

**SWAMI DAYANANDA COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE,MANJAKKUDI.**

**(Affiliated to Bharathidasan University – Thiruchirappalli).**

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

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## CORE COURSE XII

### INDIAN CULTURE AND LITERATURE

#### Objectives:

To make learners understand the rich literary heritage of India

To appreciate the underlying unity among the diverse languages and literatures of India  
To recognize the important contribution of India to world literature

#### Unit – I: Poetry

Kalidasa : “Look to This Day”

K.J. Saunders : “Karma” (Selection from *Buddhist Verse*)

#### Unit – II: Poetry

Dr.T. N. Ramachandran : “Tiruyirattaimanimaalai” (Selection from Translation on

*Kaaraikkaal Ammaiyaar*)

Prof.K. G. Seshadri : “Fear We Not” (Selection from Translation on *Bharathi*)

#### Unit – III: Prose

S. Radhakrishnan : “Character Is Destiny”

M.K. Gandhi : “Faith on Its Trial”

#### Unit – IV: Drama

T.P. Kailasam : “The Burden”

D.G. Mukerji : “The Judgment of Indra”

#### Unit – V: Fiction

Indira Goswami : “The Journey”

Bama : *Karukku*

#### Reference:

Ramachandran, T. N., trans. *The Hymns of Kaaraikkaal Ammaiyaar*.

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## Unit-I POETRY

### Look to This Day

-Kalidasa

#### Text

*Listen to the exhortation of the dawn  
Look to this day:  
For it is life, the very life of life. In  
its brief course  
Lie all the verities and realities of your existence. The  
bliss of growth,  
The glory of action,  
The splendour of achievement  
Are but experiences of time.*

*For yesterday is but a dream And  
tomorrow is only a vision; And  
today well-lived, makes Yesterday  
a dream of happiness  
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.  
Look well therefore to this day;  
Such is the salutation to the ever-new dawn*

#### Summary of the poem

The poem 'Look To This Day', is a poem by the great classical poet Kalidasa. He gives philosophical point of view of life. His work is inspiring in nature. He speaks about the life and gives thought provoking idea to the people, how to tackle every day of life. He asks the readers to look at the day of dawn. The dawn says to see the day and it can only tell the human way of life. Today is the day to realize the bliss of growth and action. Today is a glory and it can make achievement of life. Most of the people don't realize the day and it's important. They don't know how to live and lead a day. Kalidasa says Yesterday was a dream and tomorrow is a vision so today the day to live. Don't live in yesterday and don't wait for tomorrow quite enjoy the present. When you live the present day perfectly the yesterday was the happiest one and tomorrow will be a perfect vision of future.

## Essay

### Discuss the theme of the poem “Look to this Day”.

Kalidasa, a classical Sanskrit writer is considered the greatest poet and dramatist of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century. He was a court poet of king Vikramaditya. He flourished during the reign of Chandragupta. His works are based on puranas and his works are, Malavikagnimitram, Abhijnanasakuntalam, Vikramorvasiyam, Raghuvamsa, Kumarasambhava, Ztusachana, Meghaduta.

### Look to This Day

The original source of the poem Look to this Day is generally attributed to Kalidasa, an Indian Sanskrit playwright and poet active during 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century AD. His works were based on Hindu philosophy. Several variations of the English translation are found but the original Sanskrit poem has not found.

### The message of the poem

This is the beginning of a new day. God has given us this day to live with positive vision. We can either waste it or use it for good. Today is very important because we are exchanging a day of our life for it. When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever. We want this day to be gain, not loss; good, not for evil; success not failure.

*“Look to this day:*

*For it is life, the very life of life”.*

Life is everything of mankind. The world filled with truths, beliefs, principles, customs etc. so the man should go forward with positive attitude.

*“In its brief course*

*Lie all the verities and realities of your existence”.*

The life is a real game. The people already rewarded by valuable gift but they don't realize it. The gift is the time of today. Each dawn is a gift of life and the poet asks man to take care of himself to be happy, to love deeply and enjoy life. The most important thing is a man should spend his valuable days wisely.

*“The bliss of growth,*

*The glory of action,*

*The splendor of achievement*

*Are but experience of time.”*

### Salutation to the Dawn

The poem starts off really lively. Look to this Day, it is the salutation to the Dawn by India's icon writer Kalidasa. He says about the importance of the past, present and future.

*“For yesterday is but a dream And*

*tomorrow is only a vision; And*

*today well-lived, makes Yesterday*

*a dream of happiness*

*And every tomorrow a vision of hope”.*

Kalidasa's interpretations of past, present and future are perfect because it motivates and makes one to live a better life every day. Yesterday is something of an experience that you can

learn from, while tomorrow is something that you can take these experiences, if you sustain today. It can also make you feel like a better person, if you have taken the lessons of yesterday to your heart and mind.

A man should take every moment in life to sustain something grateful and it will define his greatness in future. If a man complete the day the day with success the world not only salute him, it will learn how to make a day successful. The day is to mend, so make the day and take the day. It means that people have to think about the present and not about the future or past.

People want to live accordingly the day they are having, they need not to worry for what had happened in the past, and they need not worry for the future. We need to look at the present and compete the challenges of every day. One day is good and another day will be bad but the days are not an issue, how you sustain in those situations in a day is important. So we have to look at the present then only we can compensate the mistakes of the past and it will lead for bright future.

### **Conclusion**

All must enjoy each day but remember the today define the past and project the future because if we lost we cannot get it back. The poem is written in iambic tetrameter and considering the poet's mood. He is a quite philosopher. The poet has used lexical repetition to emphasize a significant image of life.

### **Paragraphs**

#### **Give an account of the Kalidasa's poem 'Look to this Day'.**

Kalidasa's epic poem Look to this day is great influential poem that we have in English literature. The poem is small in lines but the lines meant the life and the importance of the day. The day is a gift of God but the question is 'Is the man realized the gift? The answer for this question is based on the people who understand the poem. A man doesn't have anything better than use the days. Every dawn speaks the importance of the day. So the poet says

*"Such is the salutation to the ever-new dawn".*

This poem is very simple to understand in diction. This poem doesn't have any grand poetical devices. He simply influenced the people with his proper and simple way of writing. He says that the day gives growth, it implies action, it gives glory, and it gives the chance to achieve.

Today is the past and future and today shape the life of wisdom seekers. Kalidas says 'yesterday is a dream, tomorrow is a vision of hope' so look to this day and live a victorious life and this is the best salutation of ever new dawn. All must enjoy each day but remember today define the past and project the future because if we lost we cannot get it back. The poem is written in iambic tetrameter and considering the poet's mood. He is a quite philosopher. The poet has used lexical repetition to emphasize a significant image of life.

## Short answers

### 1. Write a short note on Kalidasa?

Kalidasa is a Sanskrit poet and dramatist of Indian writer of any epoch. It is believed that he belongs to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century CE. His name is literally “servant of Kali”. He had become the archetype for Sanskrit literary composition. His works are based on puranas. Kalidasa was a court poet of a king Vikramaditya. Kalidasa had great influence on several Sanskrit works, on all Indian literature. Sanskrit plays by Kalidasa influenced late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century European literature. Kalidasa’s work continued to evoke inspiring among the artistic circles of Europe during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### 2. List out the works of Kalidasa.

1. Abhijnanashakuntala(play)
2. Malavikagnimitra(play)
3. Vikramorvashi(play)
5. Kumarasambhava(epic poem)
6. Raghuvamsa(epic poem)
7. Meghaduta(minor poem-elegiac poem)
8. Ztusachara( minor poem- descriptive poem)

### 3. Who is the author the poem ‘Look to this Day’?

The great Kalidasa is the author of the poem ‘Look to this Day’.

### 4. What is yesterday according to Kalidasa?

According to Kalidasa Yesterday is a dream.

### 5. What is the vision of life in the poem?

Tomorrow is the only vision of life in this poem.

### 6. Give an importance of Today.

Yesterday is a dream and tomorrow is only a vision. When the people well –live ‘Today’ yesterday is a dream of happiness and tomorrow is a vision of hope.

### 7. How do we salute the dawn in the poem?

*“Look well therefore to this day;  
Such is the salutation to the ever-new dawn”*

The well look to this day is a salutation of ever new dawn. It is the only way to honor the dawn.

### 8. How does the poet call Dawn?

The poet calls the dawn as the ever-new dawn.

### 9. What are the experiences of time?

The bliss of growth, the glory of action, the splendor of achievement these are the experiences time.

### 10. Define the ‘Day’ in the poem

The day is defined as the life and it has all the verities and realities of living.

*“Look to this day:  
For it is life, the very life of life”*

**Choose the best answers.**

1. Look to this day author

- a) Kalidasa    b) Kamban    c) T.P. Kailasam    d) Milton

2. Day is defined as \_\_\_\_\_

- a) Today    b) Life    c) Achievement    d) Vision

3. Bliss, growth, achievement are experience of \_\_\_\_\_

- a) Day    b) Tomorrow    c) Time    d) Action

4. Yesterday is \_\_\_\_\_

- a) Dream    b) Life    c) Action    d) Time

5. Tomorrow is only a \_\_\_\_\_

- a) Vision    b) Achievement    c) Time    d) Life

6. Which day is mentioned by Kalidasa in this poem?

- a) Today    b) Tomorrow    c) Yesterday    d) Sunday

7. When today well-lived, yesterday is a dream of \_\_\_\_\_

- a) Happiness    b) Vision    c) fear    d) life

8. When today well-lived, tomorrow is a vision of \_\_\_\_\_

- a) Hope    b) Life    c) Change    d) Light

9. Fill up the line: Look well therefore \_\_\_\_\_

- a) to this day    b) for this day    c) have this day    d) had this day

10. \_\_\_\_\_ is to ever-new dawn

- a) Achievement    b) Happy    c) Salutation    d) Vision

**Answers**

- 1.a    2.b    3.c    4.a    5.a    6.a    7.a    8.a    9.a    10.c

## 2. Karma (Selection from Buddhist verse)

-K.J Saunders (Anuguttara

Nikaye iii.33)

### Text

*The harvest of thy farmer birth Must  
now be reaped upon this earth For be  
they many, be they few,  
O Monks, the Law is known to you  
Deeds done in envy or in hate, Deeds  
of the fool infatuate,  
Must bear their fitting punishment,  
Till Karma's energy be spent  
For lustful thought and angry word No  
entry to thy life afford,  
But recognize thy proper doom  
And yield just retribution room:  
Who seeketh wisdom flings the gate  
Wide open to his fitting fate!*

### Summary of the Poem

In the Buddhist tradition, Karma refers to action driven by intention which leads to future consequences. The harvest or the sowing of our deeds of our previous birth, are now reaped upon in this birth. The happy life or the suffering of man now is the consequences of his deeds done in his previous deeds, says Buddha. The evil deeds such as envy, hate, foul infatuation, lustful thought, angry words, done in the present life must embrace fitting punishment tells Buddha to His monks and followers. Hence people should be aware of rebirth and be wise in their thought and action, preaches Buddha.

