

Post-Truth Political Narratives in India

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Abstract

Post-truth, a new concept developed in the west, rhymes with post-modern, post-structuralism, post-trauma, etc. Since Truth is a complicated word with metaphysical implications, I would hence use ‘fact/s’ in an empirical sense. The opposite word being ‘lie/s’, it is understood that in the empirical world there are only facts and lies. Facts are empirical and truth tends to be metaphysical. There could be only one Truth in a metaphysical sense, but there could be many facts. We deal with facts and lies in the empirical world. In politics, there are only lies, and facts hardly speak and create sensations. Language/discourse grows with lies. As there are umpteen lies, there are umpteen discourses. In much public discourse on issues, identity outranks arguments, ego outsmarts secular outlook, and deceptions erode fundamental norms. Our reasoning is fiddled out with cognitive deceptions and biases. Such narratives build a fragile social edifice. Against this theoretical background, two political writings, namely, Sanjay Baru’s “*The Accidental Prime Minister*” and Shashi Tharoor’s “*The Paradoxical Prime Minister*” have been taken up for a study to examine how the political narratives in India have affected the discourse. I have called them “Post-truth semi-political biographies”. Both the authors have broken the fourth wall and spoken directly to the audience.

Keywords: post-truth, fact, lie, metaphysical, empirical, discourse, political narratives.

I

In the post-deconstruction era, several established ideas and thoughts of the past, proverbs, and aphorisms have been challenged and deconstructed. The west is notable for contributing such new deconstructed ideas. The explosion and implosion of such knowledge are fast, no matter where we are heading in the state of confusion. However, as it is said, the human mind is creative or has increasingly become intellectually active, in the artistic sense. Such intellectual ideas, either deconstructed or reconstructed are but a natural phenomenon. One such idea is post-Truth, sounds expressions like post-modern, post retirement, post-trauma, etc. Semantically, it is simple to say that this compounding has two words, 'post' and 'truth'. 'Post' as opposed to 'Pre' means 'after'. Post-Truth sounds like a cliché since it rhymes with post-modern, post-structural, post-trauma and so on. Hence, it should be put in this way, "After Truth". The basic question that immediately follows is what, after truth? Another question that we may tend to ask, obviously implied, is what is that which is called truth? Without getting into metaphysical complications, we can simply understand and restrict 'truth' to the sense of 'facts'.

II

Tracing the history of the expression Post-truth, it has been developed in the twenty first century as a philosophical and political concept. Sean Illing defines it as "the disappearance of shared objective standards for truth" (22), while Barbara A. Biesecker looks at it as "circuitous slippage between facts or alt-facts, knowledge, opinion, belief, and truth" (329). The term has gained its widespread currency in the form of "post-truth politics" during the 2016 United States presidential election and in the context of EU referendum in the UK. After much discussion, debate, and research it was picked up as Word of the Year in 2016 by

the *Oxford Dictionary* where it is defined as "Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief"² In politics, it is associated with non-truthfulness, lies, deception, and deliberate falsehood.

Much earlier than it was introduced as a political concept, Friedrich Nietzsche is considered as one of the chief predecessors of post-truth. According to him humans create the concepts through which they define the good and the just, thereby replacing the concept of truth with the concept of value, and grounding reality in the human will and will to power. In his essay *Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense* (1873) written one year after *The Birth of Tragedy*, but was published by his sister Elisabeth in 1896 when Nietzsche was already mentally ill, he says that humans create truth about the world through their use of metaphor, myth, and poetry (Kaufmann 42). Every word immediately becomes a concept, every concept originates through our equating what is unequal (46).

Max Weber, a distinguished sociologist, draws a distinction between facts and values in his essay *Science as a Vocation* (1917). He argues that facts can be determined through the methods of a value-free, objective social science, while values are derived through culture and religion, the truth of which cannot be known through science. In his 1919 essay *Politics as a Vocation*, he argues that facts, like actions, do not in themselves contain any intrinsic meaning or power (146, 357).

