almighty because of his unflinching faith in Him. That's why he serves creatures. His 10th book *In Sacred Moments* is exemplary for his service to human beings through his poetry and a mirror to watch own conducts of life.

The poems in *In Sacred Moments* are sequentially related, simple but startling, soul searching, pacifying, fecundity in art, literally moving and moulding. Peeran's stalwart eyes are wide open. He diagnoses and prescribes medicines of sublime thoughts to heal wounds caused by so-called human lover and peace keeper. The title page of the book is not only to read but also to watch. The word Sacred is eternal message to pseudo Superpower, self-proclaimed highly qualified, cultured and boasting of being economically sound. Two hands joined together, raised before face and from the core of the heart, the worshipper cries before the Almighty who is the Creator of the universe. Rays of light that are emanating from the hands will certainly overcome darkness. Stark gamut of *In Sacred Moments* may easily be understood by the people who know someone is watching from heaven that creatures are enjoying their lives on His planet. The word Sacred plays an important role in purifying souls. Like saints and sages, Sufi poet Peeran conveys message to the world. This is the essence which permeates from *In Sacred Moments*.

The pen represents the written form about the creation and the events to be effected in the countless generations from the beginning of the world to its end. Poets and readers must know that the inkpot and the pen have a mystic expression of the source of knowledge.

S.L. Peeran is a kind of poet having enchanting appeal of a poetic melody with seriousness of the meaning and reality of the thought. He is a particular sort of poet who indulges in useful and

upgrading expressions that lead and arouse healthy passions that favours the art of poetry.

Peeran is so much engrossed in perception of poetry that he composes poetry in praise of God, the truth and condemns falsehood and all sort of evils that delude man from right thinking.

The English Sufi poet Peeran is to be known for *In Sacred Moment*, a monument of excellent rhetoric which dexterously combines experience and demonstration of the way to salvation. Some devotional poems therein combine a homely familiarity with religious experience and fervour and a reverent sense of its magnificence. His verse is marked by virility of thought, decency of tone, precision of language, metrical versatility, and profound piercing feeling. His verses are thought so worthy to be preserved.

Many of the poems have different rhyme schemes, and variations of lines within stanzas. His individuality magnifies his stature among Peeran's peers in the realm of poetry.

This book contains 58 poems and among them are 33 consisting of 14 lines. Should we call this type of poem a Sonnet? The word 'sonnet' is a derivation of the Italian 'sonnet to', meaning a little sound or strain. Peeran's poem of 14 lines are neither Petrarchan nor Shakespearean as I do not find in three quatrains, abab, cdcd, efef, gg a form so splendidly used by Shakespeare nor does it have 3 quatrains and a couplet composed in iambic pentameter. Peeran's 14 lines poems are not composed to two parts- the octave, a stanza of eight lines and the sestet a stanza of six. However, it is Peeranian, a perfect flower in the garden of poetry. It excels not only in formal beauty, but also in emotional colour. And it is also expressed in condensed form one feeling, one idea or one emotion. Moreover, it yokes the idea of Rossetti 'moment's monuments'....

In the poem *In Sacred Moments*, Peeran draws references from Holy Scriptures "I had broken the 'Lakshman Rekha'; like Adam/Shown jealousy and arrogance like Satan". He knows well

God is merciful and beneficent so he advises worshippers to be submissive, and seek mercy in prayers:

Yet when I am in submission in prayers  
I am like a child in the arms of my mother  
O Lord! Forgive my erring soul and mind  
Enlighten the soul to sing paean to Thee.

Enlighten Soul leads readers as exactly to find Peeran's belief and love for Master. Whatever he is now, is blessings of Lord. Peeran says 'the sun in my heart', 'the moon in my mind' the stars in my eyes' and 'the cool breezes from all sides' have enlightened soul. Unflinching faith brings nearer to God and keeps fire of hell away.

Humility and Submission is a poem wherein he makes people knows the traits of humble man and advises to adopt in their lives. A humble man is truth, simple in manners, talks and dress, gentle in his speech and gait, never harsh to the less fortunate, courteous to parents, relatives, friends, walks with softness, keeps eyes on the ground, never complains of the misfortunes and woes...performs duties cheerfully without complaints.

Peeran portrays the problems and thereby effect on modern man which we find in his poem Dance to the Natures Tunes. He pathetically delineates activities of man from dawn to dusk he is engaged in. Hours is racy, in a hurry, stomach is black furnace, tiny brains ablaze and has to work more to earn livelihood. Every dawn enacts its own drama anew. So helpless with all these problems that compel to make men dance to its own tunes.

He ridicules modern man in "Shame Shame" and expresses sorrows and indignation with the uncertainties of new generations:

Shame has abandoned the modern man  
Unabashedly uncovers the most secret parts  
To ever be in bonhomie pleasures and mirth  
Ah! What to come of new generations?