Buddha's teachings about Karma explain that our past actions affect us, either positively or negatively, and that our present actions will affect us in the future. Buddhism uses an agricultural metaphor to explain how sowing good or bad deeds will result in good or bad fruit. The evil deeds such as jealousy, hate or foul infatuation must bear its punishment and no one can escape from it. Even one's lustful thought or the angry words spoken will lead him to his fate (karamapala), says Buddha. The destiny of man depends upon his own actions. The evil doer



should recompensate for his deeds. If one understands Karma and Karmapala(the consequences of Karma) and acts wisely then he could have a fitting place, says Buddha.

## **Essay**

**Give a detailed account of the poem Karma.**

### **Introduction**

#### **Buddha**

**Buddha** (600 BCE-300BCE) or enlightened one was born as Siddhartha Gauthama to a large clan called the Shakays in Lumbini(Nepal) in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. His mother's name was Mayadevi and his father was Suddhodana. Siddhartha led a princely life and later married Yasodhara, the daughter of respected Shakya family. Buddha is undoubtedly one of the most influential figures in the world history, and his teachings have affected everything from a variety of other faiths to literature to philosophy, both within India and the farthest reaches of the Western world.

#### **The translator S.J Saunders**

Kenneth J. Saunders was born in 1883. He served as a professor of Pacific Schools of Religion at Berkeley until his death in 1937. He appointed for research in the field of oriental religions, especially in connection with Buddhist Art, in consultation with European authorities and in the east. His works are "The Buddha's way of Virtue", "The Heart of Buddhism", "The story of Buddhism", "Gotama Buddha", and "Epochs of Bhuddist History".

#### **Definition of Karma**

Karma is a force or energy which is set in motion by 'thought', 'will', 'desire' and 'action'. The basic idea is that any thought, desire or action affects all around you. The favourite analogy is the pebble dropped in a pond, the first effect is a splash and a wave, afterwards the ripples spread out over the surface touching everything and then reflecting off objects, until the pond is covered in a web of ripples.

#### **Cause and Effect**

Karma is the 'cause and effect' or 'the chain of causality', an action or event occurs, the effect of which in turn causes other actions and events. We are bound by the law of action. What we send out, affect all around us and what is going on around us. To act in the manifested world is to act in Karma. Closely tied into Karma is the idea of destiny, reincarnation and spiritual evolution as well as physical evolution and cycles.

*"The harvest of thy farmer birth Must  
now be reaped upon this earth"*

#### **Karma according to Vasettha Sutta**

He is the lay disciple of Lord Buddha. He visits the Bhuddha at Kutagarasala in vesali and states that it would be a good thing for them, for many a day, his kinsmen, Brahmins, trades,

folks, and laborers kept the uposatha with the eightfold qualification. The Buddha agrees and says further that it would be good if not only Gods and men even the trees were to keep.

*“Action the whole wide world is fashioning, By*

*action man is ever being made:*

*‘Tis action fetters every living thing,*

*As the whole chariot by its pole is swayed”.*

By action a man creates fresh karma the effects of which must work on him. Thus the course of the world and the lives as well as destinies of individuals is being determined from moment to moment. The almost unavoidable conclusion from these chains and eastern monarchism tends always to this solution. The doctrine is well summed up in the words attributed to Gautama, Lord Buddha.

### **The true Brahmin**

The young Brahmin, Vasettha and Bharadvaja, fell to discussion one day at Icchanankala, as what makes a true Brahmin. Bharadvaja maintained that it was pure decent from seven generations of ancestors, with neither break nor defect in the heredity, whereas Vasettha opposed that virtue and moral behavior made a true Brahmin. As neither could convince the other, they agreed to refer the matter to Buddha, who said it was not birth but deeds which made the true Brahmin.

*“O Monks, the Law is known to you*

*Deeds done in envy or in hate Deeds*

*of the fool infatuate”*

### **The Heart of Buddhism**

The sage Nagasena throws light upon the inequality of human destinies. Each being has his own action; Each is the fruit of his own action’s womb; each is kinsman of his own action, and each has his own action as over the lord and protector. It is their own actions that divide men and allotting them as a high and low esteem. This means that every human being has his own action and inheritor or successor to the same. Each person is the result of his action’s root and also the relative of his own action. Man’s action only rules and protects him. It is the action of men that divides them and assigns them either a high or low status or position in life.

This is the Heart of Buddhism.

### **Concept of Egyptians on Karma**

The Egyptians expressed this concept in the form of the Goddess ‘Ma’at’ that is ‘right and true’, ‘unalterable law’ and have a saying that “it has not been broken since the beginning”

### **The Universal Law**

It becomes evident to anyone, who has spent time evaluation the old tales that the idea of past deeds affecting future events is a universal one, even when the events are separated by many generations. This is basic Karmic operation.

*“Deeds of the fool infatuate,*

*Must bear their fitting punishment”*

## **Karma and Destiny**

One should also view Karma as the force which maintains 'Harmony'. The first thing one should bear in mind is that we live in a world of our own. It is neither good nor bad; it is not the possession of any one person. It belongs collectively to all of creation. In light of this, we can be subject to its effects from actions not our own. This is the meaning of destiny.

## **Call of Duty**

There are events set in motion over which we have no control over. Our only control is in how we choose to respond to these events. This is the idea of free will. This also where we as individuals get to shape future destiny depending on how we choose to respond, in turn become cause and effect. Our responses, in turn, become cause in themselves. This brings into play an inherent duty. This implied duty is one of self-control and responsibility to guard our thoughts and actions.

## **Karma and Suffering**

The doctrine of Karma is the solution offered by Hinduism to the great riddle of the origin of suffering and the inequalities which exist among men in this world. According to the Hindus, the law of causation operates in the moral world in as invariable and inviolable manner as it in the physical world. Every action of an individual inevitably leads to some results, good or bad and the life of the individual who acts and become conditioned by the consequences of those who acts. The future is in our power and we can work with hope and confidence.

It makes men feel that the things of the world, its fortune and failures, do not touch the dignity of the soul. Virtue alone good, not rank or riches, not race or nationality.

Karma is responsible for suffering and rebirth  
The basis of Karma is Dharma (Godly duties)

Karma is Boomerang. Hence unexhausted karma is carried forward to next birth. The purpose of Karma is to teach lessons and facilitate self-purification and self-transformation. **Beliefs about Karma**

Karma, it is a self-correcting mechanism; it binds the cycle of birth and deaths. According to Hindu scriptures, the law of Karma is universal. Even Gods are subject for it. Some puranas declare that the trinity of Gods of divine responsibilities because of their meritorious actions in the previous cycles of creation. Lord Krishna himself said to have died because of the unintentional action of a hunter, who stuck an arrow in his own act of killing behind a tree in a deceptive manner in his previous incarnation as Lord Rama.

## **The solution**

The Hindus call it the faculty of 'discrimination' or the ability to concern the appropriate course of action and to find your true path or place in the web of life. In this way one can free themselves from the effects of Karma and ultimately the wheel of birth and death. This is no easy task and few are they achieve it in one life time. This is what the author conveys through the poem.

*"Who seeketh wisdom flings the gate  
Wide open to his fitting fate!"*

## Paragraph

'Karma is a Boomarang'. 'What you sow so you reap'. These sayings examine the Karma. Whatever a man does it will come back to him in his life or in his rebirth. If the deeds are good the karma will be good. If the man is bad karma will be bad. Nobody can live their entire lives as a bad person without something bad coming back on them. No one can escape from Karma. If anything happens in life, undoubtedly it is a result of Karma of your past. Our behavior also comes under the karma. How you treat others, you also treated in that way.

If you work hard you will reap the success on your life, if you not work you will get nothing. If your actions are spent towards a sensual cause or dirty thoughts it will lead to destruction. Anger, hatred, jealous everything is a boomerang. If you good you will get reward, if u bad you will get evil. This is the fate and destiny of mankind. There is no other option. It just what you sow so you reap.

Everything is in man's mind. If it is good or bad it will come to you. According to Buddha everything is one's fate and he or she should accept it silently.

*"The harvest of thy farmer birth Must  
now be reaped upon this earth"*

## Short answers

### 1. What is Karma?

Karma is a Boomarang. It is the law of God. If you sow 'good' you will reap good deeds. If you sow 'bad' you will reap bad deeds.

### 2. Who is the author of Karma?

Buddha is the author of the poem Karma. Buddha (600 BCE-300BCE) or enlightened one was born as Siddhartha Gauthama to a large clan called the Shakays in Lumbini(Nepal) in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. His mother's name was Mayadevi and his father was Suddhodana. Siddhartha led a princely life and later married Yasodhara, the daughter of respected Shakya family. Buddha is undoubtedly one of the most influential figures in the world history, and his teachings have affected everything from a variety of other faiths to literature to philosophy, both within India and the farthest reaches of the Western world.

### 3. What is Buddha's teaching about Karma?

Buddha's teachings about Karma explain that our past actions affect us, either positively or negatively, and that our present actions will affect us in the future.