French philosophers Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Bruno Latour are sceptical of the division between facts and values. They argue that scientific facts are socially produced through relations of power. Hannah Arendt in her essay, *Lying in Politics: Reflections on the Pentagon Papers* (1972) introduces the term *defactualization*, and describes it as the inability to discern fact from fiction—a concept very close to what we now understand by post-truth (20). The essay's central theme is the thoroughgoing political deception that was unveiled with

the leaking of the Pentagon Papers in 1971. She distinguishes defactualization from deliberate falsehood (7) and from lying. She writes, “The deliberate falsehood deals with *contingent* facts; that is, with matters that carry no inherent truth within themselves, no necessity to be as they are. Factual truths are never compellingly true. The historian knows how vulnerable is the whole texture of facts in which we spend our daily life; it is always in danger of being perforated by single lies or torn to shreds by the organized lying of groups, nations, or classes, or denied and distorted, often carefully covered up by reams of falsehoods or simply allowed to fall into oblivion. (6)” She goes on, “There always comes the point beyond which lying becomes counterproductive... Truth or falsehood—it does not matter which anymore, if your life depends on your acting as though you trusted; truth that can be relied on disappears entirely from public life, and with it the chief stabilizing factor in the ever-changing affairs of men. (7)”

III

Facts are empirical, while truth tends to be metaphysical. We are living in an empirical world where facts count. We may deal only with facts and not the truth, as I have already said truth sounds rather metaphysically complicated and misleading. Further, as we can hardly understand the truth at the metaphysical level, we might as well confine to the facts, and dealing with facts. There could be only one truth, and many facts since the latter are much related to the factual world. So, we can have as many facts as we can since we are living in the factual world which is created by us. The factual world is never constant; as its primary characteristic is changing, we can have many facts. Facts can never become the truth at the metaphysical level. Since we are living in the empirical world which essentially deals with facts, we would conveniently avoid using the word, ‘truth’. Similarly, ‘reality’ cannot be a substitute for a fact

since that also amounts to be dangerously misleading us. Therefore, we would use facts, instead of truth.

The opposite word of 'fact' is 'fiction' or 'fantasy' or 'deception' or 'fictitious'. I would not use 'falsehood' here as it is the exact opposite word of 'truth' at a simplistic level. Even 'lie' can never be an antonym to 'truth' at the metaphysical level. Since we cannot equate 'lie' as an antonym of 'truth', we can conveniently use it for a fact as an opposite word. Lies too are factual; a kind, I would say, since there could be one fact while there could be many lies to twist the fact. We say lies to cover the fact/s as it is said in all traditions, one lie leads to another, and we can make it endless as long as we are comfortable. There could be many reasons for twisting the facts. In much public discourse on issues, identity outranks arguments, ego outsmarts secular outlook, and deceptions erode fundamental norms. Our reasoning is fiddled out with cognitive deceptions and biases.

In the politics of every society, it is difficult to live with the fact/s, simply because facts are profound and horrendous. For example, Bofors scam, Coalgate scam, Telgi scam, 2G Spectrum scam, Punjab National Bank scam, Satyam computer services scam, Hawala scam, Kargil coffin scam, and Mining scandal involving Reddy brothers in India involving lakhs of crores of rupees are incredibly astounding facts that ordinary people could not withstand. What happens is the clash of lies, since fact/s is/are completely overpowered. If facts are maintained, no meaning is brought to politics. Politics is lying if correctly said. If politics speak only facts, there is hardly politics. That is the inseparable relationship between politics and lies. Statements may not be true, but probably true. Euphemisms abound. Deceptions are plenty. Since each deception or each lie is challenged, we find the facts are temporarily suspended or clouded in the heat of arguments. When the heat subsides, facts emerge as is the saying that goes, things will be clear only after the storm subsides. We are more excited with lies because they create sensations. Facts hardly create sensations. Further, it is human nature

to feel happy, comfortable, and excited with lies. Language grows as we tell more lies. Therefore, it affects the narratives. We have umpteen narratives as lies get multiplied.

At another level we have only opinions and impressions. This seems to be another feature of post-truth discourse. Facts are dismissed, opinions are honored; or facts are contested, alternative facts are offered. And thanks to social media or print media for making everyone post the comments/opinions about a public figure. In much public discourse on issues, identity outranks arguments, ego outsmarts secular outlook, and deceptions erode fundamental norms. Our reasoning is fiddled out with cognitive deceptions and biases. One silver line amidst all this is that society has become more open, but at the same time, it has increasingly become corrupt and vulnerable. Such narratives build a fragile social edifice. It erodes the foundations of trust and values that underlie any healthy civilization. This is not a predicament, but a situation with which we are, whether acceptable or not, bound to live.

IV

It is against this theoretical backdrop, I have chosen two books, Sanjay Baru's *The Accidental Prime Minister* and Sashi Tharoor's *The Paradoxical Prime Minister* for examining the historical facts as I have already said that I would not use truth for its metaphysical sound.

