

Sudhir Bera

A Dream For One World



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SUDHIR BERA

**Readers
Service**

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A Dream For One World
By Sudhir Bera

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SUDHIR BERA

Addressing the 3rd World Congress of Poets
at Baltimore, USA, in 1976

Photo by Irving Philip, The Sun Paper, Baltimore, USA.



"England and India United"

Dr. Earnest Kay, Chancellor, IBC, Cambridge and Dr. Sudhir Bera

To My Parents...

ABOUT POETS AND POETRY

It is the poets who visualise that there is an underlying red thread of human unity and all men are brothers and friends. But there is the veil of oblivion separating them.

Such veil of oblivion descended when Dusmanta's Ring was lost. The king could not recognise his wife. The Ring was found and the veil of oblivion was lifted and Dusmanta recognised Sakuntala.

If that Ring could be found as will lift the veil of oblivion! Humanity's eternal search is for that Ring.

Poetry is that magic Ring supplied by the Poets which will lift the veil of oblivion for realisation that all men are brothers and friends all along and all through only the veil of oblivion is awaiting to be lifted.

Dr. Sudhir Bera

AN APPEAL

We are happy and proud to say that the First Edition of the book has earned world-wide acclaim from the general readers, academicians, critics and creative writers alike.

The Second Edition has been exhausted long ago. There is great demand of the book. Due to unavoidable circumstances the Third Edition could not be published earlier.

We hope that it will meet the increasing demand of our beloved readers.

Publisher

INTRODUCTION

A Bengali poet who reaches the world through his mastery of English, Dr. Sudhir Bera is steeped in the Sanskrit culture of ancient India and shares with Bengal-born Nobel Prize winner, the late Sir Rabindranath Tagore, an ability to express his love of mankind in inspired and persuasive language.

But, whether in spite of, or because of, his profound classical knowledge, Sudhir Bera writes simply and clearly for all to read and understand. This is all the more remarkable in an age when obscure poetry is widespread and is often ascertained to be based on precisely nothing.

Outstanding poems in this book are opening poem "A Dream For One World", which affirms the brotherhood and sisterhood of all mankind; "The Street Boy" where understanding of a waif of the Calcutta streets endowed with the will to survive is sought and the poet is led to question his own pursuit of wealth and honour in community, and "If Anybody Kills Me This Very Moment", a deeply moving expression of the poet's determination to turn the other cheek even in the face of a murderer.

However, all the poems in this book are a credit to its author, whose success among men and women of good will who read it cannot but be assured.

Dr. P. Brian Cox, D. Litt., President,
The Melbourne Shakespeare Society, Australia.

Other Works of the Author:

Lagna (3rd ed.)
Sahana (2nd ed.)
Surya-Rag (3rd ed.)
Abhijnan (3rd ed.)
Anyadin (3rd ed.)
Amritasya Putra (2nd ed.)
Amritasya Putra (Recital Drama)
Jal-Janata-Nari
Nirvachita Kavita (2nd ed.)
Nastradamer Bhabishyat Bani O Bharater Bhabishyat (2nd ed.)
The Universal

Children's Literature:

Ektu Khanik Sonar Manik (3rd ed.)
Ora Alo (3rd ed.)
Bang Babaji (3rd ed.)
Pratham Baba (3rd ed.)
Yodi Hoten (3rd ed.)

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A DREAM FOR ONE WORLD

Brothers and sisters we are
All sons of God Who is One-
Only manifestations differ
In different religions.

The same elements of this earth we are made of,
But a rare species in the universe of created beings.
We have built up with much blood, toil and tears
This civilization of ours, this history-
Full of achievements of man.

We may not believe in after-life
As some of us do ;
We may not all pray the same way.
Our bodies may be burnt or buried
After we die.

But we feel hungry the same way,
We are pained by pathos and swayed by joy,
We are born and we die the same way,
Sorrow or happiness the same way we suffer or enjoy

We breathe the same air,
Share the same sun, the moon and the sky,
The same water in rivers and oceans and rains from clouds.

The barriers of country, language, colour and religion
Are but surface and superficial things.
Black and white are only skin-deep,
Underneath lies the red thread of human unity.

In life and love
Poetry does blossom and flourish
And strengthen this bond of unity

Language of poetry is from heart to heart
And is far deeper and wider than any other.
It is different from language of alphabets
Which acts as a barrier between man and man.
Poetry percolates into the heart
Breaking through all barriers of language and geography.

Mankind all over be happy and gay
Mankind all over be free and great
From history to history let us go.
The poet of today is the prophet of tomorrow -
Come on, to dream One World for mankind !

Wonderful is the world
Full of poetry
That gives life and colour to it,
That unfolds heart and broadens mind,
That banishes all narrowness
And emancipates man from animality
Trace of which is still in us.

Come on, brothers and sisters all over the world !
Whoever, wherever and whatever you be !
Come on, oh one ! Come on, oh all !
To build One World for all mankind !!

SORROW AND HAPPINESS

Sorrow and happiness are but mental conditions.
They are the same
When viewed in the perspective of time.

Life runs fast.
Its speed is sometimes obstructed,
But it does not stop.

Memories remain behind -
Memories of sorrow and happiness.
But they are the same
Because they are memories -
As dead bodies are the same
Whether of a sage or a criminal
Because they are dead bodies.

We get both sorrow and happiness in life -
In interminable succession.
It is true for everybody and for all times.
Sometimes we become overjoyed,
Sometimes we break in sorrow.

As days go on
Intensity of feelings of both sorrow and happiness
Becomes fainter and fainter.
And that is true for all.

But our surprises know no bounds
When we see
Sorrow, suffered five years back
And joy, enjoyed five years back
Mingle with each other
And peacefully co-exist
In the museum of memories.

LIVE I WILL UNTO DEATH

Live I will unto death.
I have least craving
For lengthening life's span,
Or for being immortal
In the minds of man after death,
Or for ethereal existence after life
As is aspired by the religious ones.

I want to live
Only the days of my life -
As those are recorded there in *Chitra Gupta's** Ledger-
Not even a single day beyond that.
But live I will -
As long as I live.

I am not for lengthening life's span,
I have least aspiration F
or attaining immortality in history,
Or for heavenly bliss in or after life.

Live I will
In this mortal fold
These small fragile days of life
Warm with life's zest and pulsations.

* *Chitra Gupta in the Hindu mythology is the Registrar of the Office of the God of Death. He is in charge of maintaining records of births and deaths and also of sins and punishments.*

CALL OF LIGHT

The sky is endless
The world is vast
And I am in search of my rightful place
In that context.

What I want does not happen.
What I want not takes place again and again.
Having no faith in Destiny,
I find no consolation in these failures.

Too much encircled as I was
Within my smallness-
Like a silk-worm within its web.

Stray bits of sorrow and happiness
Cut deep in the mind.
Shut out from the outside world,
Insignificance of my own self
Becomes too apparent
And mocks at me.

The circle becomes smaller and smaller
And I feel cramped and suffocated.
On this unbearable anguish of life-in-death

I became desperate
And hit hard
Against the barrier - the confinement wall.
I went on hammering, hammering,
Till a rift occurred in the barrier wall
And a ray of light burst in.

I heard the call of light:
The world is vast and the sky is endless
And this life is full of colour and light.
It is vain
To remain confined in narrowness.

THE STREET BOY

The boy is as dirty as
he is dark-skinned.

He lives outside my window
on the sidewalk.

That's where he spends his
days and nights.

Clothes are no concern of his :
He's about eight years old.

Lice drip from his matted hair
Even beggar's babies keep

Away from him for he stinks.
No boy his own age is

A match for him in strength,
That's another reason

Others do not approach him.

Nobody knows whose the boy is.
Whether he ever had

A mother or a father is a matter
of conjecture.

He does not answer anyone who asks.
He shuts his eyes

And puts out his tongue in response.
His tongue is filthy.

What he eats is hard to say. Biologists
say food is necessary ;

No life exists without it, man least of all.
But who knows what or where

The boy eats? Who bothers about it?
If you visit me for a few days
you'll discover where

His home is. The sidewalk is his
residential address.

It's there you'll find him
in rain and in storm.

He plays his own games by himself.
He has no playmates.

He is never tired. He never loses interest.
He's never still a minute

For he's a boy that is wild and energetic.
I've never seen him quiet.

In winter cold and summer heat
He's always the same.

I've been watching him about a year.
He wraps himself in a sack

If anyone has the charity to give
him one that is of no use

Because it's torn and full of holes,
lies down on the sidewalk

And sleeps in supreme unconcern
when everybody else closes
Windows and doors to keep the cold out.

When the whole city of Calcutta
wails in sweltering heat

Nobody is comfortable inside
or outside the houses,

And people are extremely scorched
That boy is unaffected.

All alone throughout the noon
he plays ball or hop-scotch.