Now the world has radically changed. The people feel human has turned stony, dagger seems in the laughter, forget and forgiveness hardly exists:

Charity, the cream of living, has now melted  
Forgiveness has flown away to make hearts stony  
Volcanic eruptions from within destroys everything  
Ah! The times do not augur happy tidings

Peeran possesses potential of ascertaining the rhyme or reason of rise and fall of a man. Judge Properly is remarkable in its tone and texture. Will of Divine comes to rescue for the fallen people. If a man suffers or reels somewhere must judge his own deeds that he is engaged in and act in accordance with the codes laid down by Holy Scriptures:

Fallen people seldom rise again  
Unless Divine Mercy comes to their aid  
Vain thoughts disturb clear thinking  
Vulgarity, profanity are cause for Man's down fall

Sorrows in prime of life is a didactic poem in nature. Peeran makes people aware of the fact that it is not easy to get anything under the sun for survival. Thought, action, dedication and perseverance are symbolical words that enable us to reap the harvest. Those who believe in work and labour fortune favours:

One needs to churn the milk to get butter  
Suck the nectar million times for honey  
Till, plow and sow for a good harvest  
Be smithy to give shape to an iron

The poem Delights is replete with the examples that have been extracted from the lives and activities of animals, birds and insects. Human being is proud of being supreme in the universe but indulges himself in one of the deadly sins which is 'greed'. It makes man even inferior to animals. We must take lesson from frog, butterfly and ant and be satisfied and contented which is a source of merriment and mirth:

A frog is happy, if it can catch a butterfly  
A butterfly, if it can suck the nectar

An ant, if it can find a grain of sugar  
But greedy man needs more and more, to fill.

It is of immense flabbergasting if people belonging to other religions or communities point fingers to their religion in the sense that Islamic terrorism or Islamic terrorist, or Muslims are fundamentalist it means, a direct and inappropriate attack on belief which hurt feelings and jolt the mind. If someone mistrust honesty and suspect patriotism definitely question does arise as to how the unbearable stigmas become tolerable. Such kind of experiences would have compelled Peeran to express his bitter experiences in One Humanity. It is a poem of not a continent, not of a religion, not of a country, not of an age or not of a class but for the entire world. Human beings are the creatures of the Creator but Christians, Jews, Hindus or Muslims are the creation of the land. Good or bad, evils or virtues, literate or illiterate, rich or poor, sensible or senseless, criminal or saviour are the ingredients of all religions. Battle of Waterloo and Panipat, World War I and II, Invasion of Kuwait, attack on Twin Towers, Usurp of Iraq in the name of Weapons of Mass Destruction, rains of Daisy Cutter and Guided missiles in Afghanistan, Undue possession of Philistine by Israelis, Demolition of Babri Mosque, Bombay, Bangalore and Ahmedabad serial bomb blasts, genocide in Gujarat etc. all these heinous deeds have not been perpetrated by one religion. Peeran knows: "Islam means safety of others". It is not a matter to ignore but ignite and teach a moral lesson so Peeran would have composed this poem for the volatile brain who create chaos and may kindly be read this stanza:

There are righteous men in every religion  
So also disbelievers indulging in "kufri"  
Hypocrites, unbelievers, disgruntled lots  
Every community has a set of good and bad ones!

There is no need to move elsewhere to find who is truly a martyr. Just see the poem Good and Evil. Peeran asserts that the man who lays down his life for truth is a martyr in the strict sense of the term. But at the same time it must be aware of the significance of truth. Truth is as high as where our thought can't fly

and sweet as honey; as lofty as the seventh sky. The protagonist of this poem Mansur Hallaj speaks out “I am truth” only to be guillotined and dismembered. Men are angel and Satan too but the inevitable condition is to ring out the evil and embrace the good. Indeed, to follow the truth requires courage and patience, full of virtuous deed.

A man is proud of being handsome, healthy, wealthy, educated, cultured, and influential and et al., but the increase in the micro albumin level in the body structure system causes profound problems that one can understand from the medical reports which has been elucidated in the poem A Grim Picture. The slight increase in the micro albumin level disturbs several parameters in the blood and urine. Prohibitory prescription reads as: give up eating chocolates, ice-cream, fruits, sweet-meal, rice, fatty substances, meat and meat products, oily substances, tea, and coffee etc. The doctor says that it is a very serious matter. The patient may go in coma, can lose eyesight and kidney and prone to have heart attack. All efforts such as, a pilgrimage to Ajmer, Shanti Pooja, a visit to Mariyamma temple, roots and shoots, vairs, hakims and homeopaths, yogis, swamis went in vain. Just to remember “Call from the unknown is irresistible”. Ultimately, horrible death may occur. The poet wants to convey message through this poem is that an earthen man is perishable and life moves and lasts at the will of God. He blesses and takes away.

The central idea of the poem Whither Peace? stands for ‘there is no peace in mind and life’. Here the poet compares lives of daily-wage earner to the beggar. The predicament of the salaried persons are voluminous and grievous as their pay-packet getting thinner every month with so many cuts and “IOU’S”. At every corner devils are lying in wait to fleece, taxmen at the door to tease and even at home wife’s greed and lamentations work for the remaining parts. The question comes to the mid of the poet for the solution. Can Gandhism help tide over the situations?

