

DUEL WITH DARKNESS

A TRANSLATION OF DASARATHI'S

THIMIRAMTHO SAMARAM

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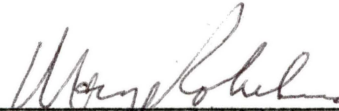
Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION  
December, 1986

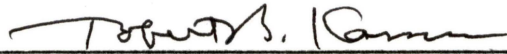
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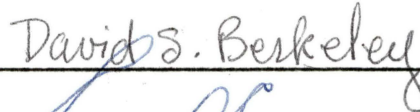


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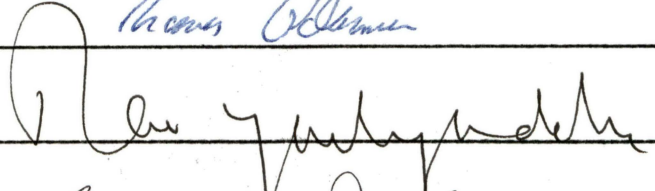
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

At the outset, with the most profound and prayerful sense of gratitude, I turn to God our loving Father, the creator, sustainer, and protector and the giver of all good things. To Him be honor, praise, glory, ardoration, and love for ever.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Harry J. John and Dr. and Mrs. Donald Gallagher of Milwaukee for their generous help.

Next, I wish to express sincere appreciation to Dr. Robert B. Kamm who, both as my professor and as the chairman of my doctoral committee, has always tried to build me up with his affectionate and hearty encouragement and support. He has always inspired me to goodness and greatness.

A big "thanks" to my adviser, Dr. Mary Rohrberger who has extended a scholarly guidance to me patiently going through my work at every stage. Sincere thanks also to Dr. David S. Berkeley who has always readily and cheerfully extended help and guidance. I also express a deep sense of appreciation to Dr. Rao Yarlagadda and to Dr. Thomas Karman.

My thanks are specially due to my sister-in-law Mrs. P. Philomena and to my wife Anne and to our children Regina, Jasintha Florence, Sundar, Valentine and Arun Xavier.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Translation is a vital channel of communication across languages. Without translation, language groups would be condemned to an insular and, in every way, an impoverished existence. But for the facilities of communication across languages, an international or even a national community--in a multi-lingual country like India--would be a myth. Instead of a one-world family, we would virtually have human herds in language enclosures. International politics and international relations would be a catastrophe if people of different countries could not communicate with each other because of language barriers. We need not over-emphasize the importance of translation for the unity and progress of all humanity, for the promotion of international understanding and cooperation, for the advancement of civilization, for the enrichment of cultures, for the betterment of the standards and styles of living, and finally, in the thinking of many, for the enlightenment of a person for life beyond life.

Translation of literary masterpieces is a rare and lasting service for human enrichment and enlightenment. Literary artists have contributed enormously to humanity's intellectual, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Human beings everywhere would be the poorer if they had no access to the works of geniuses like Homer and Virgil, Valmiki and Vyasa, Augustine and Aquinas, Kalidasa and Goethe, Dante and

Shakespeare, and Tolstoy and Gandhi. People of different faiths all over the world would be experiencing a near spiritual vacuum but for translations of the Bible, the Bhagawadgita, the Qoran, and the other scriptures. As Lila Ray (1971) points out "We owe the concept of a unitary human heritage to translation and world literature would not exist without it" (p. 208).

All poetic experience which is universal and all poetry which soothes our cares and enriches our spirits ought to be available to people everywhere. As Omar Abou Riche observes in his "Foreword" to K.N.Sud's Iqbal And His Poems (1969), "For developing a better understanding between peoples, between countries, there was never a better gift to be cherished than cultural values and poetry in an excellent translation" (p. IV).

It is in this spirit that I have undertaken to translate an award-winning book of poems Thimiramtho Samaram by Dasarathi, the present poet laureate of Andhra Pradesh in India. While introducing this contemporary Telugu poet (Telugu is one of the major languages in India) to the English-speaking west, my translation is also an attempt to provide access to Dasarathi's poetry to people in India not conversant with Telugu. As Paul Verghese (1975) notes in Essays in Indian Writing In English, "English translation on a large scale is necessary in India today in the absence of an all-India language for the benefit of an all-India readership." (p. 24).

#### Statement of the Problem

Dasarathi is ranked very high among contemporary Telugu poets. Critics consider him as one of the three most prominent poets in Andhra



today. His Thimiramtho Samaram won India's Central Sahitya Akademi Award for poetry in 1974. The most popular of Dasarathi's works, Thimiramtho Samaram is a collection of poems through which runs the central thread of indictment of evil and affirmation of good. Also affirming many universally cherished human values, the poems have an import that goes beyond the boundaries of Dasarathi's own language group. Thimiramtho Samaram means "war with darkness." It is the aim of all civilized society to end the forces of darkness like injustice, exploitation, crime, violence, and war. Every human being is inevitably drawn into this unceasing effort. He/she is drawn into a duel with darkness. To fight a good fight with darkness, human being needs a source of inspiration, encouragement, and help. Thimiramtho Samaram is one such source, however meagre.

In spite of its poetic excellence and universal mission, Thimiramtho Samaram has, so far, not attracted any translator's attention. In fact, none of Dasarathi's works, except a stray poem here and there, is available in English. It is high time that his most prominent work Thimiramtho Samaram is translated.

#### Purpose of the Undertaking

The purpose of the present undertaking is to prepare in English a poetic translation of Dasarathi's Thimiramtho Samaram for English readers who would, otherwise, not have the opportunity of acquainting themselves with the work of this contemporary poet from India.

Care shall be taken to keep the English rendering as close to the original text as possible without sacrificing its readability and poetic qualities. Transplanting each poem into English, preserving not only

its meaning, but also its psychic and cultural content shall however remain the main concern.

#### Importance of the Undertaking

It is common knowledge that evil in the form of institutionalized and personal selfishness not only exists, but abounds, in our world. While in our individual lives we are constantly plagued by evils like injustice, exploitation, oppression, crime, and violence in one form or the other, all humanity is suffocated by the nightmare of nuclear holocaust and universal annihilation. All these evils have their source in human traits like greed, pride, and hatred. These traits can be called forces of darkness. Darkness is the evil they perpetrate. It is the perennial problem and privilege of the human being to fight the forces of darkness. Now, more than ever before in human history, men and women everywhere face the great challenge of dispelling darkness in their own being, in their lives, and in the lives of their nations.

Dasarathi urges us to the war with the forces of darkness. To his call to every human being to excel in a relentless duel with darkness, Dasarathi brings an intense earnestness, a passionate eloquence, and a poetic excellence. A translation of Thimiramtho Samaram will, I hope, urge more people to a new awareness of the need for a war with the forces of darkness, inspiring them at the same time to a determined effort for victory in this war.

The translation should also enable English readers, especially in the west, to enjoy the excellence of Dasarathi's poetry and to understand the culture and the psyche and the values, aspirations, and concerns of the people of India in general, and the Telugus in

particular. The translation may thus forge a new aesthetic relationship between peoples and promote the cause of international understanding.

Incidentally, the work is also intended to lure the western English reader to Telugu literature. According to emperor-poet Krishna Devaraya, Telugu is the best among the languages of India. Divakarla Venkatavadhani (1969) points out that the Telugu alphabet contains fifty-six letters, six more than the Sanskrit alphabet. He brings out the glory of Telugu in the following words:

Telugu language is musical by nature and either Pothana's verses or Thyagaraga's songs will be sufficient proof for its adaptability to music. This is why southern musicians cannot neglect the songs of Thyargaraja whatever be their mother tongue and whatever be their capacity to understand the meaning. Appayya Dikshita, the famous Southern scholar, is said have praised the Telugu country and the Telugu language in the sloka "Andhratwa Mandhra Basha Chanalpasya Thapasah Phalam" which means that to be born as an Andhra and to be able to speak the Telugu language is really a boon which cannot be obtained without doing great penance. This testimony is all the more valuable as it comes from a non-Telugu scholar" (p. 622).

#### Limitations of the Undertaking

Of the forty-seven poems in the book, the following are left untranslated: "Balamayukha Vijayam," "Samaikyandhram," "Chiranjivi Sri Nehru," "Madhu Lahari," "Pennu Pattina Chethitho," "Bhoomatha," "Sookthi Mukthikalu," "Gundelo Koti Deepalu," "Natasri," "Oka Vijayam, Oka Udayam," and "Madhura Kshanam." Some of these poems are written in a highly classical style with many mythological illusions which, however, fail to throw any light on the persons talked about in the poems. These poems will not interest a modern English reader especially in the west. The other poems are about some political events that occurred in

Pradesh and in India. While they had their appeal at the time of the events, the poems are of no interest to a contemporary reader.

## CHAPTER II

### THIMIRAMTHO SAMARAM -- A CRITICAL NOTE

#### Dasarathi's Biodata

Who is Who Among Indian Poets 1983 gives Dasarathi's biodata reproduced below with expansion of some of the abbreviations.

B.A. (Osmania University). born 10-1-27, Gudur, Warangal District, A.P.; writes lyrics for films. Awards and Prizes received: A.P. Government Best Translation Award, 65; A.P. Sahitya Academy Award, 67, etc. Honors. Kala-Prapoorna, 75 (Doctor of Letters, from Andhra University; Doctor of Literature., 76 (hon cau., from Agra Univ.). Mother tongue. Telugu. Publications: 14. Mahandrodayam, 55; Punarnavam, 56; Amruthabhisekam, 60; Dasarathi Satakam, 62; Kavita Pushpakam, 66; Thimiramtho Samaram, 73 (all poetry; the last received Sahitya Akademi Award, 74). Has translated Ghalib into Telugu and written over 1000 songs for films. Address: 104 (C Block), Matrusri Apartment, Hyderguda, Hyderabad 500001, A.P., INDIA (p. 141).

#### Dasarathi's Place in Contemporary Telugu Poetry

Popularly known as Dasarathi, Dasarathi Krishnamacharya, is one of the three most prominent poets in Telugu today. He stands on par with C. Narayana Reddi and Arudra. G.V. Sitapati (1968) in his History of Telugu Literature rated Dasarathi as even better than Sri Sri whose revolutionary ideas stormed Telugu poetry until recently. Sitapati noted that "Dasarathi Krishnamacharya, a young and brilliant poet of the present generation, even excelled Sri Sri in poetic talent and the outpouring of progressive ideas" (p. 197). A recipient of many honors and awards, Dasarathi is currently the Poet Laureate of Andhra Pradesh.

## Trends in Telugu Poetry

In order to appreciate the place of Dasarathi as a poet, it is necessary to have some idea of contemporary trends in Telugu poetry. According to D. Anjaneyulu (1973),

The literary scene in Telugu, as far as poetry is concerned, is literature with all the rainbow colours, as it were. It represents the peaceful (and not so peaceful) coexistence of different generations of schools of thought, even centuries, for that matter. Veteran classicals like Viswanadha and seasoned romantics like Krishna Sastri continue to be active. Neo-classicists jostle the latter-day romantics, while the red-hot revolutionaries take it out on the pale-pink progressives, assuming a holier-than-thou attitude (p. 334).

In 1984 Anjaneyulu wrote, "Here, as in Indian society at large, could be seen all the ages of operation from the old stone age to the new electronic age, or in other words, from the traditional--metrical--mythological--classical through the romantic, progressive, and revolutionary to the latest in free verse and new verse" (p. 170). In poems like "Chiranjivi Sri Nehru" and "Nata Sri," Dasarathi uses the traditional metrical verse while in most other poems we find the free verse form.

For some years, the revolutionary/progressive poetry of Sri Sri became dominant. But its predominance was challenged by poets like Dasarathi. As Anjaneyulu (1973) notes

After the first flush of total Revolution as advocated by the progressives, some of the major poets, especially of the younger generation, began to have second thoughts about a clean break with the past. Notable among them are Dasarathi and Narayana Reddi, both from the Telangana Region, who represents a happy synthesis of what is best in the old and the new. They separate the living tradition from the dead, deciding how much to preserve and how much to discard. They have also succeeded in reconciling the love of the language

and the region with the larger demands of loyalty to the nation, harmonizing them both with a philosophy of new humanism (p. 332).

About Dasarathi, Anjaneyulu says, "He is equally at home with modern forms and classical matters and can express emotion with restraint." The excellence of Dasarathi's poetry is illustrated in the concluding chapter.

It is commonly agreed that some of the poetry of Dasarathi can stand the test of time. In Andhra Pradesh today, there is no doubt that Dasarathi and Narayana Reddy dominate the poetical scene.

#### Dasarathi's Persona--Aspects of Uniqueness

One of the factors that contribute to the greatness of Dasarathi's poetry is the fact that his persona at times speaks with a divine authority and a cosmic dimension. The following examples illustrate the point.

In "Welcome to the Future," Dasarathi says,

My future is the Parvathi  
an image of infinite power.

... ..  
... ..