Sanjay Baru, as given in the frontispiece of the book, is the director for geo-economic and strategy, International Institute for Strategic Studies, and honorary senior fellow, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi. The book, *The Accidental Prime Minister* was first published in Viking by Penguin Book India in 2014 and by Penguin Books in 2015, dedicated in memory of his mentors, H.Y. Sharada Prasad and K. Subramanyam. This book recounts Sanjay's encounters and experiences with the former Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh while he was serving as Information Advisor. In the Introduction chapter, "Why I Chose to Write", Sanjay honestly confesses, influenced by Sharada Prasad's cryptic words (who served as Information

Advisor to Mrs. Indira Gandhi in PMO) in his interview with the former, “Suppose you have no urge to project yourself or play the justifier of God’s ways to man or man’s ways to other men... Suppose you feel that what you know might not be the whole truth in the *Rashomon*-like ambivalence of events. Then you will come to the same conclusion as I have, and not write the book that friends expect” (x-xi). He wrote, “His words left their marks on me. I never planned to write a book about my eventful time in the PMO as Dr. Manmohan Singh’s media adviser from 2004 and 2008. That is why I never kept a diary, though I did make notes on key events during my tenure. Right up to the end of 2012, I was clear in my mind that I would not write a book about that phase in my life, despite being coaxed by friends in the media and pursued by friends in the publishing world (xi).”

In spite of this hard stand that he had toed following the footsteps of his mentor, Sharada Prasad, later, like his mentor, Sanjay had yielded to the persuasions made by Chiki Sarkar and Kamini Mahadevan of Penguin Books India. Partly for the reason, he confesses, “...largely because of my own sense of profound sadness as I watched Manmohan Singh being unfairly treated as an object of public ridicule during his second term as Prime Minister (xi)”. No one is free from criticism as we live in the world and move in the complex human relations. Particularly for a political leader, it is natural to be admired or hated, but, Sanjay writes with a touch of pity, “...but a politician should never become an object of ridicule (xi).” He continues, “Dr. Singh’s descent was disturbingly steep. When I left the PMO in 2008, television news channels were serenading him with the popular refrain from a Hindi movie song, ‘Singh is king’. Four years later, a news magazine punned on that very refrain to deliver a bleak verdict on the Prime Minister: ‘Singh is Sin’king (xi).” He did not, according to Sanjay, deserve this fate.

Dr. Manmohan Singh has many faults, however, in the words of Sanjay “he remains not just a goodman but, in the final analysis, also, a good prime minister (xi).” This is

especially true when he was in his first term. In spite of his many faults, Sanjay writes with no mincing, “No Congress leader – and I include here the party’s leader Sonia Gandhi and its ‘heir apparent’ Rahul Gandhi – can match his unique combination of personal integrity, administrative experience, international stature and political appeal across a wide swathe of public opinion. These qualities were strikingly evident during the first term of the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance, from 2004 to 2009 (UPA-I), with Dr. Singh at its helm (xi).”

He was the only Prime Minister not from Nehru-Gandhi family to have served two full terms. “However, as bad news,” the author records, “largely a series of financial scandals, tumbled out of the UPA’s second term from 2009 (UPA-II), and the media became hostile, his many talents began to recede from public view. Sadly, his won office became ineffective and lost control over the political narrative (xi-xii).” So, the fallout was hard to contain. In a democratic country, the image of a Prime Minister is utmost. If he/she suffers, the country suffers. As Pranab Mukherjee, former President said to Sanjay in one of his meetings over tea, “As long as the Prime Minister’s image is good, so, too, the image of the government and the country. When the image of the PM suffers, the government’s image and the country’s also suffers (xii).”

The book addresses four questions based on Sanjay’s knowledge of events and personalities from his time in the PMO in UPA-I. *First*, it deals with the Manmohan Singh of UPA-I and not UPA –II since the author says that he was not part of that and did not serve in the PMO. The author proves that Manmohan Singh was not the ‘puppet PM’ that he came to be seen as in UPA-II and not in UPA-I. Though he was certainly an ‘accidental prime minister’ as he readily confessed, he occupied the country’s highest chair with dignity and great competence. *Second*, the author claims that he was totally ignorant of the complex relationship between Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi and what the two had dealt with each other in closed-door meetings. The author says that his account “is based only on what I saw and came