Peeran differentiates between tyrants and prophets in his poem Tyrants Vs. Prophets. The king wages wars. He burns the towns to



rescue hostages and henchmen and slaughters the opponents mercilessly whereas prophet possesses miracles with Divine powers nevertheless bears the brunt of opponents, enemies and disbelievers and never avenge his adversaries. Prophet, saint and his followers are entirely surrendered to the Master. Humility and sublimity are his hall-marks. His heart is full of mercy. King is a dictator and his mind is obsessed with tyranny. Peeran is fearless when he is giving shape to accumulated ideas. He knows what he is creating is an eternal and a source of salvation.

Like William Blake Peeran is a visionary poet. He finds that to clear the mind and free the soul from darkness is, indeed, a daunting task. The poet propounds reason behind the fact is that now the people are living in a cocoon and in a web of religious and ritualistic life and yearn to look at the cosmos without knowledge. And in such a periphery the thoughts and images get blurred simply because of their preferred taste of living and queer way of thinking. Here in the fashion of metaphysical poets, Peeran implies scientific reference as 'Like white light breaking into VIBGYOR/On its passing through the prism/Our vision too gives colour to our thoughts/And gets frozen into the vitals of system'. Can we believe Daunting Task is the creation of the surrounding atmosphere he lives in?

Golden Hearts is a criticism of the behaviour and attitude of the so-called religious people who indulge themselves in the construction and demolition of the temple or mosque. These frenzied lots take innocent lives and create nuisance. They do not know 'where does God reside? Peeran makes people believe that God can't be found in hills, mountains, plains,, temples, mosques, churches, gurudwaras, and synagogues. Why the people are illusionary? Because they have blurred their visions and coloured their thoughts. Abode of God is the sublime and purified golden hearts. Here words 'sublime' and 'purified' are sufficient to solve every conflict of ideas. If someone wants to see or have God first of all make their thought sublime and purify souls.

When Peeran goes through news item for purchasing fighter planes he was utterly surprised at the decision of our senseless leaders. The point that strikes to his mind, where is the relevance of purchasing of the Rs 43,000/- crores for fighter planes? Particularly at the time when peace has prevailed. Enemies have already shaken hands. Hovering dark clouds have disappeared. In such a condition where is the need of fighter planes? There is no need using so huge amount on this catastrophic items. Heart rending suicides by farmers have shaken the nation. Situation is grim. Eyes are still wet. Grief is yet to over and pace of life is yet to recover. Peeran prays to God to prevail good sense to our leaders:

O Lord! Bless our senseless leaders  
Prevent another Bofor's scam  
Let our funds be used for irrigation  
Save poor populace from being perished.

The poet says with firm belief that My Guru is matchless. He is unlettered but the Lord has blessed him knowledge and His world. In spite of this blessing, he is innocent, simple, humble, a kindred spirit, peerless in excellence. Despite, never plays tricks and magic. He does not call himself an avatar. The poet's guru passes his days in a thatched roof, open to all, at all hours, sweet in tongue, compassionate with bright twinkling eyes. His message is love, what the Lord like 'To embrace the whole humanity.'

Visiting graves and mausoleums of saints is not blasphemous. It is a kind of prayer and paying tribute to them. Their lives and deeds are inspirational characteristics: humanity, generosity, gentleness, humility, sincerity, benevolence, sweetness, love, affection, compassion, kindness, charity, broad mindedness, learning and wisdom. So much inherent qualities automatically attract man of sense to their graves and mausoleums. To adopt in the daily lives will certainly bring a radical change and will be of immense harmonious in bringing fellow feeling and friendly culture which is the need of the hour.

The fractured human lives, tainted love and warring peace, pricking harmony, flawed fraternity and activities towards self-

annihilation that would have made tremendous roads into his vision and most powerful influence which have paved the way for the creation of his poem *The Great Upheaval*. The words of this poem are well chiseled. His heart bleeds so his poem awakes conscience to make it alive. He makes readers feel his feeling, feeling of the human beings. His sight reaches places and countries where wars are being waged in the name of some pretext and white nations are at its nadir to display their barbarism.

What he thinks in his mind comes to the heart and takes shape is something heart rending and beyond from common and average men of caliber and courage.

*The Great Upheaval* produces inexplicable resonance when I speak it. Peeran is a benign poet who wants to see the welfare of human beings so that life on earth acquire a higher potency and value. You will agree to my view that poetry is life and that a poet's greatness depends upon the greatness of his subject matter. How can we imagine poetry if there is absence of life, love, peace, faith, trust, fraternity, humanity, happiness, prosperity etc.?

Readers with sense and sensibility find the poet with the large sword of his vigorous writing *The Great Upheaval*, enters with the sensitive surgical pincers of his poem and his sarcasm, in the depths of human soul and in the narrow of its problems, bringing up the hypocrisy of the White supremacy.