For him the rains are fun. Calcutta's streets
are like the canals of Venice.

The lightest thundershower floods them
and they swell with water.

To cross from one place to another
people tuck up their clothes
as high as they can and
Carry their sandals in their hands:
the water is waist-deep.

Overhead the rain pours steadily down
Slippery and slimy mud,
Mingled with refuse and water, make it
impossible to leave the house.

The rains come, settling in solidly,
lightning thrills the concourse
Of assembled clouds and our mood is touched
with the softening rain :
The heart begins to hum an unknown tune.

Pensively I open the window
and in amazement see
The boy trying to swim in
the filthy street water.
He is like an amphibian.
What if the water isn't deep enough
to really swim in? He's
Down on his hands and knees
splashing enthusiastically.

He thrashes his arms and legs
with greater vigour when
He sees my window open, kicking his heels
gaily, encouraged.
This sight of him makes me feel badly.
I close my window,
Annoyed by the spattering of the rain.

He has no match in physical strength.
A blow of his fist
The fear of a blow keeps everybody cowed.
He's hard and solidly built.

Striking the pose of an ancient horseman
he straddles a calf's back.
Biting his lower lip with effort he strains,
trying to turn it into
A *Pakshiraj** a winged horse.
He'd like to ride his steed
Into the country of a fairy-tale princess. There's
no end to his mischief-making!

His conquest carries him nowhere. His warhorse
Is just a small cow.
Within the frontiers of his sidewalk kingdom
he has to remain confined.
A crowd quickly collected one day when
he started a tug of war
With a beggar over his sack. In the city
People gathered quickly. The police arrived and
the fire brigade also came.

When he saw the turn things were taking he
solemnly let go and sat
Down to a card game. Those he played with were
card kings and card queens
For of course he played alone. Laying out the cards
crumpled and dirty
He ruled them, their absolute monarch, for he had
no rival in that kingdom.

**Pakshiraj is a winged horse in the Hindu mythology on which the Prince would ride in the air in quest of the Princess. It is like 'Pegasus' in the Greek mythology though the context is different.*

At his pleasure he started fights between royalty,
knave against king or
king against queen. They lived and died, sat up
and lay down at his will
For he was the sole Dispenser of their Fates.

The boy is never ill. All day and all night
he is on the go, full of energy.
And the children in my house are never well.
Khokan and Dolly are thin and pale,
Although they're fed according to a chart, given
proteins and vitamins,
The doctor calls twice a day and they're always
taking patent medicine.

Everybody, even grandfather, throws a fit when
 one of them coughs.
 Nobody sleeps if one of them has a temperature.
 Sometimes the thought of
 Running away and leaving the worldly life
 Plays hide and seek in
 My thoughts. They're sick together and by turns.
 And when they are well
 I've never heard or seen them run about
 or laugh out loud.

Their mother is pleased with their conduct.
 Her children are not as
 Ill-mannered as the children next door. They
 know what is proper,
 And never disturb the house with crying and laughter.

I try to explain, to make her understand,
that vitality
Is shown in shouting and running about, in
happy free laughter,

In crying and vigorous activity. Children
 should not be restrained.
But their mother thinks differently and
 I don't argue with her.

But the way that boy runs and jumps and shouts
 is very much to my liking.
Where did he get the tremendous vitality, his
 keen delight in life?
He has nothing. He has nobody, but he brought
 a vigour with him into
The world, and inexhaustible vivacity, a power to live !
 He drinks in, with all his senses,
The sunlight, the water and the wind, to the last drop.
 I envy his happy ability.

My children are good. They study, I've engaged tutors
 who teach in their school,
Although I have little faith in their intelligence.
 They're promoted
And we award them prizes.
Their speech is gentle and
 they behave politely.
Their manners are controlled.
 Their mother's heart
Swells with pride but to me it seems
 they lack something.
In their clean, serene faces, so good looking,
 something is missing.
There is something I do not find there.

My most closely guarded secret is, let me confess
 in a whisper,
That boy enchants me with his mischief-making.
 My heart seems to say –
That is life, the way life is. That's it.

My children have lost their naturalness,
 they measure everything,
Obey the rules, proceed cautiously,
 accept convention.
They've lost their vitality. They're born
 to be sacrificed
On the altar of a mechanical civilisation.
A pain twists through my heart and
 my feelings rebel.

Now and then the boy looks at the rows of books
 that fill my room,
He looks and laughs, laughs and looks, standing
 in the street.
"Would you like to read a book?" I asked him
 on a certain day.
"No", he answered. "Why not try?" I encouraged him.
 "You'll learn a lot."
"Dash it." he curled his lip contemptuously.

I want to weave a web of words with him and
 spread it open.
"Come and see how many books I've read, how
 much I've studied,
I earn quite a lot you know." and I add, "If
 you study you'll earn
A lot too." His eyes were uncomprehending as
 he gazed at me.
He said nothing for a while. Then "Trash!" he
 cried and skipped away.

The pain I suffer from at times, a colic pain,
 set in again.
Twice I called out to my wife, calling loudly,
 then I groaned.
I was myself again some seven hours later after
 doctors had seen me

And prescribed medicine of various kinds. But
the word he had said
"Trash!" was still running in my head. To him it
meant nothing.
Does he really regard my learning and my earning,
my social status
With contempt? And yet we pity him because he's
alone. He has no one.
But he pities us more than we pity him. His scorn
comes easily.
When we, with our learning and- our earning and
our status, give him advice.

Many are the legends that have grown up about the
*Cowherd of Brindaban**
But I never could understand how a boy who didn't
know even his letters
Who wandered about grazing a herd of cattle and playing
a flute and
Making a rumpus with dairy maids and herd boys,
found a place in
The heart of mankind, or why young and old alike,
women and men,
Make such a tremendous fuss over such a feckless boy!

A good boy like me duly stuffs his head with the
contents of books,
Passes his exams with credit, by hook or by crook, and
is helped
Through door after door by professors because
his father has money to engage them
To so help. He gets a good job as a mark of real
affection from one of his uncles
Who is a well-known politician with undisputed pull in
influential circles.
The pay is good and so is the patronage.

* *Cowherd of Brindaban is Lord Krishna Who spent His childhood in Brindaban among the cowherds.*

Why are no legends ever written about us? No epic is
ever composed?
Nor do we have a place in people's hearts. Because
we have power,
We are feared. I can at least do harm if I cannot
do good.
People salaam us in the hope of receiving charity.

Occasionally my photograph appears in news papers and
what I say is publicised
How the readers will know that newspapers are purchased.
Of some I'm
Director in my own name, of others in others' names..

When I'll have no power,
No money and at the end of the play the
royal costume
Shall drop away and the acting will come to a stop.
I'll be forgotten.

What I am worth is what my degrees are worth, my
money, my power,
Not what I am myself. My true value, what scientists
call 'intrinsic value',

Is zero.
That's why I cannot awake a response in men's hearts,
or make an impression,

That's why I have no permanent place in their
affections. With pomp and ceremony
I am greeted at the outer gateway and dismissed. I've
never got so far as the door
To the inner sanctum of what men feel. I too mistake
my role and think my shell
Is myself. That's what they do.

The good and obedient son of a high family,
 winner of life's battles,
Adjudged in all circles,
 official and unofficial,
All powerful, I am, in myself, worth nothing.

And an ignoramus of herdboy, spending his days
 pasturing cattle,
Is clasped to the breast of eternity.

My thoughts thus rambled about.
But the street boy played on as usual
 on the sidewalk.
And I looked and looked at him.

LIFE

The first life that appeared
In the creation of the lifeless things
Was most humble in its emergence.

Blind mechanical forces
Were then ruling.
They laughed at life a laughter-
Grotesque, horrible and shrill.

Ages passed on.
Ages after ages.
Life with that humblest beginning
Unnoticed by all-
Passed on and on from life to life
Manifested in moss, trees, grass, birds and animals.
And in other living species.

Time soon came
When life won over
The blind mechanical forces.
Life's march
Trowned the blind forces,
Its ebb over-flooded lifeless all.

The question arose :
Whether creation belonged to the lifeless things and forces
Or to living beings?
The answer came :
The creation originally belonged to matter.
But it came to belong to life.

Life passed on from life to life
Millions and hundreds of millions of years still.
Exuberance of life

Overpowered and surpassed all the material things and mechanical

forces

The creation full of stones and rocks
Became a world pulsating with life and living beings.

The earth assumed a new aspect with life's advent.
The song of the birds,
The murmur of the wind,
The rhythm of the spring,
The grandeur of the mountains,
The green verdure of the forests,
The mingling of
The blue of the sky and the pale of the horizon -
Made the old earth of matters
This beautiful world of human beings.
*Amrita** was found in the dust.
New life was traced out in death.
And newer creations even in destructions..