to reliably know (xiii).” However, the book will help the readers understand the complex relationship between Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi. *Third*, the book says that Manmohan Singh had a powerful story to tell humanity. Born in a modest family in a modest village Gah, which is now in Pakistan, lacking both electricity and water supply, Manmohan Singh had his painful journey in his educational career and despite it, had reached the pinnacles, having an education at Cambridge and Oxford. His academic achievements and his record of public and national service provide a truly uplifting story to the readers. Once the author told him that his life story was comparable to Barack Obama’s. The only difference is, as the author puts it, “Obama made history by becoming America’s first black President. Dr. Singh, too, made history by becoming India’s first Prime Minister from a minority community (xiii).” *Fourth*, the author focusses his attention while narrating his experiences on the flaws that had weakened Manmohan Singh in the UPA-II government. The author says that Manmohan Singh could have contested and secured the popular mandate in the 2009 election as he was the architect of the reforms, but he “chose not to assert himself within the Congress Party and take control of his prime minister- ship (xiv)”. This unfortunate decision, the author writes, “proved to be the fatal flaw that weakened his authority in UPA-2(xiv).” The author further states in support of his argument that “In UPA-1 he was ‘in office’ and exercised some authority but he was not ‘in power’. In UPA-2 he could have been in power as well.”

However, the book is not free from its limitation. The author says that the book is not “an exhaustive account of all that happened in UPA-1. What it does offer is a sense of what it was like to be at the heart of the hopeful and heady enterprise that was UPA-1 as the PM’s ‘eyes and ears’, and as a loyalist who wanted him to succeed (xiv).” The book, besides, combines “personal, admittedly subjective, accounts” of what the author regards as important events with an analysis, hopefully objective, of policies and issues (xiv).” Another lapse of this book, as the author confesses, is that it does not contain any material that he had promised

Dr. Singh he would not share with anyone. Moreover, nothing mentioned in this book contravenes the provisions of the Official Secrets Act. For this reason, the book has some gaps in information especially in chapters dealing with policy.

Finally, the author admits that he has not shared the contents of the book with Dr. Singh prior to its publication with the apprehension that the latter may not have approved of many of the author's observations and may have even disapproved his decision to write this book. However, the author audaciously claims that the book is "an honest account of my time with the PM, offering my view of what I saw and believed had happened (xvi)." He was all the time cautioned by his mentor's words that those in government and now retired "know that things did not always go right even their heyday, but they want us to believe they would have, if only their counsel had been accepted by the political masters (xvi)."

V

At his political/public life career, Dr. Tharoor was a distinguished diplomat who served as a former Under-Secretary-General of the UNO and a former Minister of State for Human Resource Development and Minister of State for External Affairs in the Government of India. He is a two-time member of the Lok Sabha from Thiruvananthapuram. Apart from his public life, Dr. Tharoor has established himself as a prominent writer. He is the author of more than seventeen books, both fiction and non-fiction, besides being a noted critic and columnist. Noted critic Dr. Tharoor is well known for his acerbic criticism of history as well as politics. In the book, *The Paradoxical Prime Minister*, he examines the real nature of Narendra Modi's personality. The title of the book aptly suggests the paradoxical nature of Modi. According to him, Modi says one thing and does another. This brilliant study of Modi and the effect he has had on the country answers some intricate questions such as: Who is the real Narendra Modi? Is he a noble, selfless leader who acts effectively in the interests of all his

countrymen or an autocratic, right-wing bigot who is interested only in power and converting plural India into a Hindu Rastra? Or something in between?

The book is divided into five sections comprising fifty chapters. The first section comprising only one chapter takes a close look at Modi's life and times. The other four sections deal with key aspects of the way in which Mr. Modi's government functions or functioned in the four years of a five-year term and the lasting and often deleterious impact it has had on Indian society, major institutions, the economy, foreign policy, and fundamental values. Each of the five sections examines a particular aspect of Narendra Modi's personality or the manner in which his government functions.

Tharoor writes in his "Introduction" that in one of his books *India Shastra* published in 2014, a volume of essays about contemporary India, he had examined Mr. Modi's first six months into his assumption of office. This is what he wrote then:

There is a paradox at the heart of Mr. Modi's ascent to the prime ministership. His speeches and rhetoric appear to recognize, and harness, a vital shift in our national politics from a politics of identity to a politics of performance. Yet he has ridden to power at the helm of a party, the BJP, which is ill-suited to the challenge of delinking India's polity from the incendiary issue to religious identity that it had built its base on. And his rise to office has empowered the khaki-shorts wearing 'cultural organization', the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), whose views on every subject – economics, politics, history, culture, morality, gender relations, even matters of appropriate dress or conduct – are totally illiberal (xv).