The tone and contents pierce the heart. It is picturesque just to imagine, when tears shed, roll on cheeks and severe hunger, tiny toddling crying out for their lost milk, women's tears flood and tempest sighs hiding in purdah (veils) will hopefully ruin the involved lots who are doing so. The opening stanza of the poem is:

Two lakh sorties by fighter jets  
Dropping bombs on a tiny nation  
Organised by the great Yankees  
With conflagration of white Nations.

Everyday car bombs and human bombs are killing the innocent, old, children, women and feeble. Where are democrats

and republicans? Democracy and liberty are collapsing. Their hollow words strike in different channels and highlighted in prints, in essence, words are just like body without soul, fire without heat, candle without light, sea without waves and a man of heart without feeling. It's a startling revelation of hypocrisy of those powers who claim to remove poverty and talking of establishing peace. Peeran focuses their deeds while removing mask from their face, and find the exact figure:

The Yankees now drinking gasoline  
 To quench the desert thirst  
 Pumping oil to fleets of automobiles  
 Looting ship loads of wealth with pelf.

Peeran is hope of hopeless, a messiah of oppressed and exploited one. His endeavour is to vigoate and rejuvenate the dejected and jaded spirit like phoenix. Silver coins, diamond chicks, vulture of the lust, erosion in the trust, hatred flames, vice, malice, fears and fury have gripped and ceased the minds and hearts of the people. Even 90 degree angle seems oblique before the eyes for the developed countries. Hence, in such prevailing conditions and atmosphere Peeran believes in his Master. Peeran imparts a clarion call in the concluding stanza of The Great Upheaval never lose heart:

O Mother of cities! Do not be dismayed?  
 You would win, you will bounce back  
 You have great propensity to overcome  
 All evils, all dangers, all disasters.

His view is that the poets are as the true intellectual successor to great thinkers and philosophers such as Rousseau, Plato, Hugo and Locks etc. as a political and social reformer, and they put across ideas through poems.

He talks of concrete and everlasting construction of universal peace. It's blunder of the men who believe in the age and in the sophisticated arms of the edge. Understandably appalling and alarming global mass becoming victims of de-humanising overwhelming problems, anxieties and difficulties have taken

unyielding grip over all these remedies, internationally campaign for peace is an open mockery and so called Super power wants the world to turn into bakery.

His creation has fragrance, delights the mind, soothes the heart and provides comfort. Many of his lines and verses will become adage. They will pass to posterity like the epigrams of Bacon or the sayings of Solomon. We need to inculcate and imbibe these lines: 'Fools choose paths which angels shun',

'Fallen people seldom rise again', 'Leisurely attempting to do the work with sloth/Brings misery, sorrow in prime of life', 'The dove of the heart should fly forever/With the stalk of olives in its beak',

'When injustice is committed to merited persons/Then, a sign to welcome grief and pain', 'Dubious ways do not last for long',

'Raise your head above shoulders for success', 'Be smithy to give shape to an iron', and 'Ring out the evils, embrace the good.'

When Peeran prays and supplicates in sacred moments is to be observed. He completely surrenders before his God. Words 'O Lord', 'O Master', and 'Divine Mercy' are on his tongue. Moreover, his belief and devotion can be found in the following verses:

O Lord, forgive my erring soul and mind  
Enlighten the soul to sing paean to Thee.  
O Master, can I have your glimpse  
To lift my sagging spirits, an enlighten soul.  
O Mercy, Protect us from His wrath  
Ever submissive to the Lord's call

The title of all his 10 books bears beautiful words contain dazzling meaning and holy significance. Just have look and imagine in serene mood, 'Silent' moments so it is golden, 'sacred' moments, therefore, it is rare moments. We should search from within, a ray of light appears and spread fountain of hopes. The word sacred and Peeran are reciprocal, appeals to each other.

He speaks to human like one that really believes in humanity and whose business in the world is the most with humanism. In the

world of predominantly commercial atmosphere, surrounded by materialistic approach and deeply rooted self-centred apprehension environment wherein Peeran's heart and head work because of his philanthropy vivacity.

He must be known for his sacred sacramental victuals that he offers in *In Sacred Moments* to the world. This book brings a new intensity of focus to poetry and is among the high-water marks of the present decade.

I believe reader will read, regret and sigh, and wish he were a tree, for then sure he should grow to fruit or shade, at least some bird would trust her household with him, and he would be adjudged just.

His poetry will have greater impact on the activities and behaviour of human beings provided that the people study *In Sacred Moments* after having holy bath in the Ganges, indelible scars that remind us in the pages of history which have tarnished the images of the Indians will certainly be helpful in averting further degeneration and will help in human lives enjoying on the planet – earth such as souls make merry in heaven!

***“In Sacred Moment – Urmila Kaul***

Gaze fixed on this light filled cupped palms! A Divine Moment Indeed!!

Dr. Shujaat Hussain says Peeranian Universe!!! He has assessed the poet in a nut shell.

Peeran's thoughts invoke universal Love – no sect – no religion – no Lakshman Rekha. Peeran in Hope of the hopeless. Polluted thoughts and foul characters have over cast the spiritual light. Poem's poems stand with a torch.