### 4. What deeds get the punishment?

The evil deeds such as jealousy, hate or foul infatuation must bear its fitting punishment and no one can escape from it.

### 5. According to Buddha what is lead to the fate (Karmapala)?

According to Buddha even one's lustful thought or the angry words spoken will lead him for his fate (Karmapala).

### 6. How does one get the fitting place?

The destiny of man depends upon his own actions. The evil doer should repay for his deeds.

**7. What is natural Law?**

‘What you sow so you reap’ is the natural law of life. If you do good deeds you will get reward. If you do bad deeds you will get fitting punishment.

**8. Is the poem philosophical? Why?**

Yes the poem is philosophical because it deals the karmapala of human life. It proves the man’s deeds have the consequences in his birth and rebirth.

**9. Write short note on K.J Saunders**

K.J Saunders is the translator of the poem Karma. He worked as a professor in Pacific Schools of Religion at Berkeley. He appointed for research in the Oriental religions and the poem selected from Buddhist Verse “The Heart of Buddhism” of K.J Saunders

**10. Who is Vasettha Sutta?**

He is the disciple of Lord Buddha.

**Choose the best answers**

1. The Author the poem ‘Karma’ is \_\_\_\_\_  
a) Buddha      b) Kalidas      c) M.K Gandhi      d) Asokha
2. Harvest means  
a) Collect      b) Make      c) Join      d) Carry
3. Karma is \_\_\_\_\_  
a) Deed      b) Lust      c) Waste      d) Give
4. Who translate the poem?  
a) Kalidasa      b) S. J Saunders      c) Milton      d) Asokha
5. Karma is a \_\_\_\_\_  
a) Elegy      b) Ballad      c) Drama      d) Sonnet
6. The life gate opens for  
a) Adventure seeker      b) Money seeker      c) Fools      d) Knowledge seeker
7. Envy means  
a) Happy      b) Sorrow      c) Jealous      d) Fate
8. Karma is a \_\_\_\_\_ poem  
a) Philosophical      b) Elegiac      c) Farce      d) Ode

9. What is retribution?

- a) Intelligence                      b) Punishment                      c) Look out                      d) Sensual

10. What will lead to destruction?

- a) Dirty thoughts                      b) Pain                      c) Fate                      d) Knowledge

Answers

- 1.a    2.a    3.a    4.b    5.d    6.d    7.c    8.a    9.b    10.a

## UNIT-II

### THIRUVIRATTAI MANIMALAI TRASLATION BY TN.RAMACHANDRAN

O heart! Avoid abiding here all wilted and scared  
And reduced to bones (when) assailed by the sweeping

Onslaught of cruel misery; hail Him unwearied;  
He is the Lord-God whose crest is adorned

With the Ganga that flows dashing against its banks,

The white crepuscular crescent and the madar flower.                      1

The Lord never causes them to get born on earth  
Who firmly think that there is no God but He

And instal Him in their manam in humble bashfulness  
And also articulate His praise never forgetting Him.

Note : The Tamil word : “Koosi” is associated, in meaning,  
with bashfulness. The devotee feels ashamed of his past  
forgetfulness. Whenever he thinks of his littleness and the  
Lord’s greatness, he feels put out.

His matted hair of ruddy gold is adorned  
With Konrai flowers which are buzzed and kindled

By chafers; there the serpent of venomous sacs stands hissing:  
Such is He, the long-haired Brahmin.

He is indeed the Lord who will not passively witness  
The misery of worshippers who hail Him

For days on end as the Lord God. 3

He, the Brahmin, is the mighty One that comes to them  
Who take refuge in Him and saves them from rebirth;

Lo, He but wears the killer-serpent and not the flowers  
Of auric konrai which burgeon in bunches; O heart,  
What may this be?

Konrai : Cassia ; Indian Laburnum (Cassia fistula).

O our Sankara who fixed well a long and peerless dart  
To the bow in your hand to gut the triple, resentful citadels

Of the sky with ruddy fire! Tell me what will betide you

Should She—the daughter of the Mountain, the one  
Whose lips are ruddy like kovvai fruit and the one

Who is concorporate with you--, now behold  
Lady Ganga in your long and flowing matted hair?

Kovvai : According to G.U. Pope, it is a king of Bryonia.  
Its fruit is blood-red. 5

O heart, for ever hail Him who is Sankara, the One  
Of matted hair that dangles low, the righteous One who

On that matted hair sports a soaring serpent and the One  
Who on that day saves you from the onslaught of misery.

O Brahmin who sports on your ruddy matted hair

The Ganga that flows down and spreads everywhere

With great waves, melliferouskonrai and fragrant vanni  
Wreaths! If you be pleased to listen to what I say

I have something to convey you. Pray, do not sport  
On your crest the hissing and wrathful snake

That crawls on your ruddy and beauteous garlands.

Note : The words <sup>³</sup>êõçõðùç <sup>³</sup>î£-î (ruddy and beauteous garlands)  
are interpreted as “the crepuscular crescent” by Tiru. Vi. Ka., and  
PattuswamyOtuvaar. My translation follows the interpretation of Pandita  
Mani Kadirecacchettiyar and Arunachala Mudaliyar.

Vanni : Indian mesquit tree (Prosopisspicigera). 7

He is VEDIYAN; He is the import of the Vedas; He is the One  
Who authored the Vedas; Betelgeuse is His asterism;

To behold His feet, Vishnu as a puissant boar burrowed  
Into the earth in vain and eventually owned his inability.

VEDIYAN : The one of Vedas; its reciter. The one who is  
acknowledged as the supreme by the Vedas.

8

O ye who seek to avoid the base and miserable flood  
(Of birth and death) and gain entry and abiding life

In the world of eternal bliss, do what I bid you.  
He, the Hero annihilated the triple citadels of His-foes;

He is eight shouldered, Bow, with delay none, at His feet  
Which are like pure and fresh gold; be poised

In His worship for days without end. 9

He is the Lord of the supernal world; His asterism is betelgeuse;  
His throat is dark with the aalaalam that He ate; they that chant



His mystic pentad—the chief of mantras--, adore Him and come by  
The true import, can (alone) behold His feet of ruddy gold.

aalaalam : The Haalahaala Venom that emerged out of the milky main when it was churned.

10

Even when the mere shadows of those that had beheld Him  
Of the roseate feet—the Wearer of the heroic anklet--,

Are eyed, Karma will cease to be. While so, will  
Our hoary karma stick to us at all

If we, with our hands scatter choicest flowers  
In the worship of our peerless Lord whose body  
Is ruddy an radiant like fire? 11

Before the hoary Karma ‘gins to engird you, in all celerity  
And without delay, adore and think on Him—the One  
Andavaanan : The Lord of the supernal worlds. 13

You sport a river in Your head; You dance in the undying fire;  
You adorn Yourself with the fire’s ash; You bathe in ghee;  
Such are You: how then is it that You, of yore crushed  
With Your foot the head and the twenty shoulders of the Asura? 14

O Righteous Lord that wears the heroic anklet!  
The dry and strong-mouthed ghouls standing sing Your praise;

Bhootas stand and adore You; the great crematory is  
Your theatre where You dance and dance. How is it

That You sped an arrow from Your bow and caused  
The triple citadels of the Asuras to get gutted with fire? 15

Thanks to our five senses which by true analysis kept away  
From false faiths, performing righteous acts only, our love

Of servitorship for the Lord who peeled the hide  
Of the pachydermatous tusker and mantled

His triple form from therewith, is on the ascendant.

Note : His triple form : Somaaskandar (Siva, Parvati and Skanda) 16

How are we to attain Him in love?  
The snake that dances on His person

Will suffer none to come near it;  
Moreover, all that we behold before us

Are only a row of skulls and white bones.  
Besides He but rides, in delight, a bull. 17

He has crest of bright matted hair where courses a river;  
His mount is but the bull; when of yore, the celestials gathered  
And churned the great ocean He ate the venom spat out  
By a hooded snake different from the one worn by Him; He is our Lord.  
18

He is peerless; He ever rides a young white bull;  
He seeks not a similar mount for His

Consort Uma whose lips are ruddy like kovvai  
But rides His bull with Her; He is the noble One.

I render Him service sweet for ever.  
If one day I importune Him to bless me,

Will He not bless me? 19

If you die, your noble kin will pile up dead wood and burn you;  
O heart like unto the sea, while yet alive live loftily;  
Listen with zest to the glory of Him—the Bather in ghee  
Who ate the venom of the vast sea--, and stand redeemed. 20

## ESSAY

### Introduction

Karaikkal Ammaiyar is remembered as a temple poet-saint (Nayanmar) who lived more than one thousand years ago in Karaikkal. Her poetic composition "Thiruvirattaimanimala" is a twenty verse poem. It is a Tamil Shiva-bhakti devotional song. Her praise of and devotion to the Hindu deity Shiva consists of allusions from Sivapuranam. The composition of the poem Thiruvirattaimanimalai" means "The Garland (malai) of the Sacred (tiru) Pair (iratta) of Gems (mani) which contained 20 stanzas (a pair of ten) in venba and Kattalaikkalitturai metres in the antati arrangement. The simple meaning is "the sacred garland of double gems." The poem is all about the supreme God Lord Shiva told with the facts from Siva Siddhanta.

2. No rebirth for Shiva's devotees The poet and ardent devotee of Lord Shiva, saint Karaikkal Ammayar appeals to the heat to avoid living in this world where We are tiresome and afraid of life. She asks the people to praise

Lord Shiva whose crest is adorned with the Ganga and the crescent moon and mardar flower to save them from this earthly life. There is no rebirth for the people who firmly think that Shiva is their God, says the poet. Lord Shiva with his matted golden hair adorns Konrai flowers. The poisonous snake around his neck makes a hissing noise. He is the Lord who will not passively witness the misery of the worshippers who praise Him on all days. Whoever takes refuge in Him are saved from rebirth. It is our Sankara who with his bow and arrow burnt the triple, resentful citadels. Lord Shiva who is seated with his consort Paarvati brings harmony to the devotees. Lord Shiva is the one who will redeem the people from death and their on slaught of misery.