I am the Siva  
courting that Parvathi

Parvathi is the wife of Siva, a god according to Hinduism and Dasarathi talking of himself as Siva courting Parvathi even in poetry, is a matter of extraordinary audacity for a Hindu. Yet, no one accuses Dasarathi of being blasphemous.

Again, at the end of the poem "Who am I," he says,

I am he, he,  
 who gives (my) life  
 to the earth!

In a recent letter (Oct. 26, 1986) to this author, Dasarathi explained that the lines mean "I am the one who lays down his life so that human race may live." In any case, in these lines, we find Dasarathi talking like the savior of humanity!

In the same poem earlier, the poet says,

My little silence/causes panic  
 to the ocean/roaring night and day.

In "With the Hand That Held the Pen," he writes,

I am marching on/a soldier  
 to rectify the ramparts of red blood  
 at the foot of the white snow mountains;  
 to press the vermilion mark  
 on the brow of the sky;

At the end of the poem, he likens himself to Rama and Siva.

For all the uniqueness of his persona, Dasarathi has some simple mistakes and weakness. Here are some examples.

In "The Sea of Milk," he writes a sentence without a subject . He says, "To proclaim that Nature/is subject to man's mastery/ (they) have formed a lake/of fresh water in our midst." It is not clear who have formed the lake. The omission of subject in the sentence is a mistake.

The reader faces the same type of difficulty in "With the Babes of the Nile." It is not clear who these babes of the Nile are. One vague guess is that they are Palestinians driven away from their homeland.

Next, we have some weakness on the part of Darasathi as shown below. In "Garland of Alphabet Stars," he refers to Mother Telugu as "statue of splendors." In "November One," he calls sons of Andhra



"Goblets of delicious drink." The expressions have no significance and are used in the Telugu version just to rhyme with the earlier lines. , though they sound archaic . The poems will be better without these expressions.

In the poem "Bhoomatha," Dasarathi stoops to the level of a novice writer. He uses cheap puns which may provoke some laughter in an amateur reader but fail to pass for poetry. He puns "papa," meaning child with "pappa" meaning "father." Similarly he puns "Thatha" meaning grandfather and "tata," a word of good-bye. The words in each of the puns are spelt differently in Telugu. For this reason, Dasarathi puts the second word in the pun in parenthesis. Hence, the puns become labored and artificial. Another minor mistake of Dasarathi is his neglect in using a pronoun with a proper antecedent.

#### Thimiramtho Samaram: Meaning and Message

Thimiramtho Samaram is a collection of some of the poems Dasarathi wrote between 1966 and 1973. The book won the Central Sahitya Akademi award in 1975 and is the best known of Dasarathi's works. Thimiramtho Samaram literally means "war with darkness."

In Thimiramtho Samaram we have a fervent expression of the different human, social, political, and spiritual values that Dasarathi deeply cherishes. More than an assertion of these values, the work is an intense effort to awaken in all humanity a new awareness of the need to confront forces of darkness or evil starting from ripples of poison in the human heart to the piling up of devastating atomic weapons. Dasarathi gives a clarion call to each individual and to all humanity to begin anew the fight with darkness - to eschew exploitation of the poor

and the weak, to have concern for the under-privileged, to renounce violence and war, to adopt humanism, and to fill our world with peace, light, and prosperity.

### Power of Darkness

Dasarathi is intensely aware of the almost invincible power of darkness. In "World Light" he gives us a picture of this power. He says that darkness "suddenly swallows the sun with its myriad rays." "Darkness can fling from its nail the star-studded sky!" Again,

This darkness is the hero  
who laughs from inside  
the heart of a flame;  
it has captured a place  
inside the belly of the moon.

It is a cause for panic that

not even the most outstanding man,  
not even the most blinding splendor  
has been able to uproot this darkness.

In "Festoons of Wounds," comparing darkness to a tree, Dasarathi tells us that the sustenance for the tree of darkness comes from "the pestilence of longings lurking in the human mind." These longings lead to a variety of evils. The poor in particular, reel under the demonic power of darkness with hardly any hope of ever getting out of its clutches. The poor do not even have the chance to light a lamp in the midst of the enveloping darkness. Dasarathi identifies himself with these poor people and says in "Eyes of Light,"

I who have not even a gulp of gruel,  
from where can I bring oil for the lamp?

He makes the pathetic plea to the Sylph of Santhi (Peace) who is setting up a rangavalli ( a decorative design on the floor) of lamps

Turn into little clay cups  
my two deep sunken eyes  
and in them let your smiles  
like tapers burn.

Exploitation of man by man and nation by nation is part of darkness. The poet groans,

Darkness is invading me  
like the devilry of the white man  
who is strangling the black man.

In today's world, the poet finds "every where a smoke of endless darkness."

Only through peace, this darkness can be dispelled and the poet invokes,

O Sylph of Santhi,  
fling a while  
your mischievous smile  
and this pitch darkness  
will be reduced to impotence.

Dasarathi also believes that humanism is the light of the world that can dispel this darkness. He glorifies the persons who constantly strive to dispel darkness from human heart and life:

Immortal is that life  
which fights  
a dire duel with darkness.

To overcome the darkness blinding humanity, he has just one wish:

All that I want is two eyes -  
eyes that can melt;  
eyes that can glow;  
eyes that can light;

eyes that can make  
the darkness in the mind  
vanish.

Only when we have such eyes, our lives will have "a myriad-lamp deepavali" (festival of lights).

#### Denunciation of War

One of the major manifestations of darkness in our world is war. In "Ramparts of Light " Dasarathi notes that "the brain of man has become/an arsenal of death weapons." In "Duel with Darkness" he deplores that

While crores of starving people  
are bitterly wailing,  
heaps of wealth are spent  
on weapons of war.

The perverse plans of leaders of nations which Dasarathi calls "the political banquet of poison" unleashes a great horror:

See, what havoc is done!  
How many lives are lost!  
And, in the hearts of the survivors,  
how many funeral pyres are in flames!

Dasarathi is amazed that nations continue to measure their strength in terms of atomic weapons though, as he observes in "The Glow of Hope,"

It is proved that winning  
with atom bombs is a myth  
and that they will turn  
the whole world to ashes.

In "Eyes of Light" he expresses his disappointment that, all the same,

the bomb copper ewers  
 slipping down from each step  
 of the shelf of civilization  
 are exploding  
 in barbarism's compound.

The note of disappointment continues in "The Moon World":

Some one assassinates Santhi;  
 some one resurrects death.

Dasarathi calls war 'nocturnal holocaust,' and, in a poem with that title, he asks "to achieve what/is this nocturnal holocaust?" He asserts that in indulging in war, "foolishly, but with a full knowledge/man is making catastrophic mistakes." In strong terms he denounces war-mongers:

Far better than this demented human being  
 is the buffalo rolling in mud!

The poet urges nations to break the dismal walls of doubt that divide them and to overcome the mutual mistrust tormenting them. In "A Garland of Alphabet Stars," he urges that

The atom bomb  
 should be stripped  
 and shamed.

and that "all the doctrines of himsa/must be sucked up by the ground;/humanism alone/should spread over all the earth." In "Duel With Darkness" he insists that humanity should

Make a bonfire of guns  
 and light charity's flame.

### Invincible Optimism

In spite of constant darkness caused by clouds of violence and war, Dasarathi has an invincible optimism that peace will prevail. In "Come, Dame Peace," against the witness of the stumps and thorns and stones which assert that peace does not exist, nor can ever come, he says "I could not believe." He wants to disprove the stumps. He tells Peace,

I will make the stump  
that lied that you will not come  
get stimulated  
by the touch of the feet  
of an enlivening beauty  
and make it flower and prove  
that you are alive.

Next, he will not only disprove the stones, but make them affirm that Dame Peace does exist. He says,

I will turn into (statues of) women  
the stones that echoed  
the chorus "true, true"  
to the chant "you won't come"  
and make them burst  
into a new life dance.  
I will prove that you are.

Dasarathi becomes more convincing in his optimism as he locates peace " in some chamber of the heart of the scientist in the bomb factory" and "in the sprouting little blade of grass/which triumphs/tearing through earth's surface." With an intuitive logic that made him discover the power of the grass blade, he becomes an oracle and chants

Flowers must bloom, and bloom they do;  
light must burst, and burst it does;  
victory must come, and come it will;  
people must live and thrive as well.

## Faith in Forces of Life

As against the forces of darkness, we have the forces of life--both in nature and in the human being. Dasarathi asserts that there is new life in every atom of the earth. There is hidden life even in stumps. In the life of human beings we have light, gnana or wisdom, beauty, sculpture, poetry, peace, justice, equality, and humanism. Crowning these forces of life, we have the very power of life itself.

Dasarathi's faith in the power of the forces of life is amazing. His faith is almost ecstatic. It is his belief that these forces of life overcome darkness, defeat, and death.

In the "The Sea of Milk," he observes,

There is new life  
in every atom of the earth;  
there is the honey of gnana  
in the lotus of the human heart.

In spite of the previous year's winter's havoc, the mango tree is flowering again. In "Song Triumphant of All Humanity," the poet tells us,

The mango tree is dispelling  
darkness, fog, and ego  
with the lamp of sun-splendor sprouts  
that burst  
from the bosom of the stumps.

Dasarathi finds an unmistakable manifestation of the power of the forces of life in the stumps putting forth sprouts and, later, flowers. He is so sure of these forces of life that he asserts, in "Come Dame Peace," that he will stimulate the stumps with the touch of the feet of an enlivening beauty and make the stumps flower. In "Stream of Change," he goes farther:

Today, no one can make me believe  
 that the stump will never again put forth a sprout.  
 Today, when the maid of Spring  
 has come and sat in our house,  
 I have seen a chair blossom;  
 I have seen a table put on leaves!

With the power that faith in the forces of life has given him, he asserts that he will turn each stone into (the statue of a) woman and make that statue burst into a new life dance. Who can say that statues are not pulsating with a heart of their own? In "Stream of Change," he says,

Why the vain labor to prove  
 that stones do not have any heart?  
 Ask those leaf-like lips  
 in the caves of Ellora;  
 ask those dazzling women  
 on the pillars of Ramappa.

In proclaiming that stones have hearts, Dasarathi is voicing a poetic truth which C.Narayana Reddy, the other most prominent poet in Telugu today, voiced in a film song of his:

In these black stones, what eyes are stalking!  
 Behind these boulders, what hearts are throbbing!

To Dasarathi, every masterpiece of sculpture proclaims, in his words at the end of "Stream of Change," "that death is dead." The story of Pygmalion should lend further credence to this poetic truth. For Dasarathi, beauty, sculpture, poetry are not mere aesthetic things, but live-wires of life.

Dasarathi also asserts that the forces of life transcend defeat: In "Song Triumphant of All Humanity," the mango tree



is saying succinctly  
 that there is no such thing as defeat,  
 that there is the thing called victory.

The flowering mango tree is also announcing a millenium marked by the  
 strength of people, strength of will, human progress, and equality.

The strength of people with the strength of will  
 is striking a sacred symphony  
 in the august movement  
 of human progress.  
 And the floor of the palace of Equality  
 is gorgeous with rangavalli.  
 With no murderous moves,  
 with no shedding of blood,  
 All humanity with a voice liberated  
 is chanting a celestial song.

The flowering mango tree further proclaims,

We should not be fascinated by heaps of bombs.  
 Peace is the very life of lasting revolution.  
 ... ..  
 The days when monsters will win are gone;  
 the time when man can thrive has come;  
 and the triumphant conches of universal humanism  
 are bellowing at the threshold  
 of the edifice of social equality.

#### Dreams of Future

With an invincible optimism and faith in the forces of life,  
 Dasarathi has fervent dreams about the future. He denounces a future  
 which will help the plutocrats, power-mongers, despots, and dictators.  
 We have his ideas of future in "Welcome to the Future." He denounces  
 future which will bring bloodshed. He says,

Future must not come  
 cutting throats,  
 causing streams of blood,  
 carrying Death in a palanquin,  
 honoring the sword with a shower of gold,

...                    ...                    ...  
 cooking pieces of the peace dove  
 as a snack for killers,  
 burning with anger,  
 and breaching the banks  
 of the lake of life.

The future that Dasarathi desires is far different:

Future must come  
 intoxicating  
 like a bouquet  
 of a dense cluster of flowers,  
 spreading spring  
 to the ends of the earth,  
 stimulating the sprouting  
 of new love  
 in young hearts,  
 ...                    ...                    ...  
 and like the charming lotus  
 that has blossomed  
 in the lake of milk  
 of a maiden's youth.

Dasarathi further wants his future to come "like a flag of gold/like the crescent of progress/like an electric blaze." Future must also bring an end to the miseries of the poor and the helpless. He calls such a future "Parvathi" (the wife of the Hindu god Siva), "an image of infinite power."

In a strange poetic flight, Dasarathi's persona at this stage assumes a cosmic dimension and he declares

I am the Siva  
 Courting that Parvathi.