Yet when I am in submission in the prayers  
I am like a child cuddling in the arms of the mother

West say child is the father of man. But Indian concept is child is miniature of God. That Nirakan Supreme Power takes the shape

of a child. His mind and heart are zero. Inside this hollow the Supreme resides. As he grows up, earthly images with desires replace and fill up.

Knowledge is the source of suffering. It can be applied the other way also.

His heart is an over loading bus  
Hardly any peace ever on the top

Human mind is even running machine that produces heaps and heaps of thoughts in Trice Tajpal Vashist London – a great research Scholar Writer – The velocity of human mind is around 80 kharabie 80,00,00,00,00,000 miles per second (A Discovery Vol. I pg.79)

Arjun ask Lord Shri Krishna. Man is over active and restless – unable to control like wind.

Lord replies – Yes, mind is windily in nature, but regular practice can harness our mind.

Infact channelised though can make the space for universal thoughts. We can shun selfish thoughts to vacate.

Peeran says the path is static but we cover it.

Yes, we can annihilate the earth with our energy, zeal, and determination, there is my Hindi couplet,

*Aalay – jaalay re manna mann ko nahin degaaye/ Ek baar ke palan se, wilha kathin he jaaye.* I.e., never let your spirits numb during your comings and goings (engagements) for, once you fall, it is very difficult to rise again.

Peeran encourages to look to the horizon and keep your head above shoulders. Yes, honest and hardworking characters can hold their heads high. Otherwise, these are such people in every field who try to cut the high flown bite.

A senior writer – what is the latest achievement?

A poem is published in *Mecedonia* magazine?

What is the use of being published in Brazil when not known at home steed.

Well after thirty forty years of writing. I leave this world, my soul will be at peace, if just 5 words of my writing pulsate anywhere.

Ah a poem wriggled out of this venom Introspection.

This poem was the first poem of mine the then forthcoming anthology *Desert in the Making* (1997).

– Rossetly of Bhojpur. Bihar Saint Kabir also suggest – keep the biter by thy side.

Pilgrims in the white unsown garments of two pieces one above one below – remind me of a Haji Saheb (Hakeem) who had performed Haj thrice. I was interested in rites and rituals of this pilgrimage. Haji Sahab – Almost similar to your ‘Janeyu’ thread wearing ceremony.

I feel, the important message of these rituals is to come out of have and have notes. Because, king and pauper meet one and the same fate after death. So these pilgrimages make the man sublime and pious.

The sun hid in my heart  
The moon in my mind

All tragedies are because of darkness in the heart and boiling magma in the mind. Only a single thought can ruin the world or create a paradise on this earth alas, each human heart had sum and cool nectar for the universal man. The Sufi poet has moon in his mind – a Peeranian Paradise!

When humanity is at the brink of disaster  
Fall of Hitlers is the triumph for freedom  
This happened in Mahabharat age

Repeated appeals and Peace Talks could not persuade Duryodhan to give right full share to the Pandavas. Instead he kept on conspiring to kill all of them now, the only alternative left was decisive war that put an end to Kaurav lineage.



A Mahatma is born as a savior  
Dies with name of Lord on his lips  
To remind the sunken humanity  
That truth shall shine forever

In *Shrimad Bhagvad Gita* Lord Shri Krishna says: “*Yada yada hi dharmasya glanisbhawati Bharata / Abhutlhanam dharmasya ladatmanam srija myahum*” (“Whenever humanity suffers under tyranny, Supreme Power descends on earth to rescue the sufferers”). When the work is done, that divine human form is sent back violently.

What a tragedy!

The Sufi poet suffers at the pitiable condition of the farmers. They are committing suicides and the government is spending 43,000 cores for fighter planes.

A tussle between humanity and reality! Both demand priority.

Our first Prime Minister Pt Jawaharlal Nehru said we are a non-violent nation. We don't have any enemy. So we don't need big forces and heavy artillery. On the other side of the border, Mr Jinnah told the Cinc (The then British-name-?) to attack Kashmir and capture. He refused frankly – This is against the International Law.

Than Jinnah provoked the tribal to do Jihad against Kashmir. Loot plunder – Kill, but capture it

Ah, slumber of nonviolence!

Nehru went to China to sign – Panchsheel agreement – our two Nations – Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai-The ink was yet to dry, this slogan was boom ranged by heavy artillery.

Look at the plight of Bordering nest of India – they had only vest and half pants on that high altitudes with 303 guns and a few number of cartridges! And the post fell without fighting – (the unfought war of 1962 – The NEFA Debade – Col. J.R. Sehgad a renowned war histories expert.

China captured thousands of miles of Indian territory. This attack lifted the hangover of nonviolence. The struggle for

Independence is one thing. But to defend that Independence demands minute to minute, minute vigilance and prompt action with iron hand.

Suicides by the farmers are due to corrupt leader and administration. Had the top chairs honesty, lower corruption could be uprooted.

Warp and woof of the whole fabric! Gauzy!!

These power mongers have forgotten the peak personality of Maurayan Regime – Mahamatya Chanuky, serving, away from royal pomp and show, in a thatched cottage by the side of a river with no helper They have ignored the sacrifice of Gandhiji even.