Life's march continues.
The cardinal note of the creation
Was sounded in that march.
The world of blind mechanical forces
Came to be the world of human beings
Beautified and glorified
And transcended.

**Amrita in the Hindu mythology is the equivalent of Nectar.*

UNHAPPY

The day wore on lazily.
I had no work; it was a holiday.
Time passed slowly.
The hands of the clock
Limped from one mark to another.

Other days I spent in extreme haste.
The rest of today is like a hyphen
Between work of past and of future.
The eyes closed in happiness.

At the crossing of the street
The fair on the occasion of *Ratha** was going on.
Children were sounding flutes and bugles.
The peddlers were peddling dolls and play things
In the high pitch of their tones.
A child lost from relatives in the crowd
Was crying desperately.
I was absent-minded.
I was looking just as a disinterested onlooker
At the sky above and the crowd at a distance.
I was lazily looking over
The jostling crowd and their hurriedness.
"Why so hurry? Why so haughty?"

I was just thinking.
'Why do they not spend their lives
Sitting by the windows and gazing at the distance?'
I felt myself extremely happy within myself.

* Fair on the occasion of Chariot Festival of the Lord Jagannatha at Puri

In the background of that din and bustle
I was sitting in the verandah
With the undisturbed calm of my mind.
I felt so happy
And my happiness was full to the brim.

At that moment a pigeon suddenly cooed somewhere.
No, it was not alone.
There was another by its side.
I suddenly felt extremely unhappy.

My mind reeled in pain.
And I ran away from the verandah
And plunged myself into the din and noise of the fair.

WE AND THEY

They have taken us for granted
To be perpetual minors.
So the politicians want to teach us politics,
The philosophers come to teach us philosophy
And the mendicants come to preach renouncement of the world.'

We are common man.
We are swayed by suffering.
We become overjoyed in happiness.
We fall in love.
We cheat and are cheated.
We seek jobs to earn our bread.
We don't work properly when we get a job.
In one word:
We literally live every moment.

The learned people become anxious about our next life.
The clever politicians make long promises of giving things of
material well-being.

The philosophers are afoot
To prove meaninglessness of life
And immortality of the soul.
We are simple beings.
Not that we have no feeling or respect for all these
But none of these are deep-rooted in us.
They enter through one ear and go out by the other.
And that is the grim reality for most of us.

They become disheartened
And opine that our future is dark.

We also ponder and come to the conclusion
That they have neither present nor future.
They are confined in their narrowness
And do not really look at us.

RAINY EVENING

The sky was overcast.
It was occasionally raining heavily.
Menancing clouds in heaps were raising their heads.

A long forgotten tune
Was humming up in my mind.
The rhyme appeared to be not unknown.

The verandah was swept by rain water.
A crow was sitting on the top of the tree
Fully drenched.
The rumble of the thunder accompanied by lightning flashes
Was piercing the sky through and through.
My mind was having some romantic fervour of the rainy wind.
Some intense feelings of separation were lurking in my mind
I was made, as it were, by the natural surroundings
The 'Yaksha'* of Kalidas' *Meghdoot*.
But my prosaic mind
Was revolting inside.

Rain and storm were increasing more and more.
I tried to shut the blinds
And was half-drenched.
Some shiver passed through me.
Is it due to cold or love or separation from love or simply romance?
I could not really decipher.

* Kalidas is one of the greatest poets of ancient India. The *Meghdoot* is his famous work. Yaksha, a character in the *Meghdoot*, lived in exile remaining separated from his beloved under orders of the king. His pathos were vividly depicted in that book.

The evening was an extremely romantic one.
The rains were pouring in incessantly.
Everything became enchanting
With the music of the rains.
The gale, the lightning flashes and all
Brought a poetic regeneration in me.

THE DAY I SAW YOU FIRST AND THE DAY I SAW YOU LAST

The day I saw you first
And the day I saw you last -
What a difference between the two !
It was not only ages apart
But births apart so to say.

When I saw you first
I was enchanted by your big wide beautiful eyes,
Soft sweet face
And a few naughty tufts of uncontrolled hair -
Playing in the air on your forehead.
Smile was spreading in your cheeks
And some unsophisticated fervour
Was indeed overwhelming.

I used to look at you
As colours changed in your face, cheeks and forehead
The colours that were ever changing from morning till evening -
In anger, in love, in sorrow, in happiness.

Then there was the missing link.
I was lost from your life.
And you got a home somewhere.

Many years after
We met.
Now you had become bulky.
Your teeth had been tinged with beetle.
Topography of your body
Had been a victim of fat here and there.
Your neck had become fattened.
You looked tired even to talk,
And appeared to have no agility left in you,
No interest in anything.

I had a glimpse, as it were, of death in me.
I saw, as it seemed, my own fossil
In the mirror of memories
Which was suffocating and painful.

BIRTH-DAY FELICITATIONS

I send my felicitations to you
On the occasion of your birth-day.

The day
You first saw the light of the day
Is memorable to me,
To the world also.

Be born every moment
In blooming and blossoming forth
Like a bud into a flower spreading fragrance and beauty

Let your birth-day
Come again and again
And let me look, my old darling, anew
At you
And at me also.

WHILE I SHUT MY EYES

While I shut my eyes
And I did not look out to the world
I remained confined
In extreme narrowness.

The wide open sky
Did not reach me
Or accord welcome to me.

In the closed mind
Within the closed doors
I tried to cover up my smallness
By weaving falsehood
And throwing away truth.

I lost my way in the darkness
Of my mind-
Enveloping darkness
That grows out of narrowness.

I don't know
How, why and when
Some jolt came.
Light burnt.
The deep dark vanished away
And the whole world became filled with light.

My bondage became loosened in no time
As buds burst into flowers
Breaking through their coverings.

Light burnt glowing and more glowing.
The world became filled with light, light, more light.

EVERY MOMENT WE LIVE

Every moment we live
Till we die.
Oblivion eternal
Ends all rhythms of life.

Death is endless dark.
It has no suspense of life at its every step.

Live we must
As long as we live -
Every moment of it
Full of zest and pulsations.

Live we from moment to moment.
And the totality of the moments we live
Constitutes this lifespan of ours.

Everywhere every moment,
Whether in the oceans or the mountains.
In forests or the sky,
Life is having its manifestations
In manifold ways.
It is always full of impulse
For expressing itself.

This life of ours is not a monotonous something.
It is the sum-total of the living moments -
Which are fragments of the eternal time
Only specified as moments in our calculations.

We live
As long as we go on growing.
Life is to be lived
And is to be measured
Not by number of years

Nor by failures or successes
But by the urge and the earnestness
With which it has been lived in small moments -
The urge and the earnestness to live and grow.

I KNEW MYSELF ANEW

The monotony of life
Suddenly got one day a tremendous jolt.
And it shook the very roots of my emotional existence.
Love came to my life.
And it blazed in no time
The horizon of the mind
In its soft and serene glow.
The darkness of the mind disappeared!
I became a completely changed man.
New emotion, new perception and new amazement
Made the earth more beautiful,
And the air more welcoming,
And mid-day solitariness more meaningful.

Through the branches of the trees on the banks of the Ganges
The big full moon was peeping.
Small scattered pieces of white clouds were sailing in the sky
aimlessly.
And the moon beams were literally creating dream-lines at their
borders.

The fluttering of the wings of the birds
Who lost their way in the wide sky -
And their chirping,
A combined fervour of the earth, water, air and flower
Roused me to new senses.
New attachment grew with the earth
And many millions of this self of mine emerged
In one harmonious tune.

Life was never so dear to me,
The earth never appeared to be so intimate.
The sky, the air, the river, the moon beams
And the symphony of all of them were never so attracting
As are now!

I never got such a unique opportunity
Of searching myself
Within me.

My body appeared to me to be a piece of glass
On which reflection was going on -
Reflection of colour and the colourless,
Of overwhelmedness and of enchantment.
Life became full of love and romance
And was over-stripping its brims.
I was lost amongst all these -
And I rediscovered myself in a new way.

I looked at my old self
And I saw it was changing its colours.
It was changing its approach,
Its emotions and aspirations and dreams.
It is this rediscovery of the self in me
Which appeared to me to be completely a new self.
It appeared to me to be some sort of emotional rebirth,
Sober and enchanting and flooding.
It has found the Gem on the head of the *Snake**
And helped me find out the way through the forest.
Through the mind's complexities,
And through the maze of light and darkness of life.

What music is there in the sky?
What emotions are being reflected there in the ripples of the river?
What romantic ardour was overfilling the earth?
What overwhelmedness was vibrating there in the breath of mine?
In the twilight chequered with half light and half darkness
Some magic world of enchantment was there, as it were,
And was overpowering me and was making my senses numb.

* *Mythology has it that the Snake had on its head a gem which showed the way through water.*

I am, as it were, the lost tune of a flute !
I am, as it were, the fluttering of wings of a sea bird who tost its
way in its home coming!