#### Uniqueness of the Human Being

Such a deification of the persona of Dasarathi does not surprize us when we note his views of the human being. Dasarathi perceives the human being both as divine and diabolic.

In "November One," Dasarathi places the human being higher than gods.

Ours is the human heart  
that outshines (the hearts of) gods.

For Dasarathi, the people who do good to the poor are better than gods.

In "The Sea of Milk" he declares,  
This I trumpet with a thousand mouths -  
that they who have halted the Krishna  
and have answered the yearnings of the poor  
are far greater than Vishnu.

In "With the Babes of the Nile," the poet commends the people protecting humaneness:

You who burn to ashes  
to protect humaneness,  
you are our gods,  
your hearts are our temples.

Dasarathi does not overlook the fact that the human being is, at the same time, diabolic. In "Indignation Over Himsa" he notes that "man to man is ghoulish," and "man himself is the Narakasura" (the god of hell). At any rate, "man to man is gallows." Man is also a maniac of self-extermination," who draws in Death "on the chariots of crime, on the wheels of violence." Dasarathi lists the devilish deeds perpetrated by man turning "Edenic earth into hell." He considers man's brain "the bed where death delivers."

In "Ripples," Dasarathi talks of the ripples of poison in the human heart which cause violence and war. In "November One," though he extolls the human heart as outshining the hearts of gods, the poet

realizes that unfortunately "the human heart today has become the heart of an ape" and that the human being has become a demon. In the midst of man's diabolic acts, Dasarathi finds hope in a virtuous wife lighting up the lamp of indignation over himsa. Starting at her peace-filled home, the light will spread and fill the whole world with wisdom's radiance and flowers of peace will blossom.

With the perception of the uniqueness of the human being in spite of the existence of the diabolic in the human being, Dasarathi advocates humanism. In "World Light," he considers humanism as the only answer for the world's ills and as the "world light" that can banish the darkness enveloping humanity.

Another passion of Dasarathi, especially during the agitation by a section of the people for bifurcation of the State of Andhra Pradesh into Telangana and Andhra, was unity. In fact, Dasarathi is praised as "as the poet who dreamed of Visalandhra" (the united state of Andhra Pradesh).

Dasarathi's Mahandhrodayam is a collection of poems instinct with the sentiment of patriotism. Young Dasarathi must be regarded as the poet who dreamed of Visalandhra and achieved a union of hearts even before the actual union of the States (Contemporary Indian Literature, p. 261).

He wanted the Telugu race to be united always. He voices his passion for the unity of the Telugus in "One Language--One Light," and "November One." However, he yearns for the unity of all human beings. In "November One," he says

The Telugu race is one;  
The Indian nation is one;  
The whole world is one;  
The moon is one

and so is the sun;  
 ... ..  
 all of us are one.

Incidentally, Dasarathi is also a man of intense patriotism. For him, his state is mother--Mother Andhra. He calls his state the true lighthouse of democracy. In "Garland of Alphabet Stars" he says,

In the sea of the social institution  
 of haves and havenots,  
 you are the lighthouse  
 of the doctrine of equality.

He is pained that in the previous sixteen years great Mother Andhra has been "floating in tears." For Mother Andhra's birthday, he gives her a present--a victory garland he has woven with alphabet stars.

Dasarathi's patriotism is not limited to his state and to his country. He wants the whole earth to be free of pain and lament. He wishes,

Mother, my Mother Andhra,  
 Mother of my mother, Mother Bharath,  
 and the mother of mothers of mothers, Mother Earth  
 should shine with never a tear to shed.

### Conclusion

To conclude, in Thimiramtho Samaram, we have an outpouring of some of the ideals and values most intensely cherished by Dasarathi in a poetry distinguished for its simplicity, forthrightness of expression, and power. Dasarathi's theme is new and bold and is woven around facts in human nature and social phenomena. Parts of Thimiramtho Samaram might sound an empty rhetoric of peace, humanism, and socialism, but the consistency with which Dasarathi urges humanity to a renunciation of war, to a commitment to peace, unity, justice, humanism, and socialism

should convince the reader of the earnestness of his passion for these ideals--a passion he wants every human being to burn with to have a new lease of heroism for final victory in his/her duel with darkness. It is with the hope that Dasarathi's poetry can inspire us to heroism for victory over evil that the ensuing pages of Duel with Darkness are presented.

## CHAPTER III

### TRANSLATION METHOD

As a general rule, for the most part, the poems in Duel With Darkness are a literal translation of their originals in Thimiramtho Samaram. Each sentence and each verse in each poem is faithfully rendered into English as far as possible. Often, the very word order of the original text is preserved in the translation where such a word order in English is natural and plausible.

However, rendering poetry from one language to another cannot often fit into the straight jacket of literal translation. Most of the sentence patterns in Telugu and English are not identical. Nor are identical expressions available in all cases in the two languages. Also, the cultures reflected by the two languages are different and often the cultural connotations of the original text cannot be conveyed through literal translation. Hence, the general rule of literal translation is set aside at times.

The aim of the present translation is not merely to communicate the content of the poems, but to recreate them in English, so that the English reader can not only know the poet's thoughts and ideas, but also experience his flights of fancy, outbursts of emotion, and illuminations of intuition--in short, become part of the throbbings of the poet's heart and the resonances of the poet's spirit. Thus, a "transcreation" rather than a mere translation has become the aim of the present

undertaking. Transcreation manifests itself in terms of readability and clarity and felicity and beauty of expression as well as excellence of imagery.

Some examples of the departures from literal translation of the original text are given below.

Four of the lines in "Come, Dame Peace" are translated thus:

Flowers must bloom and bloom they do;  
light must burst and burst it does;  
victory must come, and come it will;  
people must live and thrive as well.

while a literal translation of the lines will be:

Flowers must bloom and bloom they must;  
light must burst and burst it must;  
victory must come and come it must;  
people must live, and thrive they must.

If translated literally, the lines will give rise to the questions why flowers must bloom or light must burst or victory must come or how people can thrive.

In "Indignations over Himsa," the first two lines are translated thus:

Man to man is ghoulish;  
man to man is gallows.

Literally translated, the lines will read,

Man to man is an enemy;  
man to man is death by hanging.

In order to lend force to the ideas that man is wilfully bringing in death, an extra line, "on the chariot of crime," is added in the



following stanza:

Death that comes  
with sickness and old age,  
man is drawing in  
on the chariot of crime,  
on the wheels of violence.

In "The Sea of Milk," literally translated, two of the lines will read, "This is the sagar/that gives a little food to our bellies/and shows compassion." The idea of a lake showing compassion might have been alright in the mythological age, but it is awkward today. Hence the simplified translation, "this is the sagar/that fills our bellies with food."

In "Welcome to the Future," Dasarathi talks of demonetizing black money. In reality, such a step is impossible. Hence the word 'confiscating' is used instead of 'demonetizing.'

Thus, the dictum of literal translation is set aside at times in order to have an appropriateness of expression or idea, or to achieve an enhanced poetical quality.

## CHAPTER IV

### DUEL WITH DARKNESS

Come, Dame Peace

"You will not come," the stumps said;  
"You do not exist," the thorns declared;  
"True, true," the stones added--  
And I could not believe!

Should the desert remain?  
Should the dust storm rise and spread?  
Should the tent collapse?  
Must the rose wither away?

Darkness will not dissolve till dawn;  
Dawn can not be seen till the eyes are opened;  
Heart will not pulsate till youth floods in;  
And speech has no charm till poetry permeates.

The perceiving eye can see  
the universe in the atom;  
The birds of fancy that can fly  
can touch a crore heavens.

You will not see or hear;  
you hide somewhere;  
but you can not escape me  
and when I insist, you can not but come.

Do not say you will not come,  
saddened seeing us,  
who, in this last quarter  
of the twentieth century,  
still cling to rotten castes  
and fight and kill each other  
in the name of dead doctrines.

Nor sit aloof demurring  
at the misdeeds of fools  
who wage wars  
to grab portions  
of the ball-like little globe.

Do not stay away  
 dreading the cruelty of scoundrels  
 who cut throats  
 for currency notes.

If you say you will not come  
 I will not stay silent;  
 I insist on your coming.  
 I will see each atom of your being;  
 I will bring you to my house.

I will make the stump  
 that lied that you will not come  
 get animated  
 by the touch of the feet  
 of an enlivening beauty  
 and make it flower and prove  
 that you are alive!

On the cruel throats that thundered  
 that you are not,  
 I will graft the thousand petals  
 of my lotus heart  
 and make them smile like flowers;  
 I will prove that you are.

I will turn into (statues of) women  
 the stones that echoed  
 the chorus and chant "true, true"  
 you will not come  
 and make them burst  
 into a new-life dance.  
 I will prove that you are.

Flowers must bloom, and bloom they do;  
 light must burst, and burst it does;  
 victory must come, and come it will;  
 people must live and thrive as well.

Bangla Desh searched for you;  
 Vietnam cried out, for you;  
 the Arabs anguished for you;  
 The whole world has fretted for you.

Those that block your way  
 with prison walls built of bombs  
 do not know that you can  
 come across the skies.

They do not know  
 that you live  
 in some chamber  
 of the heart

of the experimenting scientist  
in the bomb factory!

They do not know  
that in you  
is the unique power  
to spread over all the earth,  
breaking that chamber  
and tearing the enveloping layer.

I know that you will be  
in hearts locked in love,  
in faces filled with light,  
and in eyes sharing laughter.

I know you will be  
in the guileless hearts of children,  
in the footprints of Gandhiji  
wherein oceans can be held,  
and in the swords-into-pieces-slicing  
tip of the poet's pen.

I know you will be  
in the souls of the anonymous  
unburied martyrs  
who sacrificed themselves  
for the sake of the country.

I know you will be  
in the sprouting little blade of grass  
which triumphs  
tearing through earth's surface;  
in the will-power of the famished  
who stand against the strong;  
and in the star that shines  
in the sward of infinite darkness.

Yet, all this is not enough;  
the real problem remains;  
O, rise like a tidal wave;  
inundate the whole earth!

Become the abundant breast  
of the quintessence of the rasas,<sup>1</sup>  
become an ocean of nectar,  
a super storm of heroes,  
and love's new sprout;

---

<sup>1</sup>rasa. Taste as well as humor. While there are different tastes or flavors, Oriental aesthetics recognizes nine homors.

Become Ugadi,<sup>2</sup>  
become the foundation of my hopes,  
become the sepulchre of war,  
become the enemy of murderers,  
and fill the worlds.  
Pray, sever the heads of battles.

Welcome, Dame Peace,  
dawn of a millenium,  
light illuminating the entire earth,  
and happy denouement  
of the world's drama!

---

<sup>2</sup>Ugadi. New Year day for the Telugus--people of Andhra Pradesh.

## The Sea of Milk

This is the auspicious time  
 when we can raise roses  
 in desert spots;  
 this is the august occasion  
 when we can plant new life  
 in fallow places.

I do not know  
 if any body has seen  
 Ksheerasagar,<sup>1</sup>  
 but Nagarjunasagar<sup>2</sup>  
 is a feast to the eye.

This I trumpet with a thousand mouths,  
 that they who have halted the Krishna<sup>3</sup>  
 and have answered the yearnings<sup>4</sup> of the poor  
 are far greater than Vishnu.<sup>4</sup>

To proclaim that Nature  
 is subject to man's mastery,  
 (the leaders) have formed a lake  
 of fresh water in our midst.

Today a new radiance  
 glows in the eyes of the Telugus;<sup>5</sup>  
 today we can hold our heads high  
 among others.

In a particle of water  
 there are a myriad  
 atoms of electricity.  
 In the plough's furrow  
 are a host of delicious fruits.

In every atom of the earth  
 is new life;  
 in the lotus of human heart  
 is the honey of gnana.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ksheerasagar. The mythological Sea of Milk which the deities and demons churned to get nectar.

<sup>2</sup>Nagarjunasagar. A dam in Andhra Pradesh, India.

<sup>3</sup>The Krishna. A river in Andhra Pradesh, supplying water to Nagarjunasagar.

<sup>4</sup>Vishnu. One of the Hindu gods.

<sup>5</sup>Telugus. People whose mother Tongue is Telugu. Andhra Pradesh is their home state.

<sup>6</sup>Gnana: Wisdom.

Only when we churn,  
will the stream of nectar  
swell up;  
only he who can swallow venom  
is the lord of the universe.<sup>7</sup>

Their woes ended,  
all the Telugus  
will make the earth shimmer  
with the gold of harvest.

Hence forth there will be  
none that has no food;  
hence forth we can not see,  
even if we search, an illiterate.

This is the sagar that flows  
into stones and waste lands;  
this is the sagar that fills  
our bellies with food.  
This is the sagar  
that spills affection  
from every part of its being;  
this is the sagar  
which with its each wave  
excites ecstasy.

O what a tranquillity  
on the shores of this sagar!  
On these shores can dance  
the smiles of Nagarjuna.<sup>8</sup>

The days of the Ikshwakas<sup>9</sup>  
now stir in our dreams;  
now walks over the earth  
the compassion of the Buddha.