**3. Lord Shiva - The Supreme God** Lord Shiva's matted hair symbolises unison of mind, body and spirit and helps his devotees to focus better. Lord Shiva Himself is one of Vedas. To look at his feet even Lord Vishnu took the form of a boar and burrowed into the earth but failed and finally owned his inability. Lord Shiva has no beginning and no end. The poet once again appeals to the devotees of Shiva g and who seek to avoid birth and death to worship Shiva at his feet on all days without end. He, the eight-shouldered H ldered Hero who burnt the triple citadels of his enemies will provic his devotee salvation, says saint Karaikkal Ammayar

The appearance of Lord Shiva Lord Shiva's throat appears bluish for he drank the poison that emerged out of the milky main when it was churned. Seeing this, Paarvati pressed her hand to His throat to prevent the poison entering into His body. This poison remained in His neck and made it blue. The poet appeals to the worshippers to look at Lord Shiva who is wearing Ganges on His matted head but does not get wet. He is the very embodiment of inextinguishable fire also.

The poet praises the Lord who is wearing heroic anklet. Ghouls (spirits) and Bootas stand around the Lord singing and dancing. The cremation ground is Lord Shiva's stage where he continually dances, smearing the holy ash all over his body. 5. Lord Shiva the Redeemer Lord Shiva is matchless. He forever rides on a young white bull along with his consort Uma Devi.

The poet says that as an ardent devotee of Shiva she renders service to the Lord forever and so she is confident that her persistent requests will be blessed and granted to her. She says that on our death, our kins pile up dry wood and burn our dead body and nothing more remains thereafter. So while we are alive, we should lead a lofty life listening with great enthusiasm and energy the glory of Shiva who is a bather in ghee. He who drank the poison of the vast sea will also redeem His worshippers.

## Conclusion

The poem by Karaikkal Ammayar is about salvation to mankind that only be granted by Lord Shiva by those who believe in Him and surrender under his feet with devotion anxiety and piety.

## UNIT-III

### Faith on its trial

**-M.K.Gandhi**

Though I had hired chambers in the Fort and a house in Girgaum, God would not let me settle down. Scarcely had I moved into my new house when my second son Manilal, who had already been through an acute attack of smallpox some years back, had a severe attack of typhoid, combined with pneumonia and signs of delirium at night.

The doctor was called in. He said medicine would have little effect, but eggs and chicken broth might be given with profit.

Manilal was only ten years old. To consult his wishes was out of the question. Being his guardian I had to decide. The doctor was a very good Parsi. I told him that we were all vegetarians and that I could not possibly give either of the two things to my son. Would he therefore recommend something else?

'Your son's life is in danger,' said the good doctor. 'We could give him milk diluted with water, but that will not give him enough nourishment. As you know, I am called in by many Hindu families, and they do not object to anything I prescribe. I think you will be well advised not to be so hard on your son.'

'What you say is quite right,' said I. 'As a doctor you could not do otherwise. But my responsibility is very great. If the boy had been grown up, I should certainly have tried to ascertain his wishes and respected them. But here I have to think and decide for him. To my mind it is only on such occasions that a man's faith is truly tested. Rightly or wrongly it is part of my religious conviction that man may not eat meat, eggs, and the like. There should be a limit even to the means of keeping ourselves alive.'

Even for itself we may not so certain things. Religion, as I understand it, does not permit me to use meat or eggs for me or mine even on occasions like this, and I must therefore take the risk that you say is likely. But I beg of you one thing. As I cannot avail myself of your treatment, I propose to try some hydropathic remedies which I happen to know. But I shall not know how to examine the boy's pulse, chest, lungs, etc. If you will kindly look in from time to time to examine him and keep me informed of his condition, I shall be grateful to you.'

The good doctor appreciated my difficulty and agreed to my request. Though Manilal could not have made his choice, I told him what had passed between the doctor and myself and asked him his opinion.

'Do try your hydropathic treatment,' he said. 'I will not have eggs or chicken broth.'

This made me glad, though I realized that, if I had given him either of these, he would have taken it.

I knew Kuhne's treatment and had tried it too. I knew as well that fasting also could be tried with profit. So I began to give Manilal hip baths according to Kuhne, never keeping him in the tub for more than three minutes, and kept him on orange juice mixed with water for three days.

But the temperature persisted, going up to 104. At night he would be delirious. I began to get anxious. What would people say of me? What would my elder brother think of me? Could we not call in another doctor? Why not have an Ayurvedic physician? What right had the parents to inflict their fads on their

children?

I was haunted by thoughts like these. Then a contrary current would start. God would surely be pleased to see that I was giving the same treatment to my son as I would give myself. I had faith in hydropathy, and little faith in allopathy. The doctors could not .

My mind was torn between these conflicting thoughts. It was night. I was in Manilal's bed lying by his side. I decided to give him a wet sheet pack. I got up, wetted a sheet, wrung the water out of it and wrapped it about Manilal, keeping only his head out, and then covered him with two blankets. To the head I applied a wet towel. The whole body was burning like hot iron, and quite parched. There was absolutely no perspiration.

I was sorely tired. I left Manilal in the charge of his mother, and went out for a walk on Chaupati to refresh myself. It was about ten o'clock. Very few pedestrians were out. Plunged in deep thought, I scarcely looked at them. 'My honour is in Thy keeping, oh Lord, in this hour of trial,' I repeated to myself. Ramanama was on my lips. After a short time I returned, my heart beating within my breast.

No sooner had I entered the room than Manilal said, 'You have returned, Bapu?'

'Yes, darling.'

'Do please pull me out. I am burning.'

'Are you perspiring, my boy?'

'I am simply soaked. Do please take me out.'

I felt his forehead. It was covered with beads of perspiration. The temperature was going down. I thanked God.

'Manilal, your fever is sure to go now. A little more perspiration and then I will take you out.'

'Pray, no. Do deliver me from this furnace. Wrap me some other time if you like.'

I just managed to keep him under the pack for a few minutes more by diverting him. The perspiration streamed down his forehead. I undid the pack and dried his body. Father and son fell asleep in the same bed.

And each slept like a log. Next morning Manilal had much less fever. He went on thus for forty days on diluted milk and fruit juices. I had no fear now. It was an obstinate type of fever, but it had been got under control.

Today Manilal is the healthiest of my boys. Who can say whether his recovery was due to God's grace, or to hydropathy, or to careful dietary and nursing? Let everyone decide according to his own faith. For my part I was sure that God had saved my honour, and that belief remains unaltered to this day.

## CHARACTER IS DESTINY

- Dr.S.Radhakrishnan

### TEXT:

The times ahead of us are of a very difficult character. The movements which took place in other countries during a span of centuries have all occurred here more or less simultaneously. What answer to the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Industrial Revolution or the Political Revolution—all those things have been telescoped, so to say, in these few years in our country. If we wish to follow up political revolution by a social and economic one, our universities must send out batches of Scientists, technicians, engineers, agriculturists etc. These are essential for changing the face of our country, the economic character of our society. But we should not believe that science and technology alone are enough. There are other countries, much advanced countries in the World, which have achieved marvellous progress in the Scientific and technological side, but yet they are tom by strife and they are unable to bring about peace, safety and security of their own people. It only shows that other qualities are also necessary besides those developed by science and technology.

Science is also regarded as a branch of philosophy. The function of the universities is not merely to send out technical skilled and professionally competent men, but it is their duty to produce in them the quality of compassion; the quality which enables the individuals to treat one another in a truly democratic spirit. Our religions have proclaimed from the very beginning that each human individual is to be regarded as a spark of the Divine. *Twat tam asi*, that art thou, is the teaching of Upanishads. The Buddhists declare that each individual has in him a spark of the Divine and could become Bodhisattva. These proclamations by themselves are not enough. Minds and hearts of the people require to be altered. We must strive to become democratic not merely in the political sense of the term but also in the social and economic sense. It is essential to bring about this democratic change this democratic temper, this kind of outlook by a proper study of the humanities including philosophy and religion. There is a great verse which says that in this poison tree of samsara are fruits of tw incomparable value. They are the enjoyment of books and the great company of good souls. If we want to absorb fruits of the great literature, we must read them, read we do cricket them not a stories but read them with concentration. Our generation in its rapid travel has not reading achieved the habit of the great books and has lost the habit of being influenced by the great classics of our country. If principles of democracy in our Constitution are to

become of mind and patterns of behaviour, principles which change the very character of the individual and the nature of the society, it can be done only by the study of great literature, of philosophy and religion. That is why even though our country needs great scientists, great technologists, great engineers, we should not neglect to make them humanists. While we retain science and technology we must remember that science and technology are not al. We must note the famous statement that merely by becoming literate without the development of compassion we become demoniac. So no university can regard itself as a true university unless it sends out young men and women who are not only learned but whose hearts are full of compassion for suffering humanity. Unless that is there the university education must be regarded as incomplete. Character is destiny.

Character is that on which the destiny of a nation is built. One cannot have a great nation with men of small character. If we want to build a great nation, We must try to train a large number of young men and women who have character. We must have young men and women who look upon others as the living images of themselves, as Our Sastras have so often declared. But whether in public life or n student life, we cannot reach great heights if we are lacking in Character. We cannot climb the mountain when the very ground at Our feet is crumbling. When the very basis of our structure is ollaky, how can we reach the heights which we have set before Ourselves? We must all have humility. Here is a country which we are interested in building up. For whatever service we take up, we should not care for what we receive. We should know how much we can put into that service. That should be the principle which should animate our young men and women. Ours is a great country. We have had for centuries a great history. The whole of the East reflects our culture. We have to represent what India taught right from the time of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. Whether in domestic affairs or in international affairs we must adhere to certain standards. My advice to the young men and women; Mother India expects of you that your lives should be clean, noble and dedicated to selfless work. 2. About the Author Dr.S.Radhakrishnan (1888-1975) was one of the most eminent philosophers and statesmen of our country. He earned world wide reputation as a proessor of comparati. ive philosophy, and as an exponent of Hindu philosophy and Hind bring out the depth of his scholarship. He was first tings and speechess culture. He brought out many books. His writings and. As a teacher of Vice-President and then President of India. As a t. philosophy. Dr.S.Radhakrishnan expressed his iews on Hindu of phy, he critically describes ethics and the doctrine of Maya in Tagore's poetry in The

Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore. In The Work in his work ne Reign of Religion in Contemporar western philos

**Essay:**

What advice does Dr.S.Radhakrishnan give in his essay Character is Destiny?