I am, as it were, a tune of 'Behag' ! *
I am, as it were, the manifestations of a symphony
Of colour, design, sound, music and all of this world!
I am, as it were, flickering of first life of the creation !
I am, as it were, first love of eternal youth.
I am, as it were, the manifestations of all beauty
Of this beautiful world
Extracted from the very soul of its being.

I knew myself anew.
I knew myself in a new song,
In a new tune and in new surroundings
And in a new way,
And everything new about me.

**'Behag' is a raga which is deeply moving. It is generally for pre-midnight use. It is a tune representing pangs of separation.*

THIS SELF OF MINE

Not in any philosophical sense
But in the plain meaning -
This self of mine.

This self of mine
Which breathes,
Walks on this earth -
The self that is overwhelmed in sorrow,
Overjoyed in happiness.
Cowed in fear.
Agitated in agony,
Reddened in anger and emotion -
The self that dies of hunger and thirst,
Reveals itself in joy and frustration
I am that self-
In this plain existence of mine.

Sometimes I hover ceaselessly in the sky,
For realization of this self of mine.
Sometimes I give myself up to fantasy in its endless wanderings.

Sometimes
I find reflection of my mind
In the aspiration for immortality.
Sometimes again
I hear music of millions of years bygone.
Sometimes again
I hear the footsteps of the advent of a millenium.

But I am this little self of mine
Which is true and real.
On it goes on
Action, reaction and counter-action of beings and things.

I am a human offspring
That has hands and a face,
That talks, hears,
And goes on and also sits,
That sits and sits and starts going again.

I am a worshipper of gods of the Hindus.
I also pay due respect to
Jesus and Mohammad -
So that no harm befalls me.

I am a believer, Oh yes, I am a believer.
I am a non-believer. Oh yes. I am a non-believer.
The truth is that I am both.
Or, in other words, I am neither.
Nothing is deep in me.
I believe everything when I am in difficulty.
I don't believe anything when danger is over.

My area of knowledge is only limited.
There are many things which I do not know.
Within the range of my knowledge
Many things are again unknown.
So it is often difficult, if not impossible, for me
To recognise my own self.

I pine for things-
But do not become pleased when I get those.
I weep when I miss something,
But I don't take sufficient care not to miss that.

Respect, gratefulness, patience, *Et cetera* -
I know.
I talk about those.
But I keep myself at a respectful distance from those.
I cry for the highest in life
But I remain happy with trifles.

I am the aggregate :
Some imagination, some reality.
Some desire, some abstention,
Some known, some unknown,
Some aspiration, some disquiet
And again some detachment -
But all these centre round
This little self
Which I am.

VEIL OF OBLIVION

I could not recognise the man
Till we were introduced.

It is however strange
That we remained unknown to each other
Though we travelled the same way
For years
Together and almost at the same time.

The moment we became known to each other
I recognised him in no time.
I recognised in the flash of a moment
The intimate relationship
That has been pre-existing between us
In so many ways and over years,
In co-travel and co-suffering.

In the deep dark of ocean depths
Live animals and plants,
And lie things-
Curious and peculiar.
When water recedes,
Those come out.
Even the Ring of *Dusmanta**
Might perhaps be found.

In the abyss depth of time
Most things lie forgotten, unknown and unidentified.
If all of a sudden
That ring is found out
It will at once make you known to me
As it did *Sakuntala* to *Dusmanta**.

* *Dusmanta* and *Sakuntala* are characters in Kalidas's *Abhijnan Sakuntalam*. *Dusmanta*, the King, married *Sakuntala* and gave her a ring. The ring, was lost and, as the result, when *Sakuntala* went to her husband, he could not recognise her. The ring was found later and the King immediately took her as his wife.

Unknown moments of ceaseless time
Suddenly become full with warm friendship.
One then immediately realizes
That the acquaintance and intimacy
Were not only deep
But pre-existing all along and all through.
Only the veil of oblivion -
Separating friends from friends, brothers from brothers, men from
men
Was awaiting to be lifted.

THOMAS MANN

More than one hundred years have elapsed
The child that saw the light of the day
In Lubek in Germany -
Grew to be Thomas Mann
In stature,
Full of life and creativity.
Object of wonder was he
To his contemporaneous world
As much as he is
To the world more than hundred years after.

A very few persons
Have viewed life the way Mann has done.
A still fewer have sucked life's juice so wistfully.
How lively has he made in words
The joys of unions and sorrows of separations
And the inter-relation between man and man
And man with the earth, the sky and the horizon.

The world opinion has swayed
On Mann's novels.
Whether these depict eloquently
Life in all its varied and chequered aspects
Well-co-ordinated and well-reconciled;
Or, whether these are vivid depiction of the intensity of feelings
and emotions;

Or, whether these are saturated mingling
Of sorrow, suffering, agony and joy-
Have been bones of prolonged contentions.

Thomas Mann, the creator,
Is ever luminous
In glow of uniqueness of creativity
And occupies a permanent place in the hearts of the people.

The human unity
Which exists
Despite differences and contradictions
Created and sustained by barriers -
Of country, colour, religion, language and culture
Is the underlying red thread
In all his writings.

And we in no time are taken
To the central theme of all his writings
Which is basic human unity
Underlying the superficial disharmony.

Thomas Mann was honoured by Nobel Prize.
But Nobel Prize itself was more honoured by its awarding to Mann.
Still more honoured were those
Who had the opportunity and the privilege of awarding him Nobel
Prize.

Mann is immortal.
And contemporary views for and against
Are only transitory
Viewed in the perspective of time
Which is ceaseless. Indo-German friendship –
Inseparable tie between the two nations –
Lying at its base
Is the German outlook and approach
That India as India
With all the glory of great heritage
Should get her rightful place in the world.
And lie at the bottom of this lasting friendship
The love and admiration of Goethe, Max Mueller and Mann
For India's history, culture and literature.
And vice versa of Tagore, Subhas Bose and others.

Across the distant oceans and beyond the mountains
A Bengali Poet of little eminence
Offers you this homage, Oh Mann!
Thou life's artist, creator, painter
And life's worshipper
And genuine champion of Democracy!

In this divided and torn earth of ours
The barriers to human unity
Will be removed
Only through literature.
And unity is being built up
Slowly but steadily and in irresistible ways.
And Mann is a pioneer in that respect.

Having lost our way
We grope in the dark.
Isms are but small and narrow in their broadest.
It is only in literature
That the sky is wide open, vast and endless
And the expanse of the earth
From horizon to horizon -
Are full of life's ebb -
Sorrow, suffering, pain, agony, joy and excitement
All mingle with life's colours, designs and pulsations.

The new horizon opens -
The horizon of human understanding and unity-
A new outlook is developed
Re-establishing life's relationship with life
And with surroundings
And in endless depths
In its promise, potentiality and uniqueness.

MESSAGE OF INDIA

Ancient land of culture
Far surpassing any other
Of contemporary world.
While many countries now modern and advanced
Were still groping in the dark -
In superstition and ignorance,
India raised her head high
In magnificance of glory of her greatness,
In her search for truth -
In her cry *Satyameva Jayate*
And faith in the salvation of man -
Manava-Mukti

Her soul was free.
Her object of cherish was
Welfare and wellbeing of mankind all over.
Her religion raised man
Higher, still higher
Till it attained divinity.

It was the uniqueness of her mission –
Which was apotheosis of man
Which formed the basis of Renaissance
of much later age.

India's message to the world
Was of love for all-
Not only all human beings
But for the world as a whole –
With *Jada* and *Ajada*,
Animate and inanimate,
With all its creatures, plants,
Mountains and oceans and rivers.

The message of India is from her very soul,
From her inner heart of hearts,
From her thousands of years of search for and dedication to truth
and God
And forms the divine and universal basis of all her thoughts
and actions.

This message was so forceful!
So lasting and illuminating!
These have remained
Even after thousands of years,
As true, as guiding, as illuminating
As ever.

Her message consists in the immortality of the human soul
And its achievements and manifestations.
Her dependence on material achievements
Was rather very insignificant.
She banked on the power of spirituality
Which formed part of her being
Without which India will be anything other than India.

In her search for unity amongst diversity
She reached the truth :
Everything is the manifestation of some Super Power
Which underlies varied manifestations of God and religion
And provides the real thread of unity amongst all.

Message of India was not one of conquest by force.
It was a conquest of heart by heart
Through love and sacrifice.
It was a conquest over brute force
By grace and holiness of brotherhood.
It is for this
That while Powers that conquered other countries
Lost possession in course of time,
India that conquered hearts of the people

By her ideal of divinity and spirituality
Holds steadfast.

Political upheavals overcame her
Many times.
She spent in serfdom for centuries,
Her economy was shattered.
Her politics was perverted by foreign subjugation.
Her education was mutilated,
Her future was polluted,
Her manhood was insulted and tortured again and again.