Every sculpture around this sagar  
displays a rare grandeur  
and proclaims the glory  
of our ancient art.

---

<sup>7</sup>There is a story that Krishna swallowed poison and let it rest in his throat.

<sup>8</sup>Nagarjuna. The Buddha.

<sup>9</sup>Ikshwakas. They ruled most of the present day Andhra Pradesh. Their reign was marked by prosperity and peace. Ikshwaka was the first king of the Sun dynasty.

The past and the present  
stand together at this sagar  
which articulates  
the new song of the future.

Prelude to a new history,  
Nagarjunasagar  
is the Ksheerasagar  
which can fill with prosperity  
the Telugu households.



## Ripples

In the lake  
ripples of water;  
in the dawn  
ripples of fog;  
in the heart  
ripples of poison.

These ripples of poison  
have provoked violence in the world.  
These ripples remain the fuel  
for the flames of the battle.  
They did not die with Hitler;  
they did not disappear with Yahya.<sup>1</sup>

These ripples  
inundate the world.  
Their birth place  
is the hearts of evil men.

With your voices invade  
those venomous hearts  
which spread  
unrest and chaos  
in all directions.  
and with your pens  
chastize those poisonous ripples.

Erchew hatred,  
chain cruelty,  
hurl away horror  
and wreck wickedness,  
Indict  
and chastize  
forces  
which insult,  
rather than venerate,  
the pen and the voice  
and the sonorous sound  
and its significance.

Carry on your mission;  
tell the world the truth.

---

<sup>1</sup>Yahya. Yahya Khan, one of the military dictators of Pakistan.

## Garland of Alphabet Stars

O Mother,  
 Mother Telugu,  
 Statue of splendors,  
 Queen who shelters  
 five crore Andhras,  
 for your birthday I have brought  
 a small present-  
 it is a victory garland I have woven  
 with alphabet stars.  
 Never will it leave your neck;  
 never will it wither.

The foams of the Godavari,<sup>1</sup>  
 the galloping of the Krishna,<sup>2</sup>  
 the surge of the Tungabhadra,<sup>3</sup>  
 the glimmer of the Manjira,<sup>3</sup>  
 may these forever shimmer  
 on your skirt.

You are the crescent moon  
 reflecting seventy years  
 of the art of the Great Andhra.  
 In the sea of the social institution  
 of haves and havenots,  
 you are the light house  
 of socialism.  
 Sixteen years ago,  
 you were but a thin streak  
 of the nascent moon,  
 but today, in our lives,  
 you are the full moon.

Twenty five years ago,  
 we broke into two pieces  
 your mother, our grand mother-  
 Mother Bharath<sup>4</sup>  
 and for that we still grieve.

That is why, we will not sever you;  
 severing you shall be our hell.

---

<sup>1</sup>Godavari. A river in Andhra Pradesh.

<sup>2</sup>Tungabhadra. A river in Andhra Pradesh.

<sup>3</sup>Manjira. Name of a project which supplies drinking water to Hyderabad.

<sup>4</sup>Bharath. Another name for India.

Grandmother is twenty five  
 and mother is sixteen;  
 in twentyfive years Mother Bharath  
 has suffered severely;  
 in sixteen years, great Mother Andhra,  
 you have been floating in streams of tears.

And the mother of all mothers,  
 Mother Earth  
 is in too much turmoil.  
 Having endured the torment  
 of two world wars,  
 she is groaning  
 pierced by the verbal spears  
 of the we-will-bring-in-the-third-world-war  
 threat of idiots.

The cobras of false revolutions claim  
 "killing, we will fill the land  
 with the fragrance of the champaks."<sup>5</sup>  
 The peace doves protest,  
 "With killings comes nothing  
 but the stench of corpses;  
 never the fragrance of the champaks.

The cobras are biting the doves;  
 those who stand shoulder to shoulder  
 with the snakes  
 threaten to wound  
 those  
 who go hand in hand with the doves.

With green notes some,  
 with sword stabs others,  
 are trying to wreck  
 the value of people's votes.

We should muzzle green notes,  
 we should avert sword stabs,  
 and prove the sovereignty of people's vote.

The flag of Democracy  
 and Socialism  
 must fly free.  
 The fever pain  
 fiery of debate  
 and empty words  
 must end  
 and the rays of light must spread

---

<sup>5</sup>Champaks. Yellow fragrant flowers.

of the doctrine of peace  
and the creed of equality.

Mother-my mother Andhra,  
mother of my mother, Mother Bharath,  
and the mother of mothers of mothers,  
Mother Earth should shine  
with never a tear to shed.

In rotten hearts and thorn bushes  
jasmynes should bloom;  
In the teeth of venomous snakes  
springs of rasas must start.

The atom bomb  
should be stripped  
and shamed.  
As boys play  
with wooden guns,  
the world should sport  
with unexploding  
atomic weapons.

Soldiers should become sowers  
and cultivate crops;  
freed of famine's burden,  
Telugu prestige should flourish.

All the doctrines of himsa  
must be sucked up by the ground;  
humanism alone  
should spread over all the earth.

Fate, fortune,  
and power  
should suffer  
loss of value;  
work's value  
should soar;  
money's prominence  
must fall.

Mother, Telugu Mother,  
Queen who shelters  
five crore Andhras,  
in your lap,  
my longings  
must become a reality.

The present I have brought  
for your birthday  
will never leave your neck,  
will never wither!

## The Modugu Flowers

The Modugu stump<sup>1</sup>  
 which put forth flowers  
 as usual this year  
 with no purpose  
 is telling the tale  
 of misery-laden mankind.

Crescent moon curves  
 and circles of affection,  
 the Modugu flowers  
 which once appeared  
 like the nail scratches  
 on the lucent breasts  
 of a beautiful courtesan-

The Modugu flowers  
 which once feasted the eye  
 looking like the burning red beaks of parrots  
 and like the sunset-gold-dyed saffron mantle  
 on the shoulders of young hermitesses  
 are today dazzling  
 around the neck of Mother Earth  
 as chains of hearts  
 of eminent heroes  
 who became victims  
 of the atrocities of despots.

What damsel's smiles-spilling coral lips are these!  
 What comely maiden's rubies are these shimmering  
 from what comely maiden's cheeks?  
 What waves are these of what river of sacrificial blood  
 that gushed in the nerves of what hero?  
 What disguised forms are these of what flames  
 that rose in the stilled minds of what men  
 that thirsted for freedom?  
 What lamps of revolution are these  
 flickering in what darkness of despair?

(My) pen is impatient  
 to weave volumes  
 with the compassion-soaked stories  
 each Modugu flower narrates.

---

<sup>1</sup>Modugu. A tree which brings forth extremely beautiful, though not fragrant, red-color flowers.

The heroes of my epic  
 play on violins of anger;  
 they are my brothers who went laughing  
 into the house of death

My brothers,  
 trees of our garden,  
 be sure that Time  
 will not fail to sting  
 like a poisonous snake  
 the despots and the yillains, their supporters,  
 who played vasantham<sup>2</sup>  
 with your blood.

The withered garden of spring  
 will bloom again.

...      ...      ...  
 ...      ...      ...

The demon of war must die;  
 the sylph of santhi must smile;  
 freedom, brotherhood, and friendliness  
 must flourish!

---

<sup>2</sup>Vasantham. At the spring festival called "Holi," Hindus in India splash red-colored water on each other.

## One Language, One Light

Will the left eye pierce the right eye?  
 Will the left hand cut the right hand?  
 One body, one house -- do you forget?  
 One Telugu,<sup>1</sup> one glort -- do not you remember?

Will you pierce your own eye?  
 Will you burn your own house?  
 Do you desire to limp with a lame leg?  
 Is there peace in living as a separated pair?

There is the whole-world-one-family dream;  
 we have the hope that it will become true;  
 at such a time, must Andhra jathi<sup>2</sup> become ridiculous?  
 And forgetting vastness, must it sprout up mad heads?

The white<sup>3</sup> man made our house a rubble;  
 the Nizam<sup>3</sup> has set fire to our language;  
 at last, the divided Telugu race has become one;  
 at last, the dreams that you and I have dreamt have become true!

For a dozen years, we have been one house;  
 with no grievances, in one plate we have eaten;  
 is not yours and mine the sacred mother Godavari?<sup>4</sup>  
 Is not yours and mine the dear sister Krishna?<sup>5</sup>

After how many centuries have we become united?  
 How many fiends have we fought?  
 We should discover the way of staying together  
 and discard the thought of parting.

With diverse languages and diverse voices, for generations,  
 we were under the shadow of the foreign ruler's sword;  
 can we not rejoice in the shade of our freedom flag?  
 People of one language, can't we become one?

Knowing truthjoining shoulder, heartily must we march,  
 we should soon pull out the solution from behind the screen;  
 one body, one house, one country ours  
 and the Telugu dazzle can blaze in all directions.

---

<sup>1</sup>Telugu. One of the languages of India. It is spoken in Andhra Pradesh.

<sup>2</sup>Andhra jathi. The Andhra race or the Andhras. They are also known as Telugus and belong to the state of Andhra Pradesh in India.

<sup>3</sup>Nizam. The official title of the former ruler of the State of Hyderabad in India.

<sup>4</sup>Godavari. A river in Andhra Pradesh.

<sup>5</sup>Krishna. A river in Andhra Pradesh.

## Eyes of Light

Darkness is invading me  
like the devilry of the white man  
who is strangling the black man.

O sylph setting up  
a rangavalli of lamps,<sup>1</sup>  
will you not give me a little refuge?  
As you bend and make those radiant designs,  
it looks as though the sky  
is vaulting over the earth.  
And in the distance, the bomb copper ewers  
slipping down from each step  
of the stairs of civilization  
are exploding  
in barbarism's compound.

Everywhere a smoke of endless darkness;  
Oh, where have you hidden your brightness, gold?  
O Sylph of Santhi,  
fling a while  
your mischievous smile  
and this pitch darkness  
will be reduced to impotence.  
I who have not even a gulp of gruel,  
from where can I bring oil for the lamp?  
Turn into little lamp clay cups<sup>2</sup>  
my two deep sunken eyes  
and in them let your smiles  
like tapers burn.

Do not think there is  
an inundating affection  
in me dieing of hunger.

I am a pathless desert;  
I am an unmarked sepulcher;  
I am a sleep-reft eye,  
a wineless goblet;  
I am a dumb violin;  
I am a ghost that has no shadow;  
I am the helpless street dweller

---

<sup>1</sup>rangavalli. Decorative chalk-powder designs women, especially in villages in India, draw on the floor of their houses.

<sup>2</sup>clay cups. Clay cups are filled with castor oil and a wick dipped in the oil and resting on the edge of the cup is lighted to serve as a lamp.



getting kicks on all sides in Vietnam;  
I am a slave who is wild with joy  
that freedom is about to come.

Today one flag;  
tomorrow another!  
Today one plunderer;  
tomorrow another!  
With the blows of the flags of these plunderers,  
my heart is broken to pieces.

In the darkness I am searching  
one by one those pieces  
and with blood I am pasting them together.  
Rather than get mashed  
by the pounding club of darkness,  
I want to burn up,  
O Sylph of Santhi,  
falling into your  
rangavalli of flames!

Mere impudence  
is the "light of knowledge"  
of conceited fanatics  
who, going backward,  
profess they are progressing.

There is no one to help an innocent man;  
no one to punish those that prey on others;  
the ism of unity has become prostrate  
and opposition is entrenched in the stalemate.

We do not know who lives next door,  
nor have thought of knowing about them;  
utterly insensitive, people pass by  
the person vomiting blood on the road.  
Hurry...hurry...hurry!  
Where they are going, no one knows.  
No amount of money is enough;  
never will float up again  
the barge of life sunk  
in the sea of family problems.  
The hydrogen balloon of prices  
which has touched the sky  
will not come down to the ground again;  
it is the corpse of Ravana<sup>3</sup>  
which will never fully burn.

---

<sup>3</sup>Ravana. The demon who carried away Sita, the wife of Rama, the hero of Ramayana, the great epic of India.

O sylph,  
 who with a lakh lights  
 have determined to defeat me,  
 in the hearts of the humble masses  
 are conflagrations of angers  
 which far exceed your lights.  
 I will sit mischievously smiling  
 in the red mehndi shades of those flames<sup>4</sup>  
 I will not come to where you have lit the lamps;  
 I can not climb the terraces  
 of your rocketing costly fireworks;  
 I can not be netted in the jackets  
 of your flying rockets;  
 from behind the vrata<sup>5</sup>  
 of conjugal fidelity,  
 I can not stroke the cheeks  
 of a dissembling beloved.  
 All that I want is two eyes-  
 eyes that can melt;  
 eyes that can glow;  
 eyes that can light;  
 eyes that can make  
 the darkness in the minds  
 vanish.