Four years later, Tharoor writes, "that failure is clearly apparent," and the story of these last years, "a story of missed opportunities and dashed hopes, of waiting for '*ache din*' that never came, of seeing expectations raised to the heights by lofty rhetoric, only to come crashing down in the face of depressing reality." (2)

Though these observations seem to be personal, Tharoor admits partly that in the given political situation in the country and being a Member of Parliament from the Opposition Congress Party, “I cannot pretend to be a neutral observer,” and partly he thinks he has an obligation to respect the people’s “collective judgment enough to see if Modi would live up to the voters’ faith in his words and promises.” (2) Nevertheless, the political discourse in Indian democracy needs to be corrected since it works with animosity between the political parties. Something is terribly wrong with the existing political discourse, Tharoor feels. He raises fundamental questions: “Why shouldn’t our politics allow for mutual expressions of respect across the political divide? Why should we not, by praising politicians on the other side when they say or do the right thing, raise the bar for the standards by which we can judge their subsequent conduct? Why shouldn’t we be able to see or hear the good things said or done by those we fundamentally disagree with and oppose?” (5) This tradition, Tharoor points out, was encouraged by the late Prime Minister, Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee who routinely savaged Nehru and his policies in the Parliament, nevertheless appreciated and praised his policies whenever found good. But, today, Tharoor laments that “we have reduced politics to black and white: either for or against, nothing in between.” (5) This sort of destructive politics of the opposition is not healthy for democracy. Even the Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen in his book, *The Argumentative India* has criticized. Toeing his line of thinking, Tharoor too writes, “Democracy is supposed to be an on-going process, one in which there must be given and take, dialogue and compromise among differing interests. Let us not reduce it to a game of kabaddi.” (6)

Having made these observations, Tharoor does not compromise either with the Congress Party to which he is a member or with himself. He is straight in his argumentations and observations. His main intention in writing this book, *The Paradoxical Prime Minister*, is to show partly Narendra Modi’s true personality as well as the gap between what he says and

what he does. He has focused only on the pitfalls, forgetting it is the case with every demagogue. He writes: “I have elected not to write a straightforward political biography or a history of Modi’s *sarkar*. Rather, in order to give myself the widest possible canvas on which to depict the contradictions within his personality, style of functioning and methods of governance, I have adopted an editorial structure that owes a lot of to movie-making techniques such as cross-cutting, slow-cutting and jump-cutting, which I hope has allowed me to probe my subject much more effectively than a standard linear structure would have allowed” (15). The book does not depict Tharoor’s opinions. He says, “Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but not to their own facts. This book relies on incontrovertible facts; the glowing polls being cited by Mr. Modi’s supporters are opinions.” In the book Tharoor has taken a close look at Modi’s life and times, beginning with his humble beginnings in Vadnagar, Gujarat, and ending with his ascent to the prime ministership of India. He has called Modi a paradoxical prime minister because he has seen, “the fundamental contradictions within him as Prime Minister” (17).

VI

In conclusion, I treat these two books as “post-truth semi-political biographies”, the coinage is mine. They are semi because, in each case, the authors have not fully dealt with the political life of the two prime ministers. Both authors are not literary figures. Baru is a bureaucrat while Tharoor a seasoned diplomat and a politician. Baru closely worked with Mr. Manomohan Singh as his press information secretary (media adviser). Obviously, he has observed Manmohan Singh’s emotional attitudes and responses, intellectual make-up, and his dedication and commitment and workmanship. Baru’s observations of Mr. Manmohan, detached and aloof, is from inside, while Tharoor’s have come out as an outsider. Baru wrote the book after Dr. Manmohan Singh had demitted his office, while Shashi has written about Mr. Narendra