Poem “My Guru” – The poet warns against the giant killer of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Two lakh sorties by the fighter jets  
Dropping bombs on a tiny Nation  
Organized by the great Yankees  
Ah, experiment of the new invented Atom Bomb! Horrible  
Destruction!  
Followed by atomic multiplying reaction – mutilated humans.  
Heinous crime!

America again invented more powerful Killer gas and wanted to experiment on other land. But all slammed their doors at their face. They stuffed mouths of Indian leaders with dollars and setup Union Carbide plant on the heart land of India-Bhopal. No one knew the nature of the product. Why?

In the midnight of 2-3 December 1984, the leakage started (voluntary or – ?) White gas in the dark night started enveloping the sleeping people suffocation started taking heavy toll. The killer gas isocyanides or milk – whatever was that did not touch any yankee, scientists or leader! A fishi matter!!

5000 Indian scientists held a big conference in Bhopal. They wanted to see the working of Union Carbide plant.

No ENTRY was clamped. At last, one scientist was permitted and 4999 were kept out, not a single leader sided the scientists.

Could a single scientist give correct and his independent  
decision? What happened inside? Silence!

But silence – shouts!

Postmortems of the innumerable victims of the gas revealed  
lungs and intestines were dissolved totally.

The Bio Terrorists!

Yankee with unquenchable thirst attacked

Gulf...then Iraq to drink gasoline – Demonic thirst!

.....Research book – Bharat ka Hiroshima – Bhopal Gas

Tragedy

Dr. Satish Chaturvedi

Lastly I am really obliged for In Sacred Moments – full of  
effulgence. The pen is inspired to express feeling related to the  
poems.

I know the poet S.L Peeran as Haiku poet. I have quoted haiku  
in my article haiku scene in India Today presented in Haiku World  
conference in Pune on 9-10 December 2006. *Poetcrit* July 2008 has  
published it. Thanks once again. With all good wishes for more and  
more such collections.

*Glittering Love*

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*Glittering Love* – Ram Sharma

S.L. Peeran is a maestro in Indian English poetry and he has created a symphony of rhythmic words in his eleventh poetry collection. He has made this volume radiant with the preaching of Sai Baba, Lord Buddha, Jesus Christ, Mohammed Iqbal and he, an *aalim* (learned person) has flowed the *nur* (light) and *elm* (knowledge) by his mighty pen. Through *Glittering Love* he has forced us to ponder on the dismal chaos, as to where we are headed? In this volume he has simply preached us on diverse topics. Vibrating Un-Al-Haq (God is one and supreme), he has called this materialistic race and progress as futile. Some of his poems in this volume are reminiscences of his youth. In this poetic odyssey he has taken us from love to atom bombs and blasts. He has presented the Message of Islam to purify our feeling and thoughts. There is extravaganza of haikus in the last part of this volume as well.

Peeran seems to me to be a person of encyclopedic knowledge and with his midas touch; his words have become more appropriate and meaningful. In the poem entitled ‘Sadism’ he has mocked at our modern approach of murder, to dissect, to create doubts on the Almighty or doing unnecessary experiments to know the mystery of life. Through his poem ‘Mock Drills ‘ he has raised the lack of sensuousness and sympathy among the human being, Running in this blind materialistic race we have lost our senses and prudence. Through this panorama of modern man, he has tried to show the real path of humanism. His verses have the elements of

Wordsworthian love of nature, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's mysticism. When we wander in his verses he appears to us as a yogi, a sufi or a saint, who is adamant to take us safe from this dark tunnel to the bliss of Allah (God). He has pangs to meet his beloved who is infinite. In the poem 'Love's Pangs' he has created the aura of Sufism. He teaches us the powers of meditation and purity of heart, in such poems as 'Refresh your soul' and 'O! Solitude'. Through his images, symbols and rhythmic words he has created magic to hypnotise in the heat of low values and morals. Peeran who is a Sufi by heart calls the Almighty to save all of us

In his poem "Love forever and ever" he writes;

O My Lord! Save me from,  
The temptations of this world,  
From its gilt and glamour  
From its slippery path

He provides the preaching of Sabar (patience) in my words,

Sabar  
Control of anger,  
Creating of grace,  
Out of materialist race,  
Helping the poor with good pace,  
Arising of conscience,  
All human's conference,  
He yearns to meet his Almighty in his poem "Glory for Thee"  
My bones are creaking and shaky,  
My eyes have now become blurred,  
My voice has become choked,  
Your signs all around are amazing

He has chiseled every word to make it an elixir of spirituality. The spiritual fervor runs throughout the volume. Peeran has synthesized the Hindu-Muslim culture and presented himself as an apostle of communal harmony. Religion is not for discord, but it should be our refuge from our daily problems. Love and compassion is all that is important.