For those eyes,  
 I will cross  
 a lakh deepavalis;<sup>6</sup>  
 Only when I find  
 those eyes of light,  
 my life will have  
 a myriad-lamp deepavali!

---

<sup>4</sup>mehndi. The paste of a leaf which women in India keep in little designs on the palms of their hands and on their nails. After a few hours, the paste leaves red marks behind.

<sup>5</sup>Vrata. Pledge.

<sup>6</sup>deepavali. The festival of lights. Literally, deepavali means a row of lights.

## Welcome To The Future

I can not welcome the future  
in every form that it comes.

I can not say "welcome"  
to the future  
if it comes  
like a nurse who can not heal the sick,  
like a horse which can not win the race'  
like a purse which is empty and unexciting,  
or like free verse which is devoid of life.

If it comes like grand mother  
with a bent back,  
I can not consider it my beloved  
and extend my hand to it.

If it comes demon-like  
filling its belly  
with lakhs of lives,  
I can not show it  
any sympathy.

If it comes  
like an emperor  
face full of the scum  
of fondness for the past  
seated on a howdah of gold,  
I will become the eye of Hari<sup>1</sup>  
and leaping over  
like lightning,  
I will put an end  
to the elephant  
and its rider.

If the future comes  
like Kubera<sup>2</sup>  
hiding in its belly  
the cash box  
of crores of (rupees of) black money,  
in broad day light  
in the middle of busy streets  
plundering people  
strutting about

---

<sup>1</sup>Eye of Hari. Reference here is to the third eye of Hari which  
when opened burns whomever it sees.

<sup>2</sup>Kubera. Pluto

and riding a human being  
 and bragging  
 that with money  
 it can buy all things,  
 I will pass orders  
 confiscating the black money.

I will not invite future  
 if it arrives  
 dictator-like  
 celebrating birthdays of self  
 and listening to the endless wailing of people  
 as if it were a pleasant music,  
 its own word as the veda,<sup>3</sup>  
 and others' word as otherwise,  
 and its own ism as unique.

Future must enter  
 with the flag of new poetry,  
 with the crescent moon of youth,  
 suppressing the darkness of agnana,<sup>4</sup>  
 warding off the wailing of the innocent,  
 quenching the bonfires of power-thirst  
 destroying the devil of opportunism,  
 unsheltering the worthies who want  
 to break the partly formed egg of revolution,  
 and spurning the villains who strive  
 to turn backward the wheel of time.

Future must not come  
 cutting throats,  
 causing streams of blood,  
 carrying death in a palanquin'  
 honoring the sword with a shower of gold,  
 spreading delusion  
 in the name of development,  
 cooking pieces of the peace dove  
 as a snack for killers,  
 burning with anger,  
 and breaching the banks  
 of the lakes of life.

Future must come  
 intoxicating  
 like a bouquet  
 of a dense cluster of flowers,  
 spreading spring  
 to the ends of the earth,

---

<sup>3</sup>Veda. Scripture.

<sup>4</sup>agnana. Ignorance.

animating the sprouting  
of new love  
in young hearts,  
like the aroma  
of the Nandan Van,<sup>5</sup>  
(like the fragrance of the Brindavan)  
like a prabandha<sup>6</sup>  
spilling the nine rasas,  
like the bond of love,<sup>7</sup>  
like the Gita Govinda,<sup>7</sup>  
and like the charming lotus  
that has blossomed  
in the lake of milk  
of a maiden's youth.

My future must come  
like a flag of gold,  
like the crescent of progress,  
like an electric blaze,  
and like the crane that skirts  
the skies of liberty.

My future must come  
a protecting hand to the helpless  
wallowing in misery  
in numerous towns and cities.  
and as a prop to the penniless  
living a life of intense suffering  
in our unnumbered villages.

My future is the Parvathi,<sup>8</sup>  
an image of infinite power  
who can make  
the dream  
of the working class and the wise  
of a society based on equality  
real and eternal.  
I am the Siva<sup>9</sup>  
courting that Parvathi.

---

<sup>5</sup>Nandan Van. Also known as Brindavan, it is the garden associated with Krishna and his milk maids.

<sup>6</sup>Prabandha. A respectable volume.

<sup>7</sup>Gita Govinda. Bhagawadgita.

<sup>8</sup>Parvathi. Wife of Siva

<sup>9</sup>Siva. One of the Hindu gods.

I hold a welcome  
to future  
who, as my spouse,  
in unabating ecstasy  
floats and swoons  
in a blaze of beauty  
and amorous indulgence  
on Time's  
bed of flowers!

## The Determined Fighter

About the determined fighter  
who became a victim  
for the principles he held  
I am weaving this poem.

He knew not fear of death  
which with boldness suddenly swelled  
on the face of the shooting enemy;  
he believed only in truth!

He is scorn a selfless person  
who, at the mere mention of position,  
will with scorn step aside.  
He is not fit for today's world.

No mother; no house;  
yearns not for his wife;  
he is tireless in the battle  
that fells the nation's foes.

He seeks no tamra patra;<sup>1</sup>  
He is not fortunate enough  
even to have a portrait of his;  
all that he wants is his country;  
it is a passion in his every nerve.

His unseen tomb  
is the foundation  
of freedom's mansion.  
Only when we honor him,  
we have a glorious dawn;  
only when we do not forget him,  
will we have victory.

---

<sup>1</sup>tamra patra. An honor given to people for distinguished service in India.

## The Lotus Song

When the sky yawned  
 and embraced the earth,  
 when, at a spot we can not see,  
 the earth has kissed the heavens,  
 when the blouse of snow burst in its seams,  
 when the ripe pomegranate made a tear in its skin,  
 when the river's skirt slipped down,  
 when nascent youth grew vibrant,  
 on all sides,  
 we hear the song of progress.

A comely progress permeates;  
 we have the lotus song of blood  
 of groaning feet  
 pierced by thorns  
 and hit by stones  
 as they have left the path  
 that others have walked  
 and probed through impenetrable forests  
 and found amazing herbs.

I will seize the silent shore  
 where the earth and the heavens overflow  
 and there build a house for myself.

I will don the shawl  
 of fervent passion  
 shimmering in the eyes of my beloved  
 overflowing with selfhood.

I can not admire  
 time limping  
 like the life of a lonely man  
 or the goddesses who flee  
 like cowards.

Better than the plane with broken wings  
 is the bird that dares to dash ahead.  
 Better than the showy society  
 which is at the mercy of money  
 is the hearty life of the poor  
 who live with the labor of their hands.

Better than the old fort wall  
 with its clock that does not tick  
 is the siren of the factory  
 that makes the sun flee.

Better than the static,  
 lack-luster,  
 lack-laughter



Vinayakas<sup>1</sup>  
is the bird soaring to the stars  
not nurturing enmity  
for the sake of its belly,  
not preying on others  
in the name of defense,  
and not demeaning those  
that supplicate for alms.

The flight of that bird's wings  
is my profound poetry.

---

<sup>1</sup>Vinayaka. The mythological son of Siva with an elephant trunk.  
Figuratively, Vinayaka means a do-nothing.

## With The Babes of The Nile

O friend!  
 With the broken wine jar,  
 in an unbroken silent pilgrimage,  
 with the desert all around,  
 a sword piercing your heart,  
 how long will this walking be,  
 this destination-never-reaching journey?

From every grain of sand  
 will sprout a vine;  
 from every dark night  
 the sun will rise again;  
 every ray of light  
 is a foot of progress.  
 Behind the curtain of fog  
 is a flame-like maiden;  
 and over the bombs will alight  
 birds of peace.  
 Both then and now,  
 man has won;  
 the monster has lost.

Though your country is different,  
 though your culture is different,  
 your hearts and ours join  
 to become future's dawn.

You who burn to ashes  
 to protect humaneness,  
 you are our gods;  
 your hearts are our temples.

Just as diamonds  
 put on new buds in coal mines,  
 just as the Ganges  
 leaps from underground,  
 from you who are backward  
 progress will surge.

Brothers!  
 The coward will come rushing  
 with a sword to stab;  
 trying to murder,  
 the fool dies first;  
 while the Buddha,  
 spilling smiles,  
 makes us radiant.  
 Mounting the cross,  
 Christ forgives the sinners.  
 Laying down his life, the Mahatma  
 brings life to our nation.

With his goodness, Mohammed  
becomes venerable to the world.

Who has won a victory  
with traits of in humanity and selfishness?  
In gentleness; remember,  
is true vitality.

The past was not yours;  
but, the future can't but be yours;  
the dog's tail sees no change,  
but time is bound to change.

The time is not far  
when, with pairs of lovers  
exchanging hearts  
in warm passion flames,  
love spreads in the world  
and the flood of battle is gone  
and we reach  
happy havens of peace.

March on as demon-destroyers,  
as undaunted heroes,  
as the sky's blue clouds,  
as the Nile's wave-steeds,  
as tempests, as conflagrations,  
and as leaping little springs--  
march on, brothers!  
Spurn slogans;  
forget feuds.

## World Light

Darkness  
 that suddenly swallows  
 the sun with its myriad rays,  
 darkness that can fling from its nail  
 the star-studded sky,  
 darkness of ignorance in man,  
 darkness of arrogance in the mind,  
 darkness that is enchanting as a fairy  
 sitting near and enticing,  
 setting fire to our tranquil life  
 and causing intense agony-

this darkness covers  
 bends, mounds,  
 trees and hills;  
 it hides good and evil;  
 holds an umbrella to the scoundrel and the gentleman,  
 it shelters the sinner,  
 soothes the wickedest wretch,  
 prevents your perceiving  
 the truth that is in front of you,  
 and obstructs your seeing  
 your own shortcomings!

Not even the most outstanding man,  
 nor even the most blinding splendor  
 has been able to uproot this darkness.  
 This darkness is the hero  
 who laughs from inside  
 the heart of a flame;  
 it has captured a place  
 inside the belly of the moon.  
 It has sneaked into  
 the tresses of beautiful women.  
 It has built a mansion  
 in the eyes of the profligate.  
 It spreads a carpet  
 before your feet;  
 it builds its palace  
 in your shadow.  
 Gaining your confidence,  
 it makes you useless;  
 pleasing,  
 it makes you  
 tread the wrong path.

That we can not find  
 the light  
 that banishes this darkness  
 causes panic.

Man yearns for  
that light of the world  
humanism  
which makes  
this darkness  
vanish.

## Festoons of Wounds

The sword of time  
 shows no pity.  
 It moves on  
 wounding heart after heart.  
 I think a person's aging  
 is due to that wounding.

The agony that (time's) wound has caused  
 has some kind of sweetness.

That wound is an inspiration  
 to the creation of fine arts.  
 That wound is the quest  
 of the poet, the musician, and the artist.

That wound will turn into a rose bud and blossom;  
 it floods the heart with a rain of kisses;  
 it dances like a laughing flame;  
 it is a lamp at the threshold of my body.  
 It is the nature of the wound-lamp  
 to light up the inner and outer worlds.  
 It is the sickle that cuts  
 the tree of darkness;  
 it is the poesy that achieves  
 the quintessence of nectar. What is the sustenance for the tree of  
 darkness?  
 It is the pestilence of longings in man's mind.

What shall I do with time's unhealing wound?  
 How shall I write its flame as poetry?  
 Becoming wine, it overpowers me;  
 becoming an agony, it butchers me;  
 becoming a garden, it spreads itself in my path;  
 becoming a thorn, it pierces my feet.  
 It tells the truth;  
 it pats on the shoulder;  
 it drags to the bottom of the ocean;  
 it carries to the paths of clouds.  
 This wound is warring with me;  
 it gives me away as a booty to the victor;  
 It rises a sprout and grows a tree,  
 brings forth fire flowers, blows camphor breezes.  
 It teases me and torments me;  
 it rocks me and rules me;  
 in the sleepless, tear-filled, horrible night street,  
 it prays with time-stamped beads.

To count the wounds of my heart,  
 I have instituted the Ministry of Statistics.  
 The rough book of the account of wounds  
 has become bulkier than the account book of stars!

How many people have wounded me!  
 How many events have bruised me!  
 The assassin who killed Gandhi  
 shot the fourth bullet into my chest.  
 The brute that killed Kennedy  
 hit me as well with his bullet.  
 Every bomb that exploded in Vietnam  
 is still in illegal occupation of my heart.  
 The flames of war that rose on either side of Suez  
 are a garland of red flowers of dusk in my heart.

Time is slicing my heart every moment;  
 the dagger of my neighbor's intolerance  
 is constantly puncturing my eyes;  
 and there are the jackals who burst into laughter  
 pressing open a crust covered wound  
 and squeezing drops of blood.

I will consign  
 arrogant darkness  
 to the flames of conflagration  
 raging in unhealing wounds.

With the diamond hammer of my unhealing wounds,  
 I will smash to pieces  
 the deaf hearts of the power-blinded.  
 In the pitiless human heart's desert land,  
 with a host of poesy's clouds  
 I will bring compassion's rain.  
 I will make the guns shut their mouths;  
 I will slap the bombs on their cheek;  
 with the festoons of the sun-red  
 broken pieces of my heart,  
 I will make the earth a palace of pomp  
 glittering with joy!  
 I will defeat Yama;  
 I will make stones sing;  
 I will couple hearts;  
 and to make the Telugu race  
 prosper united,  
 I will sacrifice my life.