**1. Introduction** Dr.S.Radhakrishnan, besides being an outstanding philosopher and writer, was an established statesman. All his writings are noticeable for originality and depth of thoughts. He is a humanist. His prime concern is to reveal a vision of life based on spirituality, peace, friendliness and understanding. In the article 'Character is Destiny' Dr.Radhakrishnan says that both science and religion should go hand in hand for ushering the world in a new peaceful, social and international order.

2. Difficult times ahead The future of the world is going to be crucial, says Radhakrishnan. All the movements and evolution that took place in other countries over a span of many centuries have been compressed in our country. It is time for our universities to produce scientists, technicians, engineers, agronomists and other experts to meet the changing economic needs of our SOCIety. The economically developed countries find it difficult to bring about peace and security of their own people.

3. The study of philosophy and religion Science is also a branch of philosophy. The quality of Compassion is the most required one for the young graduates, says the author. All the religions of India uniformly proclaim that each individual has a spark of the Divine. We should become democratic not only in the political sense but also in the social and economic sense, appeals the writer. This could happen only if we read our great classics with concentration. The company of good souls is very essential. The study of great literature, philosophy and religion will make students humanists, says the author. Without the development of compassion we become demoniac. If the students coming out of universities are not compassionate, their education is incomplete, says Dr.Radhakrishnan.

**4. Character is Destiny'** The future of a nation depends on the character of its people. A great nation cannot be built if its people are mean and narrow-minded. Radhakrishnan stresses certain noble qualities for youngsters. First, the young men and women should regard others as images of themselves as told in the sastras. People who lack in character can never reach great heights in their life. Second, we should serve others without selfishness and expectations.

Building a great nation The great country of ours has given to the other our culture. Right from



the countries ancient days of the old civilizations of India, Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, our country should be spheres which has grown and developed in all represented in other countries by the young people. Mother India expects from its educated young people a life that should be clean, noble, dedicated and selfless service. This would help to build a great nation, says Dr.Radhakrishnan.

**6. Conclusion** Character is Destiny' is a quote that implies destiny or fate, is not a predetermined outside force, but that one's future, or destiny, is determined by his own inner character. This philosophy is well reflected in the essay by Dr.Radhakrishnan.

### **THE BURDEN - T P Kailasam**

(A Playlet of The Raamaayana)

**Characters:** Bharata } Princes of Kosala Satrugna Vasishtha Priest to the Royal House Anga }  
Aged Chamberlains-at-court Vanga Other servitors at the Palace

Place: A Corridor in the Palace Period: Ayodhya Kaanda of the RAAMAAYANA

Time: Early Night Place "The King's Walk" : a corridor - Dim lit

[Enter : Bharata and Satrugna travel-begrimed]

Bharata: (rubbing his eyes with the backs of his hands) Oh, the dust! The blinding dust!... To watch the fleetest steeds in all the land sniff up that red ribbon of a road from uncle's here, did bring elation to my heart; but to mine eyes, the dust!, makes e'en the King's own walk seem dimly lit!

Satrugna: (apprehensively) "Seem dimly lit?" But Bharata, it is dim lit...I fear'd it would be so!

Bharata: You fear'd it? How?

Satrugna: Intent on steering fleetsome steeds through surging streets, thine eyes did miss what mine descried: 'Twas bleak and blear our way through Ayodhya; methought the people glared at us...their looks unwelcome, callous, cold! e'en condemning;...and here...our father's favourite walk all gloomy clammy! Bharata, I feel so strangely frightened!

Bharata: Affrighted! You! (laughing) Well art thou named Dread Satrugna! A terror to thine enemies without a doubt; but thou art ev'n a bigger one to thine own self! The people's glare forsooth! Perchance the rains have held off hereabout and grains are scare; bare stomachs lend but poor succur to muster smiles of welcome! Or mayhap the chase hath lur'd our Rama to the wilds

and cozened poor Ayodhya's eyes of wonted feast!... But why... the King's Walk dimly lit?  
Perchance the King's away!...but where away?...He has not been away this long long while...and  
then 'twas Indra;...I have it! 'Tis Sakra with his cousins rampant, raging...hath slyly snar'd the king  
to battle for him as once he did before of yore! You know the story?

Satrugna: Aye. I've heard my elders tell of it; I've heard tell too 'twas our Little Queen-Mother  
Kaikeyee that with her daring sav'd the Devas from disaster! Bharata: (in alarm)...She will be  
away too! With her beloved lord at battle, she would not lag behind; my mother cannot breathe  
beyond the king's side! And what of Rama? With his mighty arm a twitch to draw bow at the  
king's side, he would not laze at home nor would Mahendra let him, and, Lakshmana? But why let  
our fears father sombre thoughts; 'tis easily known...(aloud) What ho! Without! Anga: (entering)  
Your Commands, Sire!

Bharata: (to Satrugna) He takes me for the king! And to his age dimmed eyes, this gloom doth  
lend but poor succour. (to Anga) I'm Bharata, my lord! Anga: I knew it Sire!

Bharata: 'Sire' again! His ears have gone too the way of his eyes...past sensing! Poor ancient! And  
yet I've heard tell, brother, that in his prime, his lordship had the straightest back of any that drew  
bow in the King's Guard! And at chase, his lordship could see farther, hear sharper than any that  
went hunt with the King! And now, 'tis this!' 'Tis a sin to grow old. Saumitri, one really must not!

Satrugna: (smiling) But, Bharata, 'tis Time's edict that one must grow old if one will live long!

Anga: (stragglingly and incoherently) The King...my liege...is the Prince...is...

Bharata: (impatiently) Nay! 'tis dotage dulls his senses and we but waste our time! (aloud) Forgive  
us, m'lord but we would to our royal brother Rama... (attempts to walk past Anga)

Anga: (feebly attempting to restrain Bharata) Nay, Sire!...the King...the Prince...the  
Princess...Heavens...I can...no...more! (falls forward)

Bharata: (catching him in his arms) Poor ancient! He will brush aside his king's behest to forbear  
from work and rest his limbs sore tried in the service of the Estate. Why, he has fainted dead  
away! Help,

Saumitri ... (The brothers carry him to a couch)...gently...(they lay him on it: Bharata in a loud  
voice) What ho! Without! More lights ho! This gloom is maddening! (Enter a number of courtiers:  
also servants bearing lamps and torches, with Vanga at their head. Bharata pointing to the couch)  
Look to his lordship, my lords!

Vanga: (approaching the couch) Aye, Sire! Bharata: "Sire" again! Am I awake or are we all

possessed? What does it all mean, Saumitri?

Satrugna: I do not know, Bharata, I cannot tell; but I feel, it all portends some disaster that has befallen us! Bharata: Disaster! The Gods forbid! (to Vanga) How doth his lordship, my lord?

Vanga: (approaching) But poorly, Sire! We have but ill hopes of his lordship's mending, and fear his scant breath portends his fast-approaching last!

Bharata: Poor ancient! Send for his kin; and the physicians too! (approaching the couch seats himself by the prone man; running his hand gently over the old man's brow, in a soothing tone) How is it with thee, my lord!?

Anga: (Opening his eyes which have a blar far-away look in them) Oh! That I the hoariest in all Ayodhya, that I should have lived to see what I have seen and not died ere the king died! Oh, that I should have lived to see the great king's death, the princes banished! God...punish...the wicked...queen! Bharata: (aloud, in alarm) What horror is this?

Anga: (looking at Bharata with intelligent eyes) The boy king! (Laying his hand on the prince's head) Forgive me, sire; as child and boy, as youth and man, all your life I've known Your Majesty. The kingship's trust, Ayodhya's weal were ne'er in safer hands. And blessing you, I die my liege. May God forgive the thoughtless queen whose only sin was nature 'cited love of dam for son! (falls back dead)

Bharata: (reverently closing the dead eyes, stands up;... in dignified tones) My lords, his lordship of Anga's valiant and upright soul hath found its well-earned rest at last? (to Vanga) His lordship's kin arrived yet? (some one exits) Saumitri, our king father will sorely miss his tried friend and thane! But, what of his ranting? 'Twas no less; you heard it all: he called me boy-king! And did speak of a great king that died; a banished prince: his mother wicked with "nature 'cited love of dam for son!" What king? When died? And wherefore the banishment of the prince her son if the queen the mother loved him? And whence again the "wickedness" of love of dam for son if "nature 'cited?" ...I've heard tell brother, that as the soul parts company with its ancient henchman the body, the mind in its final flutter conjures up lights and sights free of sway of reason and rakes up and spreads out in new shapes scenes of old happenings buried deep 'neath the ken of sane remembrance; Perhaps in his lordship's long-lived life, the horrors of the happenings of some royal house, left a wound so deep and so poorly healed, the cicatrice broke anew at his last breath and swayed his tongue! Why! you, my lord of Vanga, his lordship's co eval, peer in rank, comrade in arms and friend of youth and prime, you of any here should wot if aught of sense or truth there

was in his lordship's last mutterings!? Was there ever a king died in his lordship's life time?  
(Vanga drops his eyes) Why! Whence this silence? Was I not understood? Speak, my lord, I charge thee!

Vanga: (in distracted tone...aside) The Gods help me! (aloud) Aye. Sire, there was a king that died during his lordship of Anga's lifetime! Bharata: There was!? "Great King" he called him; was he, this king that died, as great as our dread Lord? Could not be! And what of a prince banished? And a wicked queen mother too; what of her? (Vanga and the other courtiers, with heaving bosoms look away; Bharata astonished at their behaviour laughs sardonically) Without a doubt, brother mine, they are all possessed! (turning round, notices Satrughna, a prey to his own premonitions, has buried his face in his hands) What!? You too!? What ails thee, Saumitri? (approaching him, shakes him gently) Come man, come! Satrughna: (agonised in face and voice) Bharata, do you not yet understand!?