Modi being in office. Baru's book revolves around Singh's life, the economist and politician who served as the Prime Minister of India from 2004 to 2014 under the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government and examines his failures besides focuses on the power dynamics between Gandhi and Singh, with the present Congress President Rahul Gandhi presented as the successor in-waiting. The book is effusive in its praise of Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister in his first term. From liberalization economics to ending India's nuclear apartheid in the first term, Baru can find no fault with Singh. Baru says that Singh's first innings (2004-09) were outstanding; however, his actual troubles had started in his second round, beginning 2009—by which time Baru had left the Prime Minister's Office - the UPA government grapples with controversies, we see the PM struggling. Baru candidly makes two worth noting observations: Singh's attitude and response to corruption and his unwillingness or inability to quit as Prime Minister at the right time. Both proved fatal to his image, Baru says. "Dr. Singh's general attitude towards corruption in public life, which adopted through his career in government, seemed to me to be that he would himself maintain the highest standards of probity in public life, but would not impose this on others," Baru writes in the book (84). But he defends his master. He writes: "Should he have resigned at the first whiff of scandal, owning moral responsibility for the corruption of others, instead of defending the government? Perhaps. Could he have resigned? Maybe not. The party would have hounded him for 'letting it down'. It would have then accused him of trying to occupy the high moral ground and quitting in principle to avoid being sacked for not 'delivering the goods'. When the horse you are riding becomes a tiger it is difficult to dismount (281)." This is nothing more than an ingenious defense. While Tharoor points out dishonesty in Modi's personality, showing the wide gap between what he preaches and what he does. According to the description of the book on Amazon, "Shashi Tharoor has stitched together a compelling portrait of this paradoxical figure (Narendra Modi)," "Never before has there been such a superbly written and devastatingly

accurate account of the most controversial Prime Minister India has ever had,” it said (Jan 19, 2019).

The titles of fifty sections such as ‘A Growing Wave of Communalism’, ‘The Attack on Institutions’, ‘Destroying Parliament’, and ‘The Dark Truth About Black Money’ may seem to be somewhat incriminating. The book is a wide-canvas sketch of Modi’s many controversial measures and policies, in a somewhat excessively partisan. Almost all the 50 rather disparate essays in this book highlight Modi’s failures. True, according to Tharoor, as everyone in this world is entitled to his/her opinion, Modi’s performance falls far short of his tall promises, and people’s disillusionment is growing fast. Tharoor may or may not be right in his prediction that “this disastrous government will be gone” (16) in 2019, but many will agree with him when he writes: “The liberal mask has long since fallen off. The gap has widened. The result is another paradox: a prime minister of lofty ambition laid low by underachievement (15).” One may agree with Baru’s narratives – his observations, impressions, and opinions about Dr. Manmohan Singh. But one may agree to disagree with Shashi Tharoor’s impressions about Mr. Narendra Modi since the latter is still in office. Both the authors have however broken the fourth wall and spoken directly to the audience.

Nevertheless, the perceptions rendered by the two writers though shocking in the initial, though agreeable or disagreeable maybe viewed as mere facts beyond verifiable since both Dr. Manmohan Singh and Mr. Narendra Modi have subjectively disowned, the former publicly denied the facts and the latter silently consumed the bitterness of facts. Post Truth political narratives are based on assumptions that are never constant, they can be challenged. Therefore, we will have umpteen narratives, and in the midst of these narratives, truth is like a smoke that merges with the clouds as Weber has rightly said that facts, like actions, do not in themselves contain any intrinsic meaning or power, they can be twisted, mended and abused.

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About the Author

Poet, short story writer, novelist, book reviewer, and critic Dr. K.V. Raghupathi has published twelve poetry collections, two short story collections, two novels, eight critical/edited books besides four books on Yoga and numerous stimulating and thought-provoking articles in various international journals, both online and print. His poetry collections include, *Desert Blooms* (1987), *Echoes Silent* (1988), *The Images of a Growing Dying City* (1989), *Small Reflections* (2000), *Voice of the Valley* (2003, 2014), *Wisdom of the Peepal Tree* (2003, 2014), *Samarpana* (2006), *Orphan and Other Poems* (2010), *Dispersed Symphonies* (2010), *Between Me and the Babe* (2015), *On and Beyond the Surface* (2018), and *The Mountain is Calling...* (2019). An Indian author best known for his poetry in the English language, his poetry is rooted in the abundance of philosophy, nature, transcendentalism, imagery and social perspectives, and replete with similes, metaphors, personifications, apostrophe, irony, climax, anti-climax and full of rhetoric and symbols. More often he takes the readers on the spiritual exploration of radical philosophical thoughts which strongly speak through all the collections. He is a recipient of several awards for his creativity at the national level that include Michael Madhusudan Dutt Award (2000), H. D. Thoreau Writing Fellowship (2001), Best Chosen Poet for 2003 (2003), Lifetime Achievement Award (2010), Rock Pebbles National Award for Creativity (2014), and King Phrasal Arbind Chowdhury Award for Poetry (2018). He lives at Tirupati, AP.

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