## The Bold Songstress Papiha

A golden flag is fluttering in the sky,  
 the only flag of seven and a half crore people.  
 Heroic songstress! your veil has become that flag  
 and your song swells  
 as if it were the very wave of the Ganges.

In the pearl like heart of the fighter for freedom  
 your image will stand like a coral for ever.  
 Your song, like a spear, pierced the enemy's heart;  
 your song, like a path, spread before the heroes.

You are a woman unafraid of death;  
 you are a generous, auspicious-voiced woman;  
 you are a santhi.

To your song fanning the flames  
 of patriotism in the people,  
 our hearts are an offering of camphor.  
 He who heard your blood-boiling song  
 leapt into the battleinspired to duty.

Your voice is a violin of anger  
 and your music, a stream of fire!

O koel singing in the spring of liberation,<sup>1</sup>  
 O cherished river Ganges flowing through Bangla Desh,  
 we will break the mountains that stand in our way;  
 we will march waging the war of liberty.

(Still) every one hums the song that you sang  
 and free Bangla Desh is like a golden flower-garden.

---

<sup>1</sup>Koel. The Indian cuckoo.



Song Triumphant of All Humanity

The flowering mango tree is saying,  
 "I remember the havoc  
 the winter winds have done."

The flowering manog tree is smiling  
 seeing the delusion of winter  
 who, behaved as if  
 its word were law  
 and its acts unquestionable,  
 and reckoned as heroism  
 its ruthless wind blowing away  
 the raiment of women  
 slender as the stem of a plant.

The mango tree is dispelling  
 darkness, fog, and ego  
 with the lamp of sun-splendor sprouts  
 that burst  
 from the bosom of the stumps

It is saying succinctly  
 that there is no such thing as defeat,  
 that there is the thing called victory,  
 that it is inevitable  
 that in the nectar  
 of tranquillity and austerity,  
 the earth will blossom,  
 and that it is a myth  
 hereafter to win in war.

What says the gobblet of liquor in hand?  
 "O impudent man, do not be intrigued!  
 Between the cup and the lip, there is a chasm."  
 Who knows what we can and can not reach;  
 who knows what we can and can not get?

O, you rich dazzled by wealth,  
 can't you see that times change?  
 Only wealth of art will not wither away;  
 only the treasure of mercy will not dwindle;  
 only the pure heart will never break;  
 only goodness can not be concealed;  
 only patience can not be vanquished;  
 only humility will never desert;  
 only friendship will never decay;  
 only love will never fear;  
 and only poetry provides  
 the intoxication  
 that rocks us all our life.

When we have that wine,  
 why another drink  
 at this hallowed hour  
 of the dawn of Spring?

And, what does the future proclaim?  
 That strength is not physical strength,  
 and that strength is not the power of wealth.  
 The strength of people with the strength of will  
 is striking a sacred symphony  
 in the august movement  
 of human progress.  
 And the floor of the palace of Equality  
 is gorgeous with rangavalli<sup>1</sup>  
 With no murderous moves,  
 with no shedding of blood,  
 all humanity with a voice liberated  
 is chanting a celestial song.

It is singing a song of hope  
 that the blessed moment will come  
 of trouncing the human demons  
 who hunger for human lives  
 and of whipping at will  
 the wicked that bathe in human blood.

Even an ant is not affected  
 by crores of neighing horses.  
 People who become highly emotional for flimsy reasons  
 are ineffectual in practical life.  
 Resolve must rise from within the hearts;  
 light must laugh from within the eyes;  
 and we should not be fascinated by heaps of bombs.  
 Peace is the very life of lasting revolution.

Waving flags, you can not put out  
 the flames rising in hearts;  
 With the shadow wars of philosophies,  
 you can not efface humanism.  
 The days when monsters will win are gone;  
 the time when man can thrive has come;  
 and the triumphant conches of universal humanism  
 are sounding at the threshold  
 of the edifice of social equality.

---

<sup>1</sup>rangavalli. Decorative chalk designs women draw on the floor in houses in India.

## Long Live Revolution

Hail, Mujib!<sup>1</sup>  
 you who led the people's war  
 for democracy  
 and equality  
 in the reign of religious fanaticism  
 of cruel military rulers  
 who seek to turn backwards  
 the chariot of time-hail!  
 Hail, revolution!

Sole leader  
 of seven and a half crore people,  
 the pigs that seek to suppress you  
 with brute force  
 do not know  
 history's lesson.

The monstrous barbarians  
 who wanted to seize  
 the entire earth  
 are gone.  
 These rogues  
 who want to swallow Bangla<sup>2</sup>  
 will go likewise.

Supposedly weak  
 ordinary people  
 will trounce  
 the strong.  
 The mad dog will die;  
 the drawn sword will snap;  
 the gun will gather rust;  
 and the myriad-headed demon  
 will lose  
 to the single-headed human.

The stream of blood of the innocent  
 is like the descent of a diamond sword  
 on the throats  
 of tyrants.  
 Foreign domination over you  
 will disappear  
 and freedom will march in.

---

<sup>1</sup>Mujib. Mujibur Rahman, the founder of Bangla Desh.

<sup>2</sup>Bangla. Bangla Desh.

The dawn has embraced the East  
and the fretting earth  
is inviting  
change.

## Indignation Over Himsa

Man to man is ghoulish;  
 man to man is gallows;  
 man is a maniac  
 of self-extermination.  
 Giving as gifts  
 air and water,  
 earth and the heavens,  
 God has placed him  
 in the world  
 to live  
 and to prosper  
 procuring plenty.

Death that comes  
 with sickness and old age,  
 man is drawing in  
 on the chariot of crime,  
 on the wheels of violence.

Death due long hence  
 man brings right now!  
 Blowing off the tapers,  
 stirring up darkness,  
 crushing the jasmines,  
 spreading a couch of thorns,  
 hurling up the hawks,  
 ensuring death of doves,  
 pulling down tents,  
 promoting deserts,  
 shrowding the bright full moon  
 and bringing in pitch darkness,  
 poisoning earth that should be the stage of love  
 and turning it into a battle ground,  
 installing death itself  
 on the throne called life,  
 changing cities and villages  
 into cemeteries,  
 shedding pools of blood  
 where streams of honey flow,  
 planting forests of swords  
 where poesies bloom,  
 man has turned  
 Edenic earth  
 into hell!

In the bower of jasmines  
 has grown a brier of thorns;

In the temple of Siva,<sup>1</sup>  
now dwells Yama!<sup>2</sup>  
Palaces fit for fairies  
man has filled with bombs.  
Man himself is the Narakasura;<sup>3</sup>  
his brain  
the bed  
where death  
delivers.

In this turbulent world,  
in this dark night,  
it is enough if we have  
one virtuous wife  
who will light  
the little lamps,  
indignations  
over himsa;<sup>4</sup>  
then will alight  
all over the earth  
rays of wisdom's radiance;  
then will blossom  
flowers of peace  
and victory will wing  
its way to the poet!

---

<sup>1</sup>Siva. One of the gods in Hindu mythology.

<sup>2</sup>Yama. The god of death in Hindu mythology.

<sup>3</sup>Narakasara. The chief demon of hell in Hindu mythology.

<sup>4</sup>himsa. Violence.

## Who Am I?

In the evenings, the ocean argues with me;  
 it strives to imprint its seal on me;  
 a while it frightens me with its high waves;  
 a while it soothes me with the foam of its laughter.

And I-like an immovable hill of rocks,  
 like a heart that can face any one,  
 indifferent  
 to its shouts  
 and its big bubbles  
 sit  
 overcoming its frightful noise  
 with my silence,  
 swinging my legs  
 in its eyes  
 and joining hands  
 with the skies.

My little silence  
 strikes fear  
 in the ocean  
 roaring night and day;  
 and therein is my victory.

The hissing wave, serpent-like  
 outstretching its tongues to chew up the earth,  
 the very next moment, turns back and recedes.

The immovable earth  
 is like the temple's chief deity.  
 I struggle and suffer  
 to live like the earth,  
 but becoming an ocean,  
 my heart  
 is chaffing and overflowing in me;  
 and to hide the bed of gems in me,  
 I struggle incessantly.

Outwardly, I look like the earth,  
 but, inside, I race like the ocean.  
 I do exactly what I do not like;  
 I fail to attain what I want;  
 I want to take up the gun in my hand,  
 but, with a pen, I will be dreaming dreams.  
 And while the philosophies I believe become falsehoods,  
 while the Jasmine creeper that I raised  
 begins, serpent-like, to bite me,  
 while the edifice of hope that I built is crumbling,  
 and while the goddess of future that I knew  
 becomes the avatar of a present ogre,  
 sighing, I censure myself.

The fallen mellow leaves of autumn,  
I carry in my pocket  
as a remembrance of spring.  
Yet, in my nerves, the fire is crackling still.  
In me, shrinking in the snows of conceit,  
the silver fire of Thretha yuga is spreading<sup>1</sup>  
courting an awakening.

That is why I am erect.  
But, who am I?  
I am he, he,  
who gives life-breath  
to the earth!  
Who am I? I am he.

---

<sup>1</sup>Thretha yuga. The silver age in Hindu mythology.



## Ramparts of Light

The bomb has floated in the air;  
 the bomb has fallen on the ground;  
 the bomb has exploded in the heart;  
 and the air zone in the whole sky  
 has become poisoned.  
 The brain of man has become  
 an arsenal of death weapons.

Man is frantically striving  
 to kill himself;  
 Every person is superb  
 according to his own self;  
 every one claims  
 that he can uplift the world;  
 proclaims that only his theory  
 is the gospel for people's good;  
 Oh! What impudence!  
 Oh! What a shame to humanity!

Poverty has become widely prevalent;  
 devilry has become dominant;  
 capability has increased  
 but friendliness has become faint;  
 delusion has deepened  
 and peace has passed away.

There is no end  
 to the thirst for power  
 and to the paranoia for wealth;  
 compared to power and wealth,  
 even nectar is bitter!

What is the use of professing,  
 holding a pen in hand  
 and hitting the head against the ground?

Let the heart of all humanity  
 surge;  
 let faith in peace  
 leap about;  
 let the breath be stilled  
 of those who long for war;  
 let them be crushed to death  
 under the heaps of bombs they have piled up.

Let the dreadful deadly weapons decay;  
 let the happy beauteous goddess of peace smile;  
 let darkness in the world vanish  
 and let the ramparts of light rise higher.

## Bewildering Youth Power

Don't sing trash in the name of a new song;  
don't rear vanity in the shade of novelty;  
don't stroll on the road scarce dressed and stiff;  
and aligned with ideologies, don't try to hide truth.

There are those who divide and those who destroy;  
there are those who put three threads in a knot;  
there are the "elders" who make us tread wierd ways;  
but where are the worthy men leading us on the right path?

O young son of India! do not lose your way;  
do not become ineffectual imitating and adopting.

Don't give a cat call and say it is music;  
don't scribble and say you have created new art;  
producing lewd writing, don't pretend it is new poetry;  
and don't proclaim your strutting about a new dance.

Don't quarrel debating  
that the devil itself is God.  
Never forget the fact  
that times change.

Don't believe the falsehood  
that from violence will be born  
the swan of social equality.  
And never become a murderer.

## The River Talked To Me

The river  
talked to me-  
waves as its syllables,  
the two banks  
as subject and object,  
the flow  
as the verb,  
the fish as the inner meanings,  
and the sand  
as the sound!  
But what is it the river said?

That the past, the future  
and the present are known to it.

I am a river within river,  
word within word,  
song within song.  
The river is pouring forth to me its pain;  
it is unfolding its story.

In the city, the talk  
of the river is strange;  
the city fights with the river;  
stabs the river in its belly.  
The river slices the city  
and runs away unseized.

Between the river and the city  
I am crushed.

The city doesn't speak to me;  
the city doesn't fight with me;  
but the river afflicts me;  
it probes my heart  
and, now and then, makes me wail.

Yet, I like the river;  
with a gushing, overflowing youth,  
like a turbulent beauty  
she hugs me tight.

Who wants  
a riverless town,  
a roomless house,  
a bowerless wood,  
a heartless person?

## The Captured Moon

You are the darling moon;  
 you are a tickling embrace;  
 you are the hunger that rages  
 among young men and women.

You are the friend of the pairs;  
 you are the foe of the singles;  
 you deserve the amity  
 of the scientist and the artist.

Where is the banyan tree in you?  
 Where is the old woman in you?  
 Where in you is the colorful  
 gazelle gracefully leaping about?