In the poem 'Into Oblivion' he sings; Let me now drink the wine of love, To go into oblivion like a dove. His imagery from nature is marvelous, just like in the poem 'Save Me' he calls;

Let me not be dew to the morning sun,  
Or butter to a heated cauldron,  
A knave to a squint eye,  
A target to an evil villain

He has made spiritualism and preaching's from Islam, Hindu and other religions so simple that these flow spontaneously without any effort and the reader glows by their spiritual bliss. Love is the foundation stone of all philosophical thoughts and it glitters throughout this volume, in the poem

Music of Life, he says;  
Love and affection to be instilled,  
Heart with music and song to be filled.

This poet maestro has made love and music our food of life which prevents us from becoming a 'Hamlet'. Peeran is the supreme ruler in the territory of humanity. He calls the progress of modern man as futile and forces us to read and think,

When will this madness stop?  
For, brutal killings, rape and plunder  
Of olden times of conquers, ruthless,  
Savages, have again now be born (Unheard Voices)

I am certain that this volume will stir our mentality of Mammonism and force us to think about passion, compassion, brotherhood and secularism.

The poet is quite successful in his Bhagirath efforts to make all tributaries of spiritualism a giant Ganges. I am certain that this volume will prove a landmark in the history of Indian – English poetry. I do hope many more volumes flow from his pen which will prove mightier than swords.

### ***Glittering Love* – Justice S. Mohan**

I am delighted to receive your book of poems on the title of *Glittering Love* My delight is all the more. Since a person working in Custom and Excise Department tending to be a poet. Perhaps the

judicial experience must have helped you since my experience is Law and Literature go together always. About the book I can say it should be rated as a first class one. Poetry as you know flows from the heart. When the feelings urge, the poems crystallise. When you say in Soliloquy

“In the middle of the night,  
In the deadly chilly winter  
We wake up to warm ourselves.  
The fury of the day rises up,”

It reminds me of the beautiful lines of Sarojini Naidu

In the desolate hour of mid night  
when an ecstasy of starry silence sleeps  
Over the still mountains and deep, I long for you

The broken pieces are marvellous.

The daily perfumes and fragrances  
Have vanished, now I am left to stench  
Ah! Why do I live? I wish I perish.  
Then suffocate in this purdah all my life.

These words picture the mood of despondency and a life without purpose. I do not know how to praise you for the poem advent of “Test of strength” I should say this is a master piece of advice

To realize your own soul.  
And purify your own inner self.  
To find remedies to all inner evils.  
To exert patience at all times.

This has to be inscribed on the heart of every human being. In short I should say you are a peer among the poets.

Heartiest Congratulations.

*Garden of Bliss*

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***Garden of Bliss* – N.P. Singh**

*Garden of Bliss* is the twelfth collection of poems by S.L. Peeran. It consists of 90 poems, 12 Quatrains and 16 Haiku. They revolve around the destiny of man in a changing world. They also stress that man can achieve happiness and salvation through God's grace and mercy. The satanic impulses of lust, greed, anger and jealousy create unrest and discord in the mind of the men and women of our time. They are cut off from the traditional norms of piety, loyalty and fellow feeling. The result is that tensions and conflicts grow enormously and even family, the basic unit of the community is largely devoid of compassion, understanding and goodwill.

There is a new development of realistic self-assessment and personal stamp in the latest anthology of S.L. Peeran. "Long Tiring Journey" (p.58) is a candid confession of the protagonist's journey of life. The metaphor of "train" has been beautifully used in order to convey the ups and downs of the life of the protagonist – "Sometimes the aged train chugging/shunting up and down,/Sometimes it would get derailed./Breaking the lovely dreams." (p.58) The protagonists' vision at the end of the poem is, however, not devoid of hope – "Now at last we have reached the end,/The weary destination, to rest,/To recoup, to look up for fresh dreams." (p.58). It has to be noted that the poem was written on the eve of the poet's seeking voluntary retirement. In other words, the protagonist voices the dilemma of the poet on the eve of his voluntary retirement.



“Aam Aadmi” (p. 62) is a satiric poem focusing our attention on the gullibility of the man on the street and the crookedness of the men who can create – “illusions and a false paradise” – and the lot of the common people remain bad as ever. There is a triumph of realism in the poem.

“The Best Half” (p. 83) is, perhaps, the most moving poem in the anthology that examines the institution of marriage in contemporary society. After three decades of companionship, the protagonist finds that – “It is impossible/To befriend and console your best half/It is impossible to satisfy all her/Urges, fancies, fantasies, dreams/All the time she has one complaint/or other one grouse or another/All the silks, gold, wealth you showered/*on her goes in vain, in drain.*” (p.83) (*italics mine*)

It is a sobering thought that even after three decades of friendship and companionship, the protagonist of the poem is as unhappy as Leo Tolstoy was in his marriage. The irony of the title “The Best Half” is most trenchant. The wife is not the better half but the best half, yet for the protagonist she is little more than a nagging wife. Her words simply lacerate his heart. “The Best Half” is not only the most moving but also the most disturbing poem in the anthology. It is an interrogation of marriage.