But her soul has remained unconquered.
Her light of life never left her.
The worst political and economic catastrophes -
The darkest days in the nation's life
Could not blur her vision.
She has withstood all vicissitudes
With confidence.

While the Roman and the Greek Empires
Have come to be part of mythology,
India's humanistic and spiritual objectives and achievements
Have remained ever shining
Unobstructed by time,
Unlost in oblivion.

IF ANYBODY KILLS ME THIS VERY MOMENT

If anybody kills me this very moment
Whoever he may be -
A friend or an enemy,
A person benefited by me,
Or known or unknown to me
Whatever -
If he kills me this very moment!

Biological reaction would be
Fleeing away
Or trying to survive.

I will do neither.
Because I don't want to live.
Not that I have been disappointed in love.
Nor that I have failed in business,
Nor that I have been plagued in politics.

If I am to be killed to save manhood
I am ready and prepared to die.
If, however, he kills me to kill manhood,
I would be only eager to die
Because there would be no meaning in my living
If manhood is killed.

So I won't flee away,
Nor will I resist.
I would stand and witness
How man and manhood are killed.

The man who wants to kill me this moment
Has killed himself much before,
And has killed his manhood even earlier.
Maybe the man in him would arise
When coming to kill me –

Because manhood is product of millions of years of blood, toil
and tears.

And if an iota of it is still left in him
That may come out any moment.

So, I will stand in the hope
That there would be resurrection of manhood in him.
I would close my eyes if afraid,
But I won't flee away
Nor will I resist.

My apprehension is:
If I flee away or resist,
His ego would be hurt,
And like a hunting dog
He would run after me more excited.

But if I don't flee away or resist
There would be no occasion for his excitement.
And he would be able to kill me cold-blooded.
And if a man can kill a man cold-blooded
It is better for me that I die.

If anybody kills me this very moment
I will stand and die
And won't flee away or resist.

WORLD OPINION

Your poetry exemplifies the simplicity of greatness and the greatness of simplicity. It touches the heart. It is unique in its height as well as depth. Its excellence lies in expressing in the simplest of language the most intricate of complexities. You have indeed emancipated modern poetry from obscurity and opened up a new horizon before the world.

Some of your poems are really masterpieces. Your "The Street Boy" is indeed an epic which reveals eternal truths prevailing over conflicts and equally applying to all men and women of all societies and of all times. Its pathos are sure to create a lasting impression on the minds of those who, to whatever society or community they belong, read it.

Mrs. Bessie Wherry Noe, President,
New York Poetry Society, U. S. A.

You have something important to say, and you say it with sincerity and originality. I particularly like "The Street Boy", relating as it does (for me at least) to the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' of not only one locality, but of the whole of world society. I would like to see this poem re-written in a condensed form so that it could be more easily absorbed in a wider society, perhaps in a more general medium such as daily newspapers, weekly magazines, for the general readers. Readers of poetry-as -such-are so few. I think the image of the 'haves' and the "Street Boy" with his vitality and adaptability, his strength and individuality, shows very clearly what has happened to a great part of our society - especially the western societies which have no 'frontier' of great challenge and which have been dominated by the need for more 'possessions' and more and more 'ostentations'.

Mrs. Alice Egan.
Editor, VFADD Members News, Australia.

It was indeed an honour to meet you in Baltimore at the World Congress of Poets. At that time you were kind enough to give me a copy of your book of poems "A Dream For One World". I was, I can assure you, deeply impressed by the poems. The title poem is one of my favorites since it movingly expresses an ideal of brotherhood to which all of us must subscribe if we are to avoid danger posed by world conflicts. In the United States poets are sometimes considered

superfluous members of society, although this is not always true. I know they are traditionally honoured in your country. Whenever they speak, however, they are, as Shelley described them, 'the unacknowledged legislators of mankind'. Your voice is a strong one and deserves to be heard.

O. B. Hardison, Jr., Director.
The Folger Shakespeare Library, U.S.A

Your intentions are very honest and bold. Your dream for One World is really just a dream for poets.

Obviously your original language must be very rich with reference to Indian mythological and historical heroes, tradition, thus carrying on the hope of the ancient sages for One World.

I am so happy that your presence was so well covered in the Baltimore papers..

Jeno Platthy, President,
Third World Congress of Poets, 1976.

I have greatly enjoyed your book of poetry. It is very good free verse and each poem has depth and meaning.

Dr. Mabelle A. Lyon.
Chancellor & General Secretary,
World Poetry Society.

I regard this book as being a very important and interesting work and one which deserves to have a very wide circulation.

Dr. Ernest Kay, D. Litt., FRSA, Chancellor.
International Academy of Poets.
Cambridge, England.

As I have perused Sudhir Bera's anthology, "A Dream For One World", I have come to realize his deep and fervent prayer for restoration of humanity that appears to be exalted from time to time at certain people's convenience but always has been more or less abused under the shade of colourful human civilization. Very often we are too busy to ponder this fundamental problem.

Of those poems compiled in this anthology, "Veil of Oblivion" seems to have very symbolically manifested his earnest reverence for the imperishable humanity which reminds me of a religious context. In particular, it is so interesting to notice his careful quotation of a

Hindu legend, the Ring of Dusmanta, that it could directly provide us with the real exuberance of his continued theme that flows throughout his poetry.

With further understanding of Indian mythology it would be more enjoyable and appreciative to read his insights as beautifully versed in the anthology.

Jin-Sup KIMN.
Eminent Poet & Critic, Korea.

There is something very appealing about your book. Ideologically I find myself in full agreement with you. You have the heart and mind of a poet, the insight, the feeling, the inspiration. In other words, you have that which cannot be taught. You are, if you choose, a true poet.

Florence Becker Lennon.
Eminent Poet & Critic, U.S.A.

Mr. Bera's Poetry is deep and illuminating as well as full of wisdom. What is most remarkable is that such deep ideas are expressed in a plain clear language which, I think, shows his poetry is based upon the long tradition of Indian literature.

Dr. Sung Chank Yung.
Professor, Dept, of Comparative Literature,
University of Seoul.

Your 'A Dream For One World' first delivered in 1976 at the 3rd World Congress of Poets, Baltimore, 1976 contains a yearning for change which is now almost a twenty year plea to the world and the nations.

Your impassioned desire to see this come to fruition is more and more called for these days. Your scope of compassion is manifested in the pathos depicted in the STREET BOY. And of each of your poems written I can re-live your experiences to share with us as we read for you have the precise gift of clarity and simplicity (so difficult to attain) which marks you a born-poet, a gifted poet. It is said that it takes one to know one.

I wish you further success in all of your literary endeavors and your world poetry leadership likewise.

Rosemary Wilkinson, Secretary General
World Academy of Art & Culture
California, USA

Bera is not yet the poet of tile world It will take sometime perhaps, ten to twenty years after his death, when a still unborn poet-philosopher from Germany may return the favour and write a poetic homage for Bera.

The book as a whole is a reportage on the big and little aspects of the every day world, both past and present, it is worth reading.

'Laurels & Leaves'
The Philippines

Sudhir Bera brings into Indian parnassus a freshness and newness that perfume all

Young and very dynamic, he is sure to gift the world with memorable poems.

At the Third World Congress of Poets at Baltimore, U.S.A., I saw him capturing the hearts of hundreds of poets from six continents.

Poets like Sudhir alone can keep the poetic flag of India flying in all capital cities.

Dr Krishna Srinivas, D. Litt.
Editor, POET, Madras.

One asks if Sudhir Bera is first a poet or a humanist. The obvious answer is that he is a poet of humanity whose eventual oneness is his perpetual dream. He has the keen eye of a scientist and the heart of an idealist; he is at home with the most material conditions and with the loftiest visions of the Spirit. He is a perfectionist and a sensitive artist of life. He has the key to the phenomenon of life :

We live
As long as we go on growing.
Life is to be lived
And is to be measured
Not by failures or successes
But by the urge and the earnestness
With which it has been lived in small moments
The urge and the earnestness to live and grow.

His book 'A Dream For One World' is a shining mirror in which you and I can watch ourselves with all our plus and minus shades.

M. P. Pandit, Chairman,
World Union International.
Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, India.

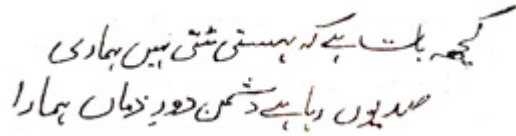
The very title of the book suggests what it is all about - Unity, peace, harmony and goodwill. This is the eternal' message of India. I am glad to see that you have tried to present this message to the present world torn by dissensions.

Swami Lokeswarananda, Secretary,
The Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta.