You are the menu of gods and goddesses;  
 you are a cart of white radiance;  
 You are obstinate and unyielding  
 even to Rahu or Ketu<sup>1</sup>

To the Moslems you are a banner;  
 to the love-lorn you are a tormentor;  
 you are the agenda that is before  
 the assembly of today's poets.  
 Man has set his foot  
 where deities never did tread  
 nor demons penetrated  
 and you are the bundle of our victories!

You, who eluded us all these days,  
 you, who are exceedingly exquisite,  
 today you have fallen  
 into the hands of one man.

---

<sup>1</sup>Rahu or Ketu. Planetary bodies which are connected with the eclipse of the moon.

## The Lady Who was No Frailty

When the clouds of war  
were raining a torrent of arms,  
close to the army camp  
appeared to me a lady  
who was no "frailty."

She is the sylph Aswini<sup>1</sup>  
who protects the lives  
of the soldiers of Bharath  
who are in danger of death.  
With the white garments  
woven with cool moonshine,  
she seemed the moon  
come in the guise of mother.

She is the Mohini handing nectar<sup>2</sup>  
at the place where death dances  
while war planes, like kites,  
are performing feats in the sky,  
while the heart of the earth is breaking  
due to the bombs those planes rain,  
she does not panic;  
she does not even vince!  
(There is) the glow of hope in her eye,  
the national anthem on her lips,  
the love of the mother(land) in her heart,  
and the sword that can stab death in her hand.

She is the sundari<sup>3</sup>  
who lives all the time  
between the teeth of death  
as the Satyabhama to Narakasura,<sup>4</sup>  
and as the Maha Kali for the Mahisha.<sup>5</sup>  
Her name is Sandari,  
but, for enemies, she is a nightmare.

---

<sup>1</sup>Aswini. A nymph who concealed herself in the form of a mare and, through the sun, has two sons called Aswins. Mythically, the Aswins are the parents of the Pandava princes Nakula and Sahadeva.

<sup>2</sup>Mohini. When the fairies and the demons were fighting for nectar, god Vishnu comes on the scene in the form of a charming woman called Mohini. Spell-bound by her beauty, the demons stop brawling for the nectar which Mohini distributes to the fairies.

<sup>3</sup>Sundari. A beautiful lady.

<sup>4</sup>Satyabhama. Krishna's wife Satyabhama who fought with Naraka when Krishna fainted in the battle.

<sup>5</sup>Maha Kali. Maha Kali slayed Mahisasura, the bull demon.

## The Moon World

At the time when we have touched  
 the inaccessible moon,  
 why is it on earth  
 conflict does not cease?  
 At the chequered hour when  
 we can conquer the skies,  
 why squabble for a few  
 yards of the earth?

Some one dreams dreams  
 of swallowing Kashmir;  
 another is rushing to cross  
 the meeting point of the three seas.

Some one assassinates santhi;  
 some one resurrects death;  
 claiming his stance superb,  
 madly struts another.

Some one becomes entranced  
 eyeing the green notes;<sup>1</sup>  
 another feels fulfilled  
 swimming in the tears of the poor.

It does not matter if there is no food grain;  
 It is enough if there is the military;  
 why food?  
 We have plenty if we have bullets!

O won't you find the way  
 of banishing penury?  
 O why won't you discover the drug  
 that makes us conquer death?

We should align ourselves  
 with the planets Kuja<sup>2</sup> and Sukra;<sup>3</sup>  
 we should foster fabulously  
 the mental powers of man.

We must find the way  
 whereby man hates not man.  
 We should transform the world  
 into a heaven of joy and peace.

---

<sup>1</sup>Green note. Ususally, a hundred rupee note which is green in color.

<sup>2</sup>Kuja. The regent of the plantet Mars.

<sup>3</sup>Sukra. The planet Venus or its one-eyed regent. Sukra was the guru of the giants.

## Dreams and Dupes

Till yesterday,  
 how many dreams have I dreamt-  
 that caste will be cast away;  
 that doctrines will be destroyed;  
 that between man and man,  
 there will be no other barrier;  
 that all will be the progeny  
 of Mother Bharath;  
 that once we have independence,  
 our country will turn into a heaven;  
 that himsa will be choked to death;  
 that the swan will unfold its wing;  
 that on the earth there will no where be  
 any one who wants to assassinate  
 that stranger to enmity and position,  
 that heavenly ascetic Gandhi.  
 that he who chanted "bhai, bhai,"<sup>1</sup>  
 can not cut off our hand;  
 that he who offered assistance  
 will not invade;

that there will be somewhere some one  
 who can halt the soaring prices;  
 that money will lose its tyranny  
 and that people's word will prevail;  
 that the very word war  
 will truly become a myth;

that no one will squeeze the throat  
 of the dove called Peace;  
 that the Telugus  
 will not fight among themselves;  
 that among the zealots of world democracy,  
 there will not be divisions-  
 till yesterday,  
 how many dreams have I dreamt!

---

<sup>1</sup>Bhai. A Hindi word meaning brother.

November One

Friends!  
Sons of Mother Andhra,  
filled with a superb spirit!

Shaking off the dust of differences,  
undoing the folds of disputes,  
covering ourselves with the rug of poetry  
that protects us from the cold of afflictions,  
and with the hookah of enthusiasm,  
with an intoxicated awareness,  
and with fuddled eyes,  
we should not forget the idea  
of knowing ourselves  
in this winter darkness  
which brings to our mind  
the precious auspicious dawn  
which united our hearts  
and made us one.

Religion which should be exalted,  
turning our thoughts to God,  
has become a heinous doctrine  
sending us to the house of Yama!<sup>1</sup>

And the lotus of politics  
seeking people's well-being  
has become the cause of famine  
and is lifeless today.

Useless is the obstinacy  
that splits the heart into two;  
we need goodness  
which unites the minds.

We are not people without prosperity-  
Bhagya Nagar is ours.<sup>2</sup>  
We will have no defeat-  
Vijayawada is ours.<sup>3</sup>

Ours are the Himalayas;  
and ours the Indian Ocean;

---

<sup>1</sup>Yama. Deity of death and ruler of hell.

<sup>2</sup>Bhagya Nagar. Literally, it means city of prosperity.  
It is another name for Hyderabad, capital of Andhra Pradesh.

<sup>3</sup>Vijayawada. Literally, it means the city of victory.



Ours the trident of Siva;<sup>4</sup>  
and ours the wheel of Krishna.<sup>5</sup>

Ours is the human heart  
that outshines (the hearts of) gods.  
But the human heart today  
has become the heart of an ape.

Once, man was an ape,  
but today he is a demon.  
We do not want demons  
who rake up unrest  
in our tranquil human world.

Man should become the moon,  
the full moon which floods hearts  
with the white radiance of amity.

Telangana is not a lost kite;<sup>6</sup>  
Telangana is a torrential rain of honey;  
Telangana is a heavenly violin;  
Telangana is a court of new poetry.

The Telugu race is one;  
the Indian nation is one;  
the whole world is one;  
the moon is one

and so is the sun;  
and on November one,<sup>7</sup>  
all of us are one.

---

<sup>4</sup>Siva. One of the gods in the Hindu pantheon.

<sup>5</sup>The wheel of Krishna. The indomitable weapon that Krishna wielded.

<sup>6</sup>Telangana. One of the regions of the present state of Andhra Pradesh.

<sup>7</sup>November one. The Andhra State was created on the first of November in 1955.

## The Glow of Hope

A laughter in the mouth  
of crores of weapons;  
a flower in the garden  
of crores of thorns.

It is proved that winning  
with the atom bombs is a myth  
and that they will turn  
the whole world to ashes.

By killing, we will have  
no victory over the enemy.  
The wealth-thirst and the war-thirst  
are afflicting man.

What use have we for man  
who has no peace of mind?  
What use have we for life  
that has no nectar of friendship?

Where is the solution  
to man's dreadful agony?  
Where are the waters that can put out  
the fire that is raging in the world?

Where is the great mantra<sup>1</sup>  
that can suppress arrogance?  
Where is the unique formula  
that will unify the world?

In every heart, God-like,  
the Mahatma must appear;  
and the whole world should tread  
in his footsteps.

He alone, to our world,  
is the light of hope.

Only he is the happy harmony  
in this poet's voice.

He alone is the sage  
who brings peace to the universe.  
He is the great hermit  
who can paralyze the jugglery of deceit.

---

<sup>1</sup>Mantra. A spell.

He is the precise answer  
to today's baffling problems.  
He is a mighty challenge  
to today's instability.

To our world orb'd by darkness  
the Mahatma is an abundant light.  
In the forest of falsehood  
the Mahatma is a searcher for truth.

## Stream of Change

Today no one can make me believe  
 that the stump will never again put forth a sprout.  
 Today, when the maid of Spring  
 has come and sat in our house,  
 I have seen a chair blossom;  
 I have seen a table put on leaves.

Do not try to delude me  
 saying that it is a lie  
 that man will win.

In the mirror of the shelf,  
 with the threads of hair  
 in the beard of experiences,  
 with an imperturbable concentration,  
 Valmiki<sup>1</sup> is weaving poems  
 that in spite of having ten heads,  
 the demon only got ruined!

Why the vain labor to prove  
 that stones do not have any heart?

Ask those leaf-like lips  
 in the caves of Ellora;<sup>2</sup>  
 ask those dazzling women  
 on the pillars of Ramappa.<sup>3</sup>

Trumpet on your drums  
 that there is no one  
 who can conquer death.

Every word-statue  
 sculptured by Spain's poet Lorca  
 proclaims every day  
 that death is dead!

---

<sup>1</sup>Valmiki. The author of Ramayana, the great epic.

<sup>2</sup>Ellora. The caves of Ellora have excellent Buddhistic paintings and sculpture.

<sup>3</sup>Ramappa. A famous temple in Andhra Pradesh with ancient sculpture.

## Man-Money-Work

O farm laborer  
 plodding  
 for paddy harvesting  
 along the bank of the stream  
 in the cold,  
 hunger sawing in your stomach,  
 your tears are the Krishna canal;  
 this world knows not your value.

This world is a tiger  
 to you who has no money;  
 but, at the threshold of the well-to-do,  
 this world is a dog.

When, oh when,  
 will the power of money fade  
 and the value of work increase?

Those who don't toil  
 have bundles of wealth;  
 but those who labor and sweat  
 earn no more than can a beggar.

If there is no money in the pocket,  
 you will have no room in the hotel,  
 nor any place in the bus.

We don't find in the entire country  
 people who can bend  
 the heads of the mountain peaks  
 of rising prices.  
 Every one is great  
 in impulsiveness.

The vicious system must go  
 of giving primacy to money.  
 The good days must come  
 of valueing the human being.

With the vote they come,  
 says one;  
 stressing, "with the cartridge,"  
 another is beating his thigh.

Only when you know yourself  
 and open your eyes  
 and forge ahead,  
 I say it is revolution.

## Blood Flowers

Blood streaming down its udder,  
Kala Dhenu<sup>1</sup> stares with a pitying look-

Devoid of the ability to draw milk,  
the wretches have milked blood!

Incapable of growing flowers,  
the ultra-clever have cut down the trees!

The dumb tree is groaning;  
how many trees are felled!

How many cows have fallen dead!  
How much blood has flown!  
And how much land has turned into a desert!

Every drop of blood  
that has fallen on the earth  
has sprouted into a sapling  
and has blossomed into a blood flower.  
And the hearts of the deaf have heard  
a lamentation of curses.

I salute  
the Ugadi<sup>2</sup>  
which with modugu<sup>3</sup> banners  
has triumphantly arrived.

Will the purblind men  
who do not recognize as change  
the change that has caught the East in its net  
and the demons  
who do not accept as progress  
the ending of the death holocaust  
listen to Ugadi?  
Will they admit the truth?

No one can stab satya;  
no one can pierce time with a spear;  
no one can delude people  
passing off the atrocities of dictators  
as dramas with happy endings.

---

<sup>1</sup>Kala Dhenu. Cow of Time.

<sup>2</sup>Ugadi. Telugu New Year Day.

<sup>3</sup>Modugu. A tree with beautiful red flowers.

While a fool may break  
an unformed egg,  
no one can drag an unprepared people  
into the tragedy of ideologies.

The blood flowers are telling  
the story of broken fetters;  
the blood flowers are narrating  
the hunger-burnt human agony.  
They delineate  
the universal image  
of revolution.  
The garland of blood flowers  
is an emblem of enlightenment,  
a banner of revolution,  
and a song of the new year.

## The Flame Maiden

There is no greater comfort  
 than to recline in the lap  
 of the Flame Maiden  
 who has come  
 with the gait of a swan  
 to save the man  
 rattling in the cold  
 with no blanket  
 to cover himself.

Keeping hardships behind,  
 one minute most heartily  
 warm yourself with the Bhogi flames;<sup>1</sup>  
 fancy an amorous hour;  
 fancy the lip of the Flame Maiden  
 a goblet of wine.

With no anklets at her feet,  
 with no bracelets on her arms,  
 but wearing the vest of flames  
 the coy charmer has sauntered here  
 in hungry infatuation.