In Siddhartha (p. 80) the protagonist is Yashodhara, the wife of Siddhartha, that is Gautam Buddha. The protagonist does confess candidly – “O my darling Siddhartha. Misery and suffering moved you/Sorrows of the world burnt your heart, rend your mind/You sought solutions to the suffering of mankind/Your deep meditation silence of mind found answers.” (p 80). Yashodhara loses her husband rather early but she does not blame him. She knows Siddhartha has to conquer the world through meditation and self-knowledge. She understands her husband better than a nagging wife.

While the poems in Garden of Bliss do raise awkward and disturbing questions (and there are no easy answers), the Quatrain and Haiku do suggest bliss in a grossly imperfect world:

What nature leaves imperfect, the art perfects  
Man, a second creator of the world, a perfect  
Giving to the world its objective existence.  
*Consciousness removing all the defects* (p.97)  
(italics mine)

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Life is a riddle  
*A most ugly situation*  
*Brings storms, tsunamis*

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Ring in and ring out  
*To bring cosmic harmony*  
*All march hand in hand*  
(italics mine) (p. 98)

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If men and women, rich and poor, husband and wife, the privileged and the under privileged march hand in hand, if companionship is fully realised, the family and the community would be healthy and the garden of bliss would cease to be a utopia. It would become a reality.

This is the thrust of S.L. Peeran's twelfth anthology *Garden of Bliss*. I recommend the anthology to all those who crave for meaning and purpose in an apparently meaningless world.

*Eternal Quest*

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**“*Eternal Quest* – Dr. Yogesh Sharma**

The book, *Eternal Quest* by S.L. Peeran consists of 93 beautiful poems, 71 striking quatrains and 27 remarkable haikus, and 111 pages, covers a broad range of themes, serious and light hearted. Others are cultural, social, emotional and philosophical. The book beautifully displays the sensitivity and intelligence of the writer as a poet and his involvement with the art of writing poetry. The poet takes the readers on a voyage of joy with his verses.

The poems of *Eternal Quest* achieve fabulous heights. Equally the poet shows his pain and anguish to the readers in his love to his homeland ‘India our land’, .....

Chinese attack, loss of Tibet  
Pakis invasion of Kashmir.

Here poet almost cries to see his bleeding nation. Equally they set out to show the readers his concern inner peace, with such poems, ‘Whither Solace?’, ‘Whither Harmony?’, ‘How to reach inner Peace?’ etc..

The inner light that cherishes the soul  
Is a celestial gift for a fortunate few.

Each poem is a carefully woven story and is left in no confusion about its meaning. Each poem will mean a new thing to new readers but all display without doubt, the excellent ability of the poet and a fabulous imagination of pen that has created this

delightful collection of verses. The titles are very simple and meaningful.

The poems change in rhyme, scheme or meter but this does not stop the flow of ideas. Comparisons and similes have been used very sensibly and are highly relevant to the flow of ideas.

Our children are like cool streams  
 To parching land and gardens.  
 Warm Sun shine on a wintry day.  
 Full Moon and shining Stars on a dark night.

(‘Our Children’, p. 84)

The poet displays a very deep understanding of sensitive emotions such as grief, poverty, struggle, religion, patriotism, humanism, mysticism and what not. The poet has been highly successful to deliver a very clear message with very well selected words. The verses clearly develop emotions in the reader; some happy, some sad. Many are written in questioning style. ‘What Colossal Change?’ (49-50).

The poem ‘Nirvana, Moksha’ (p. 72), talks about reality into a mythical world in a very fine way. “How to attain ‘Moksha’, Nirvana”, (p. 79), – the readers now wish to go in that world to see if they can enjoy or experience that joy. The poem ‘What Dignified Pure Life?’ talks with love and affection of an ancestral home in need of repair and of grandmother now unable to carry out these repairs herself. Readers can identify themselves with these situations.

The poems seem to have been written the events connected with life, ‘Laughter the best medicine’ (p. 63), and others possibly written after some personal experience motivated to be written, ‘Senseless Power’ (p. 23). An enjoyment of the family life seems evident from the poems. A lovely poem, ‘Lost in City’s din’ paints a beautiful family scene. The passion of the poet is clear when he writes about his love in ‘Love Betrayed’. It evokes comfort in the reader as the emotions are conveyed through his words. Possibly family, close friends and students would be the reader for this collection of poems. These poems would offer something to them

all. For those readers who are unfamiliar with the Indian language, Sanskrit, or Indian values may lose some beauty and pleasure.

One free himself from these forces,  
To attain 'moksha' and 'nirvana'.

(How to attain 'moksha', nirvana? p. 79)

The punctuation and grammar in the book are good. It is however unusual to see a sentence starting with 'And' or 'But'; even more so when followed by comma.

Poetry is the manifestation by the poet. Like painted art there is nothing right or wrong but all is art.

Nature in our self  
Stars, moon, sun, celestial signs  
Unite knots of time. (p. 108)

So it is difficult to find flaws with the poet and suggest improvement. Verses are believable and very finely written. The design of the poems is well organised. The book is readable because there is a variety of solid subject matter and a wonderful glow of ideas. It is good to see reference to current issues as well as more traditional ones.