Bharata: U n d e r s t a n d ?...what? Satrughna: The...king...that...died...! Bharata: What, he that his lordship spoke of? Why, what of him? Satrughna: Why...Bharata...'tis...'tis...!!!

Bharata: (the horror and suffering on Satrughna's face sets Bharata thinking and sudden as a thunderclap, the truth bursts on his mind; in tones of frenzied despair and anger) What he?... (With limbs taut, and clenched fists defiantly challenging the room) Not he? 'Tis a lie! A fiendish...God... (in helpless resignation)... 'Tis the truth! (collapses on the back of the couch where the dead man lies;...in the agonised voice of a stricken fawn and with face buried in his hands) My...king!...My father!... Never to look on thy loved face again! Never to look into thy loving eyes again! Never to hear thy kindly voice a g a i n!

Satrughna: (approaching, touches him in the nape of his neck; in a voice blended of sympathy and protest) Bharata, remember who you are!

Bharata: (reiterating dazedly) "Remember...who...I...am? Who...I..." (with an effort...aloud to Vanga) Is his holiness the Sage Vasishtha in the Palace ?

Vanga: Aye, Sire! Bharata: (plaintively) Then, bespeak for me, my lord, that Bharata, numb'd in limb and mind, hungers for sight and touch of His Holiness' feet, here! And (raising his voice with effort, to the courtiers) We would be alone I (all the retinue leave noiselessly by the right egress from the corridor, while Vanga leaves by the left.)

[Bharata with superhuman effort is controlling his emotions, glaring widely at the left ingress to the corridor. The moment the sage Vasishtha enters, one bound of hysterical frenzy lands him near the

Rishi.]

Bharata: (in almost threatening notes) Could you not...you, the greatest of the great ones of the earth...could you not have sav'd him...and...saving him...sav'd us all too!!? (collapses at the Rishi's feet; Satrugna brushing away his fast-falling tears, places a chair immediately behind the sage)

Vasishtha: (seats himself, the princes still prone at his feet; in a dispassionate voice charg'd with a soupcon of admonition) It is not in my heart to chide thee, child! But this helplessness of thine, belies thy sex, thy learning, thy blood, thy lineage and prepares thee but ill for thy man's task of bearing the burden that fate path placed on thee, the greatest of the Raaghavas! (laying his hand gently on Bharata's head) Calamities like these, aye, greater than these are sent us but to try our strength, of body and mind, of heart and soul !

Bharata: (like a cobra stricken to death, limply raises its hood for the last time, raises his head, his welling eyes meeting the Rishi's; in a voice fraught with heart-rending agony) Try us? Try us great one? Try our strength of heart and mind and soul? But, why, great one, why, the trial of this one humble soul spell a great people's grief? He meant as much to millions and more as to me! Why? Why? Why? (collapses at the Rishi's.

**UNIT-V**  
**The Judgment Of Indra**  
**-BY DHAN GOPAL MUKERJI**

PLACE: A Monastery on one of the foothills of Himalaya.]

[SCENE: In the foreground is the outer court of a Monastery. In the center of the court is a sacred plant, growing out of a small altar of earth about two feet square. On the left of the court is a sheer precipice, adown which a flight of stone steps--only a few of which are visible--connects the Monastery with the village in the valley below.

To the right are the temple and the adobe walls and the roof of the monastery cells. There is a little space between the temple and the adobe walls, which is the passage leading to the inner recesses of the monastery. Several steps lead to the doors of the temple, which give on the court. In the distance, rear, are the snowy peaks of the Himalayas, glowing under the emerald sky of an Indian afternoon. To the left, the distances stretch into vast spaces of wooded hills. Long bars of light glimmer and die as the vast clouds, with edges of crimson, golden and silver, spread portentously over the hills and forest.

A roll of thunder in the distance, accompanies the rise of the curtain.]

SHANTA. [He is reading a palm-leaf manuscript near the Sacred Plant. He looks up at the sky.] It forbodes a calamity.

[Suddenly the Temple doors open. Shukra stands framed in the doorway. Seeing that Shanta is alone, Shukra walks down the steps toward him.]

SHUKRA. Are you able to make out the words? SHANTA. Aye, Master.

SHUKRA. Where is Kanada?

SHANTA. He will be here presently. Listen, master: it sayeth: "Only a hair's breadth divides the true from the false. Upon him who by thought, word or deed confuses the two, will descend the Judgment of Indra."

SHUKRA. The thunder of Indra is just. It will strike the erring and the unrighteous no matter where they hide themselves; in the heart of the forest or in the silence of the cloisters, Indra's Judgment will descend on them. Even the erring heart that knows not that it is erring will be smitten and chastised by Indra.

[Thunder rumbles in the distance.]

SHANTA. Master, when you speak, you not only fill the heart with ecstasy, but also the soul with the beauty of truth.

SHUKRA. To praise is good. But why praise me, who have yet to find God and,--[Shakes his head sadly.]

SHANTA. You will find Him soon; your time is nigh. SHUKRA. I wish it were true.

SHANTA. Master, if there be anything that I can do for you. If I could only lighten your burden a little,--

SHUKRA. Thou hast done that already. All the cares of the monastery thou hast taken from me. Thou hast bound me to thee by bonds of gratitude that can never break. [Enter Kanada.] Ah, Kanada, how be it with you to-day? [Coming to him.]

KANADA. [He is a lad of twenty and two.] By your blessing I am well and at peace. Have you finished your meditation?

SHUKRA. [Sadly.] Nine hours have I meditated, but--I shall say the prayers now. [Enters the temple and shuts the door.]

KANADA. He seems not to be himself.

SHANTA. When he is in meditation for a long time, he becomes another being.

KANADA. There is sadness in his eyes.

SHANTA. How can he be sad,--he who has risen above joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, hate and love?

KANADA. Above love, too?

SHANTA. Yea, hate and love being opposite, are Maya, illusion! KANADA. Yet we must love the world.

SHANTA. Yea, that we do to help the world.

KANADA. The Master is tender to the villagers even if they lead the worldly life.

SHANTA. We be monks. We have broken all the ties of the world, even those of family, so that we can bestow our thoughts, care and love upon all the children of God. Our love is impartial. [The thunder growls in the distance.]

KANADA. Yea, that is the truth. Yet I think the Master loves thee more than any other.

SHANTA. Nay, brother. He loves no one more than another. I have been with him ten years; that makes him depend on me. But if the truth were known,--he loves none. For he loves all. Indra, be my witness: the Master loveth no one more than another.

KANADA. Ah, noble-souled Master! Yet I feel happy to think that he loveth thee more than any.

SHANTA. He loves each living creature. He is not as the worldly ones who love by comparison--this one more, the other less. Last night, as the rain wailed without like a heart-broken woman, how his voice rose in song of light and love! He is one of God's prophets, and a true singer of His praise.

KANADA. I can hear him yet.

SHANTA. I will never forget the ineffable joy that glowed in his words. Only he who has renounced all ties, can speak with such deep and undying love. No anxiety--

KANADA. It was that of which I would speak to thee. Dost thou not see sadness and anxiety in the Master's face?

SHANTA. He is deep in thought--naught else.

KANADA. Ever since that message was brought him the other day, he has seemed heavy hearted. It was melancholy tidings.

SHANTA. Nay, that message had naught to do with him. [Thunder growls. The Temple doors open. Shukra comes out of the Temple and shuts the doors behind him. Then he stands still in front of the Temple.]

SHUKRA. [Calling.] Kanada.

KANADA. Yea, Master. [He goes up to Shukra, who gives him some directions. Kanada exits; Shukra stands looking at the sky.]

SHANTA. How wonderful a vision he is! As he stands at the threshold of the temple he seems like a new God, another divinity come down to earth to lead the righteous on to the realms celestial. Ah, Master, how grateful am I to have thee as my teacher! I thank Brahma for giving thee to me.

[Enter Kanada. Shukra then walks to Shanta, with Kanada following him.]

KANADA. Master, all is ready.

SHUKRA. Go ye to the village; ask them if all be well with them. When the heavens are unkind--ah, if it rains another day all the crops will be destroyed. What will they live on? No, no, it cannot be. Go ye both down to them and take them my blessings: Tell them we will make another offering to Indra to-night. It must not rain any more.

SHANTA. Bring out begging bowls, Kanada. KANADA. Shall I bring the torches, too? [Crossing.]

SHUKRA. The clouds may hide the moon; yea, the torches, too. [Kanada exits R.]

SHUKRA. Yea. [Thunder growls above head.] The storm grows apace. I hope thou wilt find shelter ere it breaks. [A short silence.] The world is growing darker and darker each day. Sin and Vice are gathering around it like a vast coiling Serpent. We monks be the only ones that can save it and set it free. Shanta, be steadfast; strengthen me. Help me to bring the light to the world. Thou art not only my disciple, but my friend and brother. [He embraces Shanta.] Save me from the world.

KANADA. [Entering.] Here be--[Stops in surprise.]

SHUKRA. [Releasing Shanta.] Come to me, Kanada. [The latter does so, Shukra putting an arm around Kanada's neck.] Little Brother--

KANADA. [Radiantly.] Master--

SHUKRA. Be brave and free--free from the delusions of this world, Sansara. Go yet to the village; take them our blessings! Hari be with them all! May ye return hither safely. [Thunder and lightning.] Ah, Lord Indra!--Look, it is raining yonder. Go, hasten--

SHANTA. [Taking a begging bowl and torch from Kanada.] Come!

SHUKRA. [Putting his hands on their heads.] I bless ye both. May Indra protect ye--[the rest of his words are drowned by the lightning flash and peal of thunder].

[The two disciples intone: "OM Shanti OM." They go down the steps.]

