on. How an entity can be described with different contradictory names? Sridhar has tried to answer this with clear logical explanations. Brahman manifests the universe of names and forms through Its power of Maya. The universe or Jagat has two aspects—the manifested, Karya Brahman, having gross and subtle realms and the unmanifested source, also called as Karana Brahman. He says that Nirguna Brahman does not refer to the Karana Brahman or unmanifested Seed. But it refers to Purushottama in its absolute state of Turiya which is beyond all dualities (89–90).

The Scriptures describe Brahman as the material and intelligent cause of this universe. And, to accomplish its desire to manifest, it uses its power, Maya. Sridhar has beautifully explained how Brahman manifests or projects universe through the incident of the disrobing of Draupadi from Mahabharata. He writes: ‘Lord Krishna saved her [Draupadi] by covering her body with a cloth of infinite length that he projected using his power. … Krishna the material and intelligent cause of the cloth … projected it out as an appearance through his mysterious powers’ (93–4). Therefore, when it is said that the universe of names and forms is the effect of Maya it means that the universe has existence but only apparent and temporary. Consequently, the world of objects is also called mithya as it is both existent and non-existent at the same time; it is changing but not everlasting.

Section three ‘Hindu Society’ has articles on some contemporary issues—‘Indians have Forsaken Dharma’, ‘The Need for Indian Narrative’, ‘Notes on Hindu Society’. Sridhar has freely relied on his musings in this section and pointed out how the socio-political and economic fabric of the country has been adversely affected by abandoning of dharma. He writes: ‘Dharma is defined as “that which upholds”’(112). Section four ‘Translation of Sanskrit Hymns’ includes the translation of and commentary on few selected hymns. Section five ‘Miscellaneous’ has the writings on ‘The Symbolism of Worship of Shiva Linga’ and about a few prominent Hindu deities besides an explanation of the Gayatri mantra.

This book provides thought stimulating reading and enriches the reader with some of the essentials of Vedic religion and philosophy. The Vedas appear to contradict themselves at many places and few of these apparent contradictions are also logically explained in the book.

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Sweet
Nileen Putatunda


Nileen Putatunda is a bright young man with a facile pen that betrays his erudition. A humble soul, his writings touch one’s mind. This latest addition to his many poetry collections surprises even the reader who follows Putatunda’s writings. This volume contains more than ninety poems with the date and place of the creation and occasional credits to someone or some place that inspired the verses.

Putatunda attends a ‘Lecture Demonstration’, where a boy at ‘a roadside tea stall’ turns into a ‘Harvard professor’. The quirky lines do not fail to evoke empathy: ‘With his shirtsleeves rolled up / In a warm, bright auditorium / Who lectured on / A global history of capitalism’ (70). When he is grateful to his chosen ideal, Sri Ramakrishna, that he ‘swallowed’ the ‘poison that was meant for me’, Putatunda deftly pictures the bond of the devotee and the deity, but repents that it is a ‘plague on me / For posing / To be your lover’ (43).

The poems are all spiritual and sometimes also, philosophical, and yet bring out the humane in the mundane around us. Putatunda has created all the poetry as a love of labour and donates his earnings to the Ramakrishna Math, Belur Math, West Bengal (10). But, he is not doing it all entirely free of cost; he demands ‘the highest possible wages / For us all / Self-realization’ (58)!

Editor
Prabuddha Bharata

Nileen Putatunda