In the utter darkness and frustration that threaten to wipe away our spiritual heritage, your poetry has ushered in a ray of hope and light. Future can never be dark as long as young dynamic devoted poets of vision exist heralding the eternal message of India capturing the hearts and imaginations of millions :

"Have remained ever shining
Unobstructed by time
Unlost in oblivion."

as Iqbal has said :



(Kuch that hai aisi hasti mitti nahht hemari
Saduwn raha hai dushman Deware Zeman Hemara.)

Which means : "There are some reasons why our identity is not destroyed though enemies were always there in every period of history."

You are gifted with unparalleled intellectual energy and I worship and admire and salute the rising poet of Age in you who knows no barriers of race, colour, creed, no barriers of geography or politics and sings the song of Humanity and common man all over the world.

Dr. Madan Mohan Chopra.
General Secretary, One World Association and
World Conference on Unity of Man.

Wealth of your thought is as vast as it is unique. Your boldness in expressing yourself is indeed unparalleled. You are really a poet of great originality.

Annada Sankar Ray. Chairman,
World P.E.N., West Bengal Branch.

One will seldom come across a man ever bubbling with life and exuberance like Dr. Sudhir Bera who is like an atomic nucleus transmitting speed and energy. This speed he has injected in his poetry. With whatsoever prejudice you start reading Dr. Bera's poems, you will have to read them through, and you, if you are not totally inert, are bound to be shaken to the root of your emotion by the poet's honest and bold sincerity and clarity.

Sri Premendra Mitra.
Eminent Bengali Poet & Writer, Calcutta.

The poems of Dr Sudhir Bera are extremely courageous and bold. The language is clear and simple and touches the heart.

Dr. Balaichand Mukhopadhyay (Banaful).
Eminent Poet & Writer, Calcutta.

Dr. Bera's poems simply startle the reader by its excellence. These are unique and unparalleled in their height as well as depth. Expression is eloquent. I would have life's deprivations, if I had not read his poems. I have often felt that he is the poet who is the soul of my soul.

Dr. Manmatha Ray (Natyakar)
Eminent Dramatist &, Writer, Calcutta

His countrymen should be grateful to Dr. Sudhir Bera for the high esteem he has earned for the country in the field of Poetry which none in India but Rabindranath Tagore could ever achieve

Dr. Asutosh Bhattacharya
Former Professor & Head of the Department,
Bengali Language and Literature,
Calcutta University.

POETRY IN INDIAN LIFE
Speech delivered by Dr. Sudhir Bera
Indian Delegate to the 3rd World Congress of Poets
at Baltimore, USA on June 24, 1976

Mr. President and Fellow Poets all over the world,

I deem it a proud privilege to get this opportunity to address you a few words and to read out some of my poems.

At the outset, I would, however, plainly confess that I could have expressed myself better in my own mother-tongue which is Bengali.

In our country, we are not only not encouraged but positively discouraged to write in any language other than in our mother-tongue especially in the field of creative literature.

But as you would not understand my language, I am to speak in English because that is the common language between you and me without which communication will be impossible.

You would, however, agree, I am sure, that translation of anything from one language to another is an extremely difficult task, but translation of poetry is almost an impossibility because the feelings, sentiments, emotions and pathos can never be translated from one language to another. Moreover, the poetic atmosphere, the background - all these can never be translated! How can I make you understand, my friends, what a rainy season in Bengal is ! And unless you know that, you cannot, I am afraid, really appreciate a Bengali poem on rainy season.

I have however, tried to translate my poems into English to the best of my ability. But, to be frank, my personal view is that my poems in English has only ten per cent of what I have been able to express in Bengali which is my mother-tongue.

I, however, am not very much worried because you are all poets and can well supplement from your imagination the balance of ninety per cent and reach nearest approximate evaluation of the poems. I personally believe that 'language of poetry is from heart to heart and is far deeper and wider than any other. It is different from language of alphabets which acts as a barrier between man and man.' Let that barrier of language be broken, Oh Poets ! And let us resort to the language of poetry!

I come from India, more specifically from West Bengal and Calcutta. I think, and would also request you to think, that the Indians, and particularly the Bengalees, are born poets whether they write poetry or they do not write poetry because the Indian civilization, culture, religion and literature are all in poetry. The Vedas, the Upanisadas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Gita, the works of Kalidas and Bhababhuti and other writers are almost all in poetry. Is it not a wonderful thing!

This poetry of the Indian life has never gone though thousands of years of political strifes and economic debacles have repeatedly overcome her. Poetry is part of our being. We are, so to say, born, and we die, in poetry. When we are born, our ceremonies are in Sanskrit hymns which are nothing but poetry. When we die and the final curtain is rung down on the drama and the dream, we do the woeful passing away ceremony in Sanskrit hymns which are nothing but poetry. Perhaps you will find nowhere in the world such-intertwining of life and living with poetry. When joys and sorrows mingle with each other, and tears dissolve into laughter and laughter dissolves into tears, poetry of the Indian life becomes manifest!

You might perhaps be interested to hear the origin of poetry which underlies all the life and "Sadhana" of India. I will tell you that story. A great dacoit, named "Ratnakar", used to kill men and took everything in their possession. He had been doing this for years and his cruelty roused even the Gods Who generally, if not maliciously or motivatedly, sleep over human sufferings and agonies. One day God Brahma Who, according to the Hindu mythology, is the Creator and His associate Narada, a sage, came to this earth and wanted to do something about the notorious dacoit Ratnakar. They took the guise of two Brahmins and went to him. Ratnakar approached them and was going to kill them with his mace. They said to him that they would gladly die in his hands only if he could answer their one question. Ratnakar agreed. They asked : "You are doing sin by killing men but why are you doing such sinful things ?" Ratnakar replied : "I earn by killing men and maintain my parents and wife and certainly they will share the sin, if any, with me". The sages in disguise requested him just to go to them and verify if they would agree to share his sin. He thought that his preys were clever enough thus to send him away to

find chance to escape. The sages told him "We would be waiting till you come back and if you don't or cannot believe our words, then, all right, you tie both of us in the nearby tree and go quickly and get the answer and come back."

Ratnakar, the dacoit, tied them in the tree nearby and almost ran to his house.

He first went to his father, Chavana, a great sage. Ratnakar asked him : "Would you not, Oh father, share sin committed by me in killing men and thus make earnings thereby with which I had been maintaining you?" Chavana became furious at this and said that it was his duty to maintain old parents but how can his sin be shared and that they had not asked him to rob or kill. At this, Ratnakar got immensely perturbed. He ran to his mother who was a very affectionate lady. He asked her if she would share his sin committed by killing men in order to earn to maintain them. The mother cried and cried but said that nobody can share sin.

Then Ratnakar went to his wife and said, "Oh, my darling, are you going to share my sin which I commit by killing men to earn to maintain you?" The wife got extremely perplexed. She said, "My darling, I am to be maintained and looked after by you and that is your duty. But how can I share your sin?" And she started crying.

Here I must give you some background of Indian social life in order to facilitate your understanding of the story.

Our concept of marriage is entirely different from yours. At least that was some time back. Now of course, there is going on constant inter-mingling of east and west because the world has become smaller and overlapping and mingling of ideas are constantly taking place. In our purely Indian household system, the husband and the wife were married by their guardians and he had to take vow (which again is in poetry) that he would maintain her and that they would live together and for ever. But the system is totally different in your country. Your marriage is essentially a contract between the husband and the wife and can be dissolved easily. Obligations are more or less contractual and not sacramental as ours.

Further, our marriage is not for sex or for the marrying couples only. Our marriage is a social event. We marry, according to our Indian concept, to perpetuate the race of man, i.e. "Prajati" in Sanskrit.

One tree is born from another tree, one animal from another and one human being is born of a human being. We marry to fulfil that object of creation which is perpetuation of progeny.

Another interesting aspect I must draw your attention to. We decorate our girls most beautifully at the time of giving them in marriage. Our dress, according to the Indian concept, is not only to cover the body from heat and cold but to decorate it tastefully. Or in other words, our dress is "Abharan" i.e. decoration and not mere "Abaran" i.e. covering. Excuse me, Ladies and Gentlemen, you ladies with beautiful figures and chiselled angelic faces, might have looked much more romantic in an Indian sari. The fact is that art lies in gracefully hiding rather than in barely exposing everything. Or in other words, art consists in concealing also, though how much to conceal and how much to expose and the technique of both hiding and concealment might differ from man to man, from country to country and from time to time.

We have rambled asunder much: now let us come to the point.

So what I was saying is that in the Indian system, wives were to be maintained by their husbands. Ratnakar's wife had no doubt that she was to be maintained by her husband but as she said she could not share sin of her husband.

Ratnakar, as usual, loved his wife most dearly. When he got no proper answer from her also, he became totally upset. He returned hurriedly to the sages and cut the ropes from the tree and released them and told them what had happened and begged desperately to save him. The sages asked him to go to the river and have his bath. He at once did that. The sages then sprinkled holy water on him and asked him to continue incantation "RAMA". But as Ratnakar was a great sinner, he could not utter the name of "RAMA". He started with "MARA MARA MARA" and this in course of cycle became "RAMA RAMA RAMA."