SHUKRA. May this storm pass. OM Shiva. Shiva love you, my Shanta. For ten long years he has been with me; he has greatly helped me in my search after Him who is the only living Reality. To-day I am nearer God--I stand at the threshold of realization. I seem to feel that it will not be long before the Veil will be lifted and I shall press my heart against the heart of the ultimate mystery--Who comes there? [Listens attentively]. They cannot have gone and come back so soon.

Ha! another illusion! These days I am beset by endless illusions. Perhaps that betokens the end of my search, as the gloom is always thickest ere the dawn. Yea, after this will come the Light; I will see God! [Hears a noise; listens attentively.] Are they already returning? [Calling.] Shanta! [He crosses and looks down. Thunder rolls very loudly now. He does not heed that. Suddenly he recoils in agitation. Footsteps are heard from below, rising higher and higher. Shukra rubs his eyes to make sure that he has really seen something that is not an illusion. He goes forward a few steps. The head of an old man rises into view, Shukra is stupefied; walks backwards until his back touches the Sacred plant. He stands still. The old man at last climbs the last step. He has not noticed Shukra. He looks at the Himalayas in the rear. Then his eyes travel over the monastery walls--Now suddenly they catch sight of Shukra.]

SHUKRA. What seek ye here?

OLD MAN [eyeing him carefully]. Ah, Shukra! dost thou not recognize thine aged father? [He goes to



Shukra with outstretched arms.]

SHUKRA. I have no father.

OLD MAN. But I am thy father. Did not my messenger come the other day? [Silence.] Did he lie to me? Dost thou not know thy mother is--

SHUKRA. Thy messenger came.

OLD MAN. Then come thou home at once. There is not time to be lost. Come, my son, ere thy mother leaves this earth.

SHUKRA. I cannot go.

OLD MAN. Thou canst not go? Dost thou not know that thy mother is on her death-bed?

SHUKRA. I have renounced the world. For twelve years I have had no father, nor mother.

OLD MAN. Thou didst leave us, but we did not renounce thee. And now thou shouldst come.

SHUKRA. I told thy messenger that I have no father nor mother,--I cannot come.

OLD MAN. I heard it all. If you art born of us, thou canst not have a heart of stone? Come, my son: I, thy father, implore thee.

SHUKRA. Nay, nay; God alone is my father.

OLD MAN. Hath it not been said in the scriptures that thy parents are thy God? Thy father should be obeyed.

SHUKRA. That was said by one who had not seen the Truth, the Light.

OLD MAN. I command thee in the name of the Scriptures. SHUKRA. God alone can command me.

OLD MAN. Vishnu protect me! Art thou dreaming, my child? Yonder lies thy mother, fighting death,--

SHUKRA. I have heard it all.

OLD MAN. And yet thou wilt not go?

SHUKRA. Nay, father, I cannot go. The day I took the vow of a monk, that day I cut the bond that binds me to you all. I must be free of all ties. I must love none for myself that I may love all for God.

Here I must remain where God has placed me, until He calls me elsewhere.

OLD MAN. But thy mother lies, fighting with each breath. She wishes to see thee.

SHUKRA. I cannot come. OLD MAN. But thou must.

SHUKRA. I would if I could; but my life is in the hands of God.

OLD MAN [mocking]. God! Thy life belongs to God? Who gave thee life? Not God, but she who lies there dying; what ingratitude! This, indeed, is the age of darkness; sons are turning against their fathers,-- and killing their own mother.

SHUKRA [quietly]. I may not love one more than another; my steps, as my heart, go whither God guides them.

OLD MAN [mocking]. Truth is thy witness?

SHUKRA. May Indra himself punish me if I love one more than another. Hear me, Indra. [The roll of thunder above.]

OLD MAN [in desperation]. Come, my son, in the name of thine own God I pray to thee, come to thy mother. I kneel at thy feet and beg for this boon. [He does so.]

SHUKRA [raising him to his feet. He puts his own head down on the old man's feet.]

OLD MAN. Then thou comest? [Shukra rises to his feet.]

SHUKRA [hesitating]. There is a law in the Sacred books that says an ascetic should see the place of his birth every twelfth year.

OLD MAN. And it is twelve years now since thou didst renounce us! Ah! blessed be the law.

SHUKRA. Yet, father, if I go, I go not in obedience to the law, but since the desire to see my mother is uppermost in me, I who dreamt

not of the law hitherto--yea, now I hasten to abide by the law. Ah, what mockery! It is not the letter of the law, but the spirit in us that judges us sinners or saints. Now if I go with thee to obey the law, that would be betraying the law.

OLD MAN. Betraying the law!

SHUKRA. Thought alone is the measure of our innocence. He who thinks evil is a doer of evil indeed.

Nay, nay, tempt me not with the law. I must remain here. I must keep my vow. [He looks up to heaven; it is covered with enormous black clouds.]

OLD MAN. The law is not written in the heavens. It is inscribed in the heart of man. Obey the dictates of thy heart.

SHUKRA. God alone shall be obeyed. I cannot betray His command. I, who am an ascetic, must not yield to the desire to see my mother-- Nay! God--

OLD MAN. What manner of God is He that deprives a dying mother of her son? Such a God never was known in Hindu life. No such God lives, nor breathes. [Thunder and lightning.]

SHUKRA. Erring Soul, do not blaspheme your creator. He is the God of Truth--God of Love.

OLD MAN [disdainfully]. God of Love,-- How can He be God of Love if He dries up the stream of thy heart and blinds thy reason as the clouds blind the eyes of the Sun? Nay, thou liest. It is not the God of Love, but the God of thine insane self--self-love that makes thee rob thy mother of her only joy in life. I-- yea, I will answer to God for thee. If, by coming to see thy mother, thou sinnest, I ask God to make me pay for thy sin. Come, obey thy father,--I will take the burden of thy sin, if sin it be.

SHUKRA. Nay, each man pays for his sins as each man reaps the harvest of his own good deeds. None can atone for another. Ah, God! cursed be the hour when I was born. Cursed,--

OLD MAN [angrily]. Thou cursest thy birth?

SHUKRA. Yea, to be born in this world of woe is a curse indeed.

OLD MAN. Then curse thy tormented mind and thy desolate heart; curse not,--

SHUKRA. Nay, I curse the hour that saw me come to this earth of delusion and Maya. I do curse,--

OLD MAN. Thou dost dare curse the hour when thou wert born! Ah, vile sinner! To curse the hour of thy birth when thy mother is dying! God be my witness, he has incurred his father's wrath. Now,--no God can save thee.

SHUKRA. Nay, nay,--

OLD MAN. Shukra. I, thy father, thy God in life, curse thee. Thou hast deprived thy mother of her child, and her death of its solace. Thou hast incurred the wrath of the Spirits of all thy departed ancestors.

SHUKRA [cries out]. Not thus; not thus. [Thunder and lightning, the whole sky is swept by the clouds.]

OLD MAN. Not thus? Thus alone shall it be. Cursed be thou at night; cursed be thou by day; cursed be thou going; cursed be thou coming. Thou art cursed by the spirit of the race, by the spirit of God.

[Continued thunder and lightning.]

SHUKRA [falling at his father's feet]. I beseech thee, my father,--

OLD MAN [shrinking away]. Touch me not. [Going left.] Cursed art thou in Life and Death forever.

SHUKRA. God!--Father, go not thus.

OLD MAN. I am not thy father. [Deafening and blinding thunder and lightning.]

SHUKRA. Father--

OLD MAN [going down the steps]. Pollute not my hearing by calling me thy father. May the judgment of Indra be upon thee! [He totters down out of sight, left, in anger and horror.]

SHUKRA. Father, hear, oh hear! [The rain comes down in a deluge; thunder and lightning. The rain blots everything out of sight. It pours in deep, dark sheets, through which the chains and sheets of lightning burn and run. After raining awhile, the sky clears. In the pale moonlight, Shukra is seen crouching near the Sacred plant. He is wet and disheveled. He slowly rises, swaying in exhaustion. Voices are heard below.]

SHUKRA. Can it be that it is over? Has Indra judged me and found me free of error? Yea, were I in error, the lightning would have struck me. I lay there blinded by rain awaiting my death. It did not come.

Yea, Indra has judged! [Noises below; he does not hear.] O, thou shadowy world, I am free of thee at last. Free of love and loving, free of all bondage. I have no earthly ties,--I lean on God alone. At last, I am bound to no earthly being, not even--[strange pause]--not even,-- Shanta. [He becomes conscious of the noise of approaching footsteps and the light of the torches from below.] Who is that? [He goes forward a few steps. Enter Kanada, torch in hand.]

KANADA. Master, Master.

SHUKRA. Kanada, thou,--[a pause, very brief but poignant]. Why this agitation? Shanta, where is Shanta?

KANADA. Shanta is--

SHUKRA [seeing the other torches rising suddenly]. Speak! Who comes hither?

KANADA. They bring a dead man.

SHUKRA. Who is he? [As a premonition of the truth comes over him.] Where is Shanta?

KANADA [blurts out]. At the foot of the hill the lightning struck him.

SHUKRA [with a terrible cry]. Shanta,--my Shanta! [Two men carrying torches with one hand, and dragging something white with the other, come up the steps. This vision silences Shukra. A pause follows. Another torch is seen rising behind them.]

SHUKRA [slowly], Shanta,--gone. [Pause again, looking into the starry heavens.] This is the Judgment of Indra!

[Curtain.]

## **Karukku—Self-reflection of the Inner Self**

### **-Bama**

This autobiographical narrative, which gives testimony about a life, has to be treated as a different literary genre to be seen as an attestation of truth, a social critique as well as a carefully structured and well-written literary narrative and to be appreciated as would any influential work of fiction. Karukku is about a Christian Dalit woman who realizes that her identity as a Christian is heavily mediated by her identity as a Dalit, and that she must fight the discriminatory practices both within the Church and outside, and that this is all the more tough as a woman. Karukku is also a very different kind of a book, as if almost masticating for a new form. The narrator ponders over the various events in her life again and again from different perspectives. In her introduction, Lakshmi Holmstrom reaches a point of view that Bama groups the events in her life ‘under different themes, for example, Work, Games and Recreation, Education, Belief, etc.’ (p. vii). It is almost like watching the ripples that result when a number of stones are hurled into a pond. Every time that Bama thinks of her life, new ripples form and speed across the surface of her life, making her take stock of a large part of her life rather than the impact of a single incident in itself.