The tears shed by winter  
 crushed in the maiden's embrace  
 are bursting,  
 become little bubbles of dew,  
 on lotus petals.

On the Sankranthi<sup>2</sup> day this year,  
 when we have poor crops,  
 the poet is in ecstasy  
 with a dazzling hope in future.

Hand in hand with famine  
 have come challenges  
 the threats of partition!  
 Setting aside these woes,  
 Sankranthi should bring  
 peace to the Telugus.

---

<sup>1</sup>Bhogi flames. Bon fires villagers have on winter mornings to warm themselves.

<sup>2</sup>Sankranthi. The harvest festival in South India.



## The Fire Banner

Who is it that is coming  
with a fire banner in hand?

Who is it that is coming  
snapping the snares of snow,  
piercing through pitch darkness,  
and flying across the sky  
on the wings of swan and hawk ?

What wind is it  
that is ringing the bells  
in my stilled temple?

What ray is it  
that is tickling to laughter  
my humble house  
which has never known a lamp?

What heart is it  
that has become a lotus  
in the mire  
of narrow-mindedness?

What heart is it  
that has become  
a path of flowers  
when needles were strewn  
before the feet?

What wilderness is it  
which has its entrance and exit  
mutually mistaken?  
What eye is it  
which like mother's heart  
becomes moist  
at the sight of the helpless?

What indignation is it  
that will come crashing down  
on the arrogant  
who prey on the poor?  
Which is the curse  
which has flung humanity  
into the flames  
of death's holocaust?  
As an answer to every challenge,  
this present time  
has loved our lives.  
The future is that which arrives  
holding a fire banner in hand.

## Nocturnal Holocaust

To achieve what  
is this nocturnal holocaust?  
When will this endless war  
stop?

On the earth which should rejoice at rain,  
we have a rain of fire!  
The plant that should spread  
fragrance with its flowers  
has become a serpent and is biting!

You will get no coolness  
if you kill the moon.  
There will be no love  
if you spurn the lotus-like woman.

Humanity which should in amity thrive  
will not prosper with ill will.  
One who thinks he is winning while losing  
can not distinguish white from black.

The place we are pacing  
is not the path, but the desert,  
and the waves of water rising before us  
are the desert mirages deluding us.

Foolishly, but with a full knowledge,  
man is making catastrophic mistakes;  
Far better than this demented human being  
is the buffalo rolling in mud!

The fears that we have between us  
are but the mutual doubts tormenting us;  
These doubts are deluges.  
Oh, will not hearts again intertwine?

Break now these dismal walls of doubts;  
banish their bane;  
let affection's banyan roots reach the earth;  
let the cool shades of friendliness spread.

## A Plea

At the auspicious time  
of Sankranthi,  
Humbly I plead:  
we brothers fighting  
and cutting mother  
is criminal.

The political battle front  
is an affront to humanism.  
It is impossible to wipe away  
the imprint we make  
of frenzied feelings and hate.

First the younger brother sought partition;  
now the elder one says he would leave;  
and the mother pleads it is improper,  
Nectar-spilling Mother Andhra.

The earth stands bewildered  
that the very people called  
heroes of revolution  
should speak of parting.

Please consider a little  
this poet's word;  
henceforth, put an end to your feuds;  
keep the Andhra race united  
and the glory thereof you all share!

## Duel With Darkness

While there are people  
who resort to deadly weapons  
to settle small matters,  
there will be no peace on earth;  
warring will not cease.

How long will the flag fly-  
the flag hoisted  
by outdoing  
cunning with cunning  
and fraud with fraud?

Sitting in some well protected  
far off places,  
the leaders formulate  
perverse plans.

And thousands of miles away  
the people are powdered  
between the teeth of death.

See, what havoc is done!  
Oh, how many lives are lost!  
And in the hearts of the survivors,  
how many pyres are in flames!

Oh, how horrible this banquet  
of political poison ?  
how long the ascendancy  
of the exterminators of people?

When the starving crores of people  
are bitterly wailing,  
heaps of wealth are wasted  
on deadly weapons!

One person dreads another;  
one man's foe is another man's friend;  
today's truth is tomorrow's falsehood;  
and in every move is supreme selfishness.

Man is still inside  
the ocean of darkness;  
that is why he can not arrest  
the atrocities of the night-wanderers.

O man soaking into the earth,  
at least now awake;  
make a bonfire of guns  
and light the flame of compassion.

At a time when produce decreases  
in the land where the army increases,  
every soldier must turn farmer  
and cultivate the land.

Immortal is that life  
which fights a fierce  
duel with darkness;  
and the halo  
of poesy  
is the shrine  
of santhi  
in the world.

## V. CONCLUSION

The crucial question about the work of any poet is whether that work can stand the test of time. Critics ask the same question about the poetry of Dasarathi - can Dasarathi's poetry endure? In our own times, his Thimiramtho Samaram has won public acclaim and the Central Sahitya Akademi award in India, but will people of future generations read and enjoy this work?

John Ciardi (1959) in his book How Does a Poem Mean observes that "All criticism of poetry begins fundamentally with 'I like it' or 'I don't like it'" (p. 699). My initial reaction to Dasarathi's poetry has been "I like it." The reasons for this response will be briefly discussed in the following paragraphs.

Ciardi considers that the real power of poetry lies in its performance. He asserts that "Above all else, poetry is a performance" (p. 668), that "A poem has meaning only as it succeeds in being a good performance" (p.670), and that "the performance of a good poem is very likely to contain under its verbalization a dance of images, postures, and attitudes, and such motions, both separately and in their sequences, are an indispensable part of the poetic performance - a deep part, and a complicated one..." (p. 707).

The performance of a poem largely depends upon the exquisiteness and excellence of its structure, the form into which, according to Ciardi, the poem builds itself out of its many elements like images, ideas, and rhythms making them the meaning of the poem. The performance

of one of the poems of Dasarathi "Indignation Over Himsa" will be presently studied to illustrate the excellence of structure and technique in Dasarathi's poems.

"Indigantion Over Himsa" begins with the lines "Manishiki manishi ari/ Narudiki narude uri," meaning "man to man is ghoulish/ man to man is gallows." In these two opening lines, Dasarathi has achieved many things:

- 1) The two lines with their succinct summing up of the human being in his/her wickedness as ghoulish and as gallows are in control of the entire poem. All the subsequent lines are centered around the theme of these two lines.
- 2) The lines make a specific and strong statement with a meaning which can not be exhausted even with several volumes of explanation. As Ciardi notes, moving from the specific to the general is a good feature in poetry. The six simple words of these two lines "suddenly dazzle full of never-ending waves of thought and feeling or more precisely - of felt-thought," to borrow the words of Ciardi (p. 674).
- 3) From the first line to the second, there is an amazing flight of progress in thought. While in the first line, the human being is portrayed as deadly, in the second line he is portrayed as death to another man. In using the word "gallows," Dasarathi implies that the human being becomes not only gallows, but also an executioner of his fellowmen.

- 4) The lines have a music of their own. The first two words in each line are exactly the same except for the prepositional ending in the first word of each line. The music is enhanced by the rhyme between the end words "ari" and "uri."
- 5) There are three words and a total of nine syllables in each of the two opening lines. The poem largely follows this basic pattern though with some variance which should relieve the monotony of the sameness in the number of syllables in each line. The word and syllable pattern governing the lines in this poem will be discussed a little later.

Starting with the specific statement that the human being is ghoulish and gallows to fellow human beings, Dasarathi next gives us another deadly aspect of the human - that "man is a maniac of self-extermination." Thus, in the first four lines, the poet has summed up man in his wickedness as an agent of death killing others as well as his own self. The rest of the lines in the first stanza highlight the deadly nature of man who brings in death though God wanted him to prosper giving as gifts air, water, earth, and the heavens.

Having stated that man is bringing death upon himself and others, the poet tells us in the second stanza how man is doing so. Death which should come with sickness and old age, man is drawing in on the wheels of himsa. The poet will give the details of the "how" later. He is in a hurry to tell us when man is bringing in death.

It is thus that at the beginning of the third stanza, he tells us that "Death due long hence," he (man) is bringing right now. Having answered the when, the poet next tells us the myriad ways in which man



is bringing in death. Beginning with the third line, in the third stanza, we have a long sentence of twenty-four lines where nineteen different ways of man's deadly action are outlined. Each of the lines describing these ways are like chapter titles or newspaper headlines summing up whole areas of man's devilry. Without telling us that man is doing a wicked thing, the poet tells us what man is doing - that man is blowing off tapers, stirring up darkness, hurling up hawks ensuring death of doves, pulling down tents, promoting deserts, poisoning the earth where love should dance, installing death on the throne called life, changing cities into cemeteries, shedding pools of blood, and planting forests of swords. The climax of these actions on the part of man is that he has changed Edenic earth into a hell! This summing up the consequences of man's actions gives an elegant finish to the stanza.

The third stanza displays two more aspects of the poet's excellence. The stanza is rich in symbolism. Each of the wicked ways of man is expressed through symbols like blowing off tapers, stirring up darkness, promoting deserts, planting forests of swords, etc. Man's wickedness is thus not just stated, but powerfully portrayed through symbols and images. As Ciardi points out, symbols are "areas of meaning"(p. 682). Dasarathi's symbols suggest trends and areas of wickedness and not individual acts. "Installing death itself on the throne called life," "planting forests of swords," and "Edenic earth" are very vivid images. In these images, we have the visual sensory suggestion, to borrow the words of Ciardi.

The next aspect of excellence of Dasarathi in the third stanza is the motion of his enumeration of the evil trends of man. The long sentence of twenty-four lines already referred to above moves with

eloquence at a fast pace. The motion in these lines clearly reflects the poet's vehement denunciation of the wicked ways of man, thus illustrating Ciardi's point that a poem's motion becomes part of what the poem is about and part of what it means and feels.

Returning to the structure of the poem, in the fourth stanza, the poet leads us to the conclusion that "man himself is the Narakasura" (the chief demon of hell) and that his brain is the bed where death delivers.

Dasarathi, however, does not end the poem with this dreadful picture of man. The human situation can be redeemed in spite of the deadly acts of man. The solution lies in having a happy family. Even if there is one "Illalu" (virtuous wife) who lights little lamps of indignation over himsa, rays of wisdom's light will soon fill the whole earth and flowers of peace will blossom.

A good "illalu" is the symbol of peace, joy, contentment, selflessness, sacrifice, service, total love, and devotion to husband and family. She ensures a happy family in spite of the various problems storming it. "Illalu" is much more than a symbol. The word has a connotation of centuries of Indian culture, history, philosophy, and religion. The word also echoes centuries of tradition in Hindu society. Referring to "illalu," the poem has a soothing ending in spite of the earlier portrayal of the horrible acts of the human being. Thus, the poem ends on a note of hope and reflects the poet's optimistic attitude to life in general.

A point we should specially note at this stage is the care the poet exercises in fitting this poem into the over all theme of the book, namely, warring with darkness. He does this by pointing out that the

darkness (manifested by man's deadly acts) can be dispelled by one little lamp of indignation over himsa lit by an "illalu." Thus, the poet takes care of the structure within the poem and makes the poem part of the structure of the entire book.

A small note on the metrical pattern of the poem. The first two lines which control the entire poem set the metrical pattern for the rest of the poem. As pointed out earlier, each of the first two lines have three words with nine syllables. Of the fifty-eight lines in the poem, eighteen lines have three words and nine syllables each. Ten lines have three words and eight syllables each. Nine lines have three words and seven syllables each, another seven lines have three words each, three of them with ten and three of them with eleven syllables each, while one of them has six syllables.

In all, forty-four of the total of fifty-eight lines have three words each. eleven of the lines have two words each with seven, eight, and ten syllables, while three lines have four words each with ten and twelve syllables. This variation in the number of words and syllables provides a relief from what would otherwise be a rigid pattern. Dasarathi has followed the technique of few words per line and short words. The consequent reading ease is one of the merits of Dasarathi's poetry.

Ciardi notes that a good poem has more verbs than adjectives: "Count the adjectives and verbs; good writing (active writing) will almost invariably have more verbs" (p. 785). In "Indignation Over Himsa," we have thirty verbs and five implied verbs (an implied verb is a regular feature of the Telugu language). As against this count, we have seven adjectives and two adjectival phrases in the poem.

Ciardi also notes that "Every poem addresses in some way, however slight, the question: "What is man?" The reader tries on the mask through which the poet addresses that question..." Dasarathi's "Indignation over Himsa" focusses on the key question "what is man" summing up man in the extremity of his wickedness as well as presenting the power of one virtuous person (an "illalu") to undo the evil caused by man's wickedness.

Thus, "Indignation over Himsa" has many elements of excellence that build up into an exquisite structure. In Ciardi's terms the poem performs admirably. Many other poems of Dasarathi have similar poetic excellence in varying degrees. For this reason, it is logical to believe that his poetry will have an enduring appeal to generations of future readers. It is in this belief that Dasarathi's Thimirantho Samaram has been translated into English.

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