Ratnakar sat and started this way. He continued this way for years, how many nobody knows. Then one day, Brahma and Narada wanted to see what had happened to Ratnakar. They came and heard to their surprise "RAMA RAMA RAMA" from under a mud hill of white ants. They removed the white ants and pulled him out and asked him to take his bath and bade him write the "Ramayana". He expressed

his inability to venture such a thing. How to write, about whom to write - were baffling propositions to him. The sages asked him to write about RAMA who would be a man but all the qualities of God would be manifest in him. Thus one comes to the concept of apotheosis of man which, we all know, formed the basis of Renaissance of a much much later age, and this apotheosis of man started in India right from the birth the Ramagana.

Now an interesting thing happened. The sages had vanished. Ratnakar was pacing up and down pregnant with emotion and agony. At that moment two birds, "Kreuncha" and "Krounchi" were lovemaking and a hunter shot an arrow which killed one of the birds. The other bird started wailing. At this pitiful sight, a poetry suddenly came to the lips of Ratnakar :

"Ma Nishada pratisthang tama gama saswati sama,
Yat Krounch mithunadekambodhi kama mohitam."

It was in Sanskrit and the meaning is :

"Oh hunter You have killed one of the two birds while they were lovemaking. You have committed a great sin and you will never find recognition in society."

At this sudden outburst of "sloka" Ratnakar became overwhelmed and became poet "Balmiki". Thus a great dacoit became the first poet and the first poetry was born. Poetry simply came to him. Poetry is a thing which comes from within. It cannot be taught or done by endeavour. Real poetry is 99 percent inspiration. The Vedas, according to the Hindus, were revelations and these were excellent poetry. We are all poets here - we all know how poetry often comes and then we cannot simply stop it.

Now let us look back a bit. Ratnakar, the dacoit, was newly born as Balmiki, the poet, who wrote the Ramayana, an unparalleled masterpiece of the world. You might be interested in knowing the last sloka of the Ramayana :

"Yabat sthasyanti giraya saritascha mahitale
Tabat Ramayana katha lokeshu pracharishyati."

Which means:

"So long there will be the mountains, the rivers
and the earth, the Ramayana will exist".

A similar sloka was also there in the Mahabharata :
"Yadihasti tadanyatra yannehasti na tat kvachit."
which means:

"What is there in the Mahabharata may perhaps be found elsewhere but what is not there in the Mahabharata is to be found nowhere in the world."

It is indeed a strange thing that in the fields of "Dharma", "Artha", "Kama," "Moksha", the Mahabharata has covered almost everything,

Thousands of years have passed but the prophecies of the poets have stood. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata have remained not only an inseparable part of life and living of hundreds of millions of Indians but they have shone in all brilliance revealing eternal truths for mankind.

But what is most significant in the Ramayana is that the dacoit, who unhesitatingly killed men, could not now bear the killing of a bird and herein lies the birth story of the poet and his poetry.

Another important thing, I must draw your attention to. In India "Rishis", i.e. Sages and "Poets" were synonymous. Truths were revealed to the Rishis who expressed them in poetry. Or in other words, truths revealed to the Rishis emanated from their lips in the form of excellent poetry.

Even today, if you think a bit dispassionately, you will see that imagination precedes all work and invention. In that sense, a scientist or a technician is also a poet. I told you at the outset that you may be a poet without writing poetry and I maintain that technicians who made the Cantilever Bridge at San Francisco or invented television must have greater imagination content in them than many who scribble poems in the popular sense. My contention is that it is the imagination that forms the poetic background which is indispensable for any big or great invention, discovery or work. When Columbus looked at the endless blue waters of the ocean, he had in his imagination some picture of countries which were later discovered. So poetry is as old as man himself and will never leave him.

I come from Bengal, as I have already told you, where Rabindra Nath Tagore, the Poet of the World, was born. He wrote his Nobel Prize winning "Gitanjali" and hundreds of other works in Bengali. It is

his writings in which has been manifest which is best in Indian life, culture and civilization. It is in his writings that truths of life and love are manifest, nature and man supplement each other, man and man become brothers.

Oh! Fellow Poets! I am proud that I am a poet. I am proud that I am here in your midst. Don't we often feel life is so good, so glorious and so meaningful in spite of sufferings and anxieties ; the earth is so sweet, the light is so welcoming and the air is so embracing. The blue of the sky, the green verdure of the forest, the murmur of the rivers are meaningful only to life. Or in other words, life with all its manifestations, aspirations, pulsations, fancies, fantasies and realities, is itself a big poetry really comprehending many things. And indeed life is a masterpiece of poetry and we the poets are inseparable part of life. So long there will be life, the earth will never lose its poetry.

POETRY FOR PEACE
Speech delivered by Dr. Sudhir Bera, D. Litt.
Indian Delegate to the 4th World Congress of Poets
at Seoul, Korea, in 1979

Mr. President and Fellow Poets the world over,

I am indeed happy to have this unique opportunity and privilege of opening my heart to you.

I was hearing with rapt attention excellent speeches made by my predecessor speakers and I was moved by their scholarship, erudition and eloquence. Many of you have indeed pinpointed the problems and suggested solutions which are extremely sensible, pragmatic and of far-reaching consequences.

But, to be frank, excuse me, ladies and gentlemen, the approach to peace from the western point of view has been essentially a negative one. The horrors and devastations of war and the fear of their recurrence have led the West to turn to peace and decry war. Standing on the ruins of war at Berlin or atomic horrors at Hiroshima or Nagasaki, one cannot but turn to peace. And to my mind, that is, at its best, a negative approach to peace. I have, honestly speaking, very genuine apprehensions that the Western Countries, which are speaking of peace, are not really averse to war as such ; they are speaking of peace, but are keeping their powder dry, so to say, to start war as soon as they will feel they are in a position to win. Or in other words, the western peace is nothing but a camouflage or a strategy at its best. Indeed the history of Europe has been a history of constant warfare since its beginning.

I come from India, where, I must tell you, concept of peace was a positive one and that concept originated right at the beginning of Indian Civilization and has since held steadfast in spite of thousands of years of changes and transformations, political and otherwise. I mean Indian religion, literature and poetry are inseparable from the concept of this positive peace. We start all our ceremonies, rituals, worships or prayers, you might be interested to know, with the words 'Om Shanti', i.e. 'Let there be peace' and we end with the words 'Om Shanti', i.e., 'Let there be peace'. And in between the beginning with 'Om Shanti' and ending with 'Om Shanti' the entire course aims at but one undisturbed and undisturbable peace.

This concept of positive peace, it is really surprising, arose when curses of wars were not known, nor their causes like colonialism, over-population, food-shortage and the like were there.

This concept of, and approach to, peace in India was not peace only between a person and a person, or between a country and a country, or between one period and another period in the sense of peaceful co-existence. It was peace between all men and women, between all beings, animate and inanimate, between the stars and the planets. It is, in its philosophical height and depth, all-pervading peace-cosmic, universal and transcendental. It is the final equilibrium of forces of all magnitudes and all directions.

Lord Buddha, who is according to the Indians, is the 9th 'Avatar' (which term means 'manifestation of God') took up this peace cult to its near-finality. Even today one-third of the world population are Lord Buddha's followers. I am sorry that Buddhism as a religion has not prevailed in India due to a number of reasons but I am sincerely glad that you Japanese, Chinese and Koreans are followers of Lord Buddha and His cult of peace and you never allowed that light of Asia, that is light of peace, to be blown out, however high was the wind or stormy the tempest.

I would with all humility request you to look at the issue from yet another angle and that is very important. There is no denying that in the final analysis it is the human mind which is the citadel of peace as also the second line of defence against war. And it is on the balanced mind that much of peace and war depends.

I would request you to kindly mark the word "balanced mind". As a matter of fact, balance is indispensable for anything in this world of ours and in the Universe. It is only a matter of science that this beautiful earth of ours is hanging in the balance in the space. It is the balance that keeps it as it is. If this balance is everdisturbed what will happen, nobody knows! Where will be we and our aspirations and ambitions if Nature is all balance. It not only ensures balance but corrects any disbalance. Or in other words, balance is the foremost law of Nature. Every body knows what is called ecological balance in nature i.e. how many trees will be matched by how many animals or how many frogs will be matched by how many snakes and like

that. Every body knows what is carbohydrate Metabolism in human body.