Her life as a Catholic Christian girl and woman is arbitrated by the fact that she is a Dalit. On the other hand, her growing awareness of the Dalit identity marks her ventures into the Church, and aggravates her re-examination and reconstruction of what devotion to God means and of the role of faith and belief in her life. This, then, is a work that plans the growth and education of the narrator, from childhood and innocent faith to adulthood and understanding of the ways of the Church and the world in her own ways. The narrator is taking stock of her life at a particular climactic moment of her life, after she has left the convent, and she reflects on various events and how they have shaped the outlines of her life and imposed on her self-understanding and socio-political awareness.

As a child, Bama grew up in an atmosphere instilled with faith in the Christian religion. Religion for her was a sense of duty and obedience (enforced with strict punishment), and also an idea of class and caste identity. She learns very early what it means to be a Dalit in the Indian society, and, rapidly, understands what it means to be a Dalit in the Catholic Christian society. However, as a believing Christian, one who had chosen to become a nun even if one of her main aims was to make a difference to the Dalit society, most commonly the women and children, Bama does not give up on the vision or message of Christianity and, instead, criticizes the Catholic institutions that preach one thing and practice another. The message and aim of Christianity, according to her reading of the scriptures, is love towards all, which implies equality, and social justice and human welfare. She thinks that God chose to side with the poor as he himself incarnated in the lowly form of man. Her ideas and thought were to make a vivid change in the vision to change the plight of the Dalit people, and with that zeal, she enters the convent precisely because she thinks she can work better for the poorer sections of society, especially the

Dalits, by working with the resources and the message of the Church. Unfortunately, the convent fails her and she leaves it, but these reflections on her life make her understand that the Church had always worked in this manner in her lifetime, and that social, political and economic inequality had always marked all the internal boundaries of her beloved village life, these internal boundaries or invisible boundaries have demarcated castes and also for certainty have created rules of untouchability to high visibility. This awareness of injustice that permeates the life of our land does not bring despair, for Bama realizes that her own experiences and the resultant awareness are part of a larger Dalit consciousness raising a larger movement. However, *Karukku* is first and foremost a work about life as a Christian Dalit, and about the hypocrisies and double standards of the Catholic Church, and about the caste discrimination within it. Even as she attacks the Church, she laments the rise of consumerism and lack of belief that marks contemporary life as a whole.

The writer's tone is amazing when she reveals about the hard work that she enjoyed: 'I don't know why they were so surprised. In those days, I really enjoyed that kind of hard physical labor' (p. 47). The education system encourages subtly to look down on people doing physical labour as the lot of those who have botched to progress themselves. So, Bama's reaction is interesting. She does not look down on the work that her community does; she is only aghast at the fact that society does not recognize or reward the importance of this labour. She also recognizes the hardship of her own mother and grandmother who 'labored from sunrise to sunset, without any rest'. She further points out that even today, men and women in her village 'can survive only through hard and incessant labor'. Though labour is enjoyable, it is not paying; it is exploited by others who control the levers of power which is very well prevalent in the Indian society. To add more to this, she also describes the work that is available in rural Tamil Nadu which is so demanding for the labours. However, she speaks of her village and her people who, if no other work is available, must 'go up to the hills to gather firewood' or do other work 'in order to eat'. She then describes the work done by other 'backward' castes, and says that it is only people of her community who had 'to work so hard'. This is where the reality is outspoken. The suppression of the people is being projected from her view that hard work and other menial labour are meant only for those who want to work hard. Hard work is a way of life for her family, with her grandmother waking as early as two in the morning to do household chores before going to work at the Naicker household where she was a servant and coming back only after sunset. Her grandmother is not being described in terms of her labour but in terms of resounding out her responsibilities to her masters, to the family that she was bonded to.

Bama's writing thrives on simplicity and, inquisitively for someone who has traditionally been seen as non-literary or even using impolite language, she more often makes her points with a certain indirectness, almost without emphasizing them, proving her ability as a talented writer. Bama talks of her grandmother in Chapter Two as well, where she also describes the way her grandmother was treated and looked down on by the family she worked for. It is the continuing and spreading results of the event and action that her grandmother underwent is the ripple effect

that has indirectly affected, emphasised and strengthened the feeling of inner-self in her. Bama's technique is perceptible again in the way she proceeds further to describe all the hard work she used to do as a young girl in order to supplement the family's insufficient income. This is when she voices her inner self-reflections of exploitation by the Naicker employers and the Nadar tradesmen. She also voices again about untouchability as a set of stringent rules she had learnt to observe as a part of her life: 'All the time I went to work for the Naickers, I knew I should not touch their goods or chattels; I should never come close to where they were, I should always stand away to one side'.

Education could only be a dream for the Dalits. After her opinions over hard work and untouchability, she then moves on to the subject of her convent school, where she did not have to do this kind of work: 'I ate my meals, and I studied; that was all'. Not that she learnt to look down on physical labour but, during her holidays, she says, 'I did all the chores that fell to me customarily'. She then expresses her joy and talks about how she enjoyed hard physical labour. It is then that she talks of how this incessant labour does not improve the lot of the Dalits, it becomes their factor for survival. Furthermore, she expresses how there is discrimination between men and women in terms of even these worthless wages. She points out that her community is still cheerful and seems to take this hard life uncritically, after gently pointing out that the upper-caste society could not endure without this labour which their community would render unto them. Bama finishes on a pessimistic note, focusing on the fact that even children are sent to factories to work rather than being sent for studies.

Bama's technique then reinforces her theme: the place of hard physical work in the lives of Dalits from childhood until death and even the chance for education, their only hope to break free of the cycle of exploitation, retreating with cumulative workload on children. This chapter from the beginning validates that the book is a sequence of reflections by Bama on her own life from childhood until she left the convent. The focus of this chapter is on Bama's experiences in the holy order that was founded by a woman who had loved the poor and the lowly and had educated the children of the poor and helped them in their lives. However, the convent functioned indifferently. The first sentence of this chapter reveals Bama's primary identity as a Dalit and a woman from rural India ('I was born in a small village as a Dalit girl'). She judges the convent from this perspective and finds it lacking and unresponsive. She finds an extravagant lifestyle instead of the poverty that the church exposes of and the poverty that she had experienced in her life. She speaks of the strange, rich and lavish meals and also the size of the buildings. The church seems far removed from the material reality of the life of her community that formed the largest part of the congregation. She felt as out of place there as she would have in an upper-caste home. On top of that, the convent was extremely hierarchical, almost like the society outside. She realized that the world was inside the church and social service to the country and to the poor were far from the minds of the serving nuns. The church valued the wealth and influence among the upper castes. Bama says that even the school attached to the convent was no better.

Most importantly, Bama analyses the way the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience that nuns had to take actually separated them from the reality of ordinary lives and 'put them at a great remove, as if they belonged to a different world'. The convent was cut off from the social reality around and had no understanding of or sympathy for the poor. The nuns were 'trapped in comfort'. Bama particularly chafes at the vow of 'obedience' because this is used to keep nuns in check, to keep them submissive even in the face of injustice or insensitivity and their own commitments. Bama was forced to serve the rich, not the poor as she wished, because she was told to learn obedience and faith. What Bama found in the church was a disjunction between what was professed and what was practised. As she says, the training that the nuns received had no connection to the lives they had to live later. If the nuns found it hard to fit in, they were told that they did not have the calling. Bama strongly believes that the church had no connection with the lived reality in India; the authorities had been 'indoctrinated during their studies in Europe and in America'. Not only did the convent have no idea about Dalits but they also spoke disparagingly of them. After serving in one school for 3 years, Bama was transferred five times within 1 month. Then, after another 5 months in a rich children's school, Bama left the convent for the world of social inequity and difficulty that she had hoped that the church would work to alleviate. Reflection is focused and speaks of the authority of the church over its nuns and how the very Christian principles that are meant to motivate its good work among the people are used to coerce and govern those who have taken holy orders to serve the church and the people. She spells out some of the opinions of the other nuns about Dalits and feels provoked by the vulgarization of ethics within the church, and the impossibility of serving the people from within.

## Conclusion

Bama's *Karukku* is as much about the writer and her perception of the Church and her interpretation of the hardship endured by her people as it is about her Dalit community. Her gender and religion are added factors in her sense of marginalization as a Dalit. She writes as a Dalit woman about the experiences of Dalit women in her community and urges women to emerge victorious in bringing out their identity to independence. Her gender complicates her Dalit identity as much as her Dalit distinctiveness obscures her position as a woman and a feminist. *Karukku* is a path-breaking work that explores the various facets of exploitation of the Dalits, precisely of the Paraiyars in Tamil Nadu, even within and by the Church. A salient point about conversions to other religions by Dalits is that they usually convert as an entire community, as a caste based in a certain location. Hence, their identity as a caste is carried over, unfortunately, into the new religion. Equally unfortunately, converts from upper castes seem to carry their caste attitudes into their new religious identity. Thus, caste practices and prejudices are found in all religions in India. Neither religion nor legal constitutional intervention seems to provide any answers to the Dalits. As a matter of fact, Bama's own community was outraged for a while after the publication of the book. *Karukku* created quite a stir in Tamil literary circles after its publication, although it marked a new era in the Tamil Dalit society in voicing the voice of the voiceless to be heard in the outer arena. Thus, Bama used the local dialect of the Tamil people and

not the formalized text that can be easily understood.

Bama has delved into something entirely new in using the demotic and colloquial language as her medium for narration and even argument, and not simply for reported speech. She marks a boundary by breaking the rules of written grammar and spelling throughout, eliding words and joining them differently, demanding a new and different pattern of reading. The style she adopted is extremely difficult to translate into English due to its stylistic corpus methods.

#### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.