The human civilization and history, if I understand aright anything about it, is the product of balance between the head and the heart. We have left behind other beings in our march towards civilization and light not because we have got only a superior brain but because we have also a heart matching with that brain. Not only we could make inventions and discoveries but we could love our children, our family, our neighbours. And this love and affection of ours for our kinsmen led us to build families, clans, societies and empires. It is this love and affection that helps us get over our animality. Or in other words, our heart has a balance with our head on our march ahead. This balanced combination of growth and development of the head and the heart has made man 'a rare species in the Universe of created beings' and has been the cause of our unique progress from savagery to civilization and we have been able to 'build up with much blood, toil and tears this civilization of ours, this history full of achievements of man'.

Now, the Western world has undisputedly developed the head like anything. In science and technology, they have progressed beyond comprehension. But I am sorry to say, and I may be excused for saying this unpalatable truth, that the West has not developed in heart along with its development of the head. So we find, while they had immensely, developed in head, they are lagging far far behind in heart.

There is thus a gross disbalance. And this disbalance, if I may be permitted to give vent to my frank apprehensions, will bring disaster to man not only in his personal life but to the human race as a whole. To put it the other way round, power without heart, strength without kindness, animality without control of rationality, is mechanical and blind, it is Frankenstein that will bring in destruction of its creator.

Thus if we are to survive, and live we cannot depend on scientists or technologists because their inventions and discoveries are-likely to be misused and misapplied by persons in authority having, so to say, no heart. In other words, the heartless authority is a tyrant that will bring in only calamity and disaster to mankind. Nor the Scientists and technologists can generally be said to be so developed in heart that they can resist heartless politicians to misuse them.

So we are to turn to the heart or development of the heart. That can only be done by the poets who overflow the earth with flow of the heart with love, kindness and beauty with sympathy, feelings, emotions and pathos for mankind and manhood.

It is only the poets and their poetry that can save humanity from impending doom threatened by disbalanced development of the head to the neglect of the heart or at the cost of the heart.

The world will have, therefore, to turn to the poets. And if it turns to the poets, it is to turn to India where life and poetry, are intertwined since the beginning of her civilization. And this poetry of Indian life is inseparable from peace which underlies, as I have already said, all our religion, philosophy, literature, life, living and thinking and which is the ultimate goal: 'Om Shanti'! 'Om Shanti'!! 'Om Shanti'!!!

PHOTOGRAPH

DR. SUDHIR BERA

A Profile

Dr. Sudhir Bera, a versatile genius and a multifaceted personality, is nationally and internationally a renowned name for his outstanding creative contributions in diverse fields of poetry, art, culture, literature, humanity, world brotherhood, and world peace.

■ **Academic Attainments** : Dr. Bera had an exceptionally brilliant academic career. He secured full marks 100% in Mathematics in all examinations and his Headmaster of Sonakhali High School, Mednapore District, called him 'Gota' (a Bengali word meaning 'full'). He also always secured 97% marks and above in Sanskrit.

The Headmaster Jadulal Chakraborti, above referred to, gave him a character certificate : *"During my experience as Headmaster in renowned schools of Bengal for well over 30 years, I have not come across a boy of better metal."*

Another Teacher of his, Bankim Chandra Sasmal, MA (double), BT, Ex-MLA, wrote : "Sudhir Bera possesses all the qualities of the head and the heart which are required of a leader of men and things who would build up and guide the nation and show way to mankind and would be a pioneer in the salvation of man. All these qualities, as we have seen, are blooming and blossoming forth in him."

A double MA, LLB, D.Litt., Dr. Bera is one of the most illustrious alumni of Calcutta Presidency College.

■ **Family Background** : Born on 13th August 1929, in village Juakhali, Midnapore in a well known freedom fighters' family of the district. His father Satish Chandra Bera was a nationally reputed Headmaster, mother Simontini Bera was an ideal Indian mother. One of his uncle was shot dead by British Police, another uncle suffered life imprisonment and yet another was taken by British Police never to return.

■ **Freedom Fighter** : He joined freedom struggle while a school boy in the lower classes under leadership of Bipin Behari Ganguli. He was Secretary of the then undivided Bengal Provincial Student Congress (BPSC). Ex-MLA, Ex-Justice

of the Peace, Dr Bera is Vice-President of All India Freedom Fighter Samiti and Secretary-cum-Executive Trustee of National Martyrs Memorial Trust with office at Bhubaneswar.

■ **Career** : After independence Dr. Bera started career in the West Bengal Civil Service which he resigned voluntarily and started practicing law. Soon he became an outstanding Advocate in the Supreme Court and Calcutta High Court. He was Counsel of Indira Gandhi in P.M.'s Poll Appeal Case in the Supreme Court in 1975.

■ **Erudite Scholar, Essayist and Writer** : Erudite scholar, essayist and writer, Dr. Bera was Editor, Basumati Sahitya Mandir, a world famous Publication House started with blessings of Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, publishing world classics in Bengali language. Edited the Mahabharata translated into Bengali prose by Kaliprasanna Singh and revised by the great Vidyasagar. Dr. Bera's introduction in the 5th volume of the Mahabharata created tremendous impact on the reading public. He was a prominent writer of Bharat Kosha (Encyclopedia India in Bengali language).

■ **Humanist and Thinker**: A humanist and thinker of World renown. Dr. Bera's lines of thinking are opening up new horizons before the World. Special themes of Dr. Bera's study and research are dimensions of World Change. In the changing world, societies and civilizations are undergoing incessant changes and transformations through processes of evolution and revolution and how far those changes and transformations are original and how far those are resultant effects of action, reaction and counter-action are the themes of his study.

Dr. Bera believes that man is the measure of all things and this civilization of ours which is built up by blood, toil and tears of generations, is the proudest of achievements of man. His love for mankind is sincere and his pathos for manhood deep. According to him, "there is a basic human unity in spite of surface and superficial differences and contradictions of country, colour, religion, language and culture. And the way out of the agony of the torn and divided world, which it is today, lies in building up one world by expanding the horizon of human understanding and that can be done only through

literature and poetry." "It is only then," according to Dr. Bera. "that World Brotherhood and World Peace would no longer remain a millennium and dream for One World would come true."

"With keen powers of organization and a humanist and thinker he has a clear insight into the quickening pace of social changes and human relations "

Amrita Bazer Patrika.

■ **Journalist of International Prominence** : Dr. Bera was Associate Editor, Daily Basumati, Chief Editor, Finance and Industry. Special Representative of Asia World in the Far East countries. His features "Darshaker Chokhe" and "Atha Bengama Bengami Katha" in Pseudonym "Sri Rajputra" earned immense popularity. Dr. Bera is Member of the Institute of Journalists (MIJ), London, national President. Forum for All Media Men, President. Veteran Journalists Association, West Bengal and also West Bengal Journalists Association DISHARI.

■ **Poet of International Eminence** : Dr. Sudhir Bera, a world renowned humanist and thinker, is an internationally eminent Poet to whom Poetry is a part of his being. He disagrees with Mathew Arnold who said "Poetry is criticism of life" and eminently establishes in his poems that Poetry is manifestation of life in all its varied and checkered aspects. In his own words, "Life with all its manifestations, aspirations, pulsations, fancies, fantasies and realities, is itself a big Poetry really comprehending many things. And indeed, life is a masterpiece of Poetry and we the Poets are inseparable part of it." *Dr. Bera's speech in the 3rd World Congress of Poets at Baltimore USA, 1976.*

According to Dr. Bera, "Man is a born Poet whether he writes poetry or does not write poetry, because the imagination content which man by birth possesses has separated him from animals. In fact, the day the world of imagination opened before him, he no longer remained animal and that was the date of his birth as man and as Poet. It is this imagination content in man which underlies all his achievements we see today. This imagination content finds expression not only in poetry alone, but all his literary, cultural, scientific and technological inventions and innovations and whatever he does or aspires to do. In Dr. Bera's view, Poets and Scientists and Technologists who are antagonistic to.

and denouncing, each other, particularly in developed countries, possess this imagination content in common and difference lies in their different ways of expression only. While Poets writes Poetry in language of alphabets, Scientists and Architects also build Cantilever bridge in Sanfransisco USA or the Taj Mahal of India which are pieces of poetry and dream in materials and metals and bricks and stones. The only difference is, in Dr. Bera's opinion, while the Scientists and Technologists by their inventions raise the standard and quality of life and living, it is the Poets who overflow the earth with love, pathos, kindness and compassion and make life more loveable and more liveable.

This philosophy and all comprehending approach to life and tilings have been aptly and effectively manifested in, and transmitted through, his poems.

Dr Bera who is almost prophetic in his approach and utterance, rises to a height that knows no limitation of language, time or space.

To quote his own lines :

"The Poet of today is the Prophet of tomorrow"

"Isms are but small and narrow in their broadest"

"Language of Poetry is from heart to heart

And is far deeper and wider than any other.

It is different from language of alphabets

Which acts as a barrier between man and man.

Poetry percolates into the heart

Breaking through all barriers of language and geography."

Themes of Dr. Bera's Poems are novel and manifold. His approach is intimate, direct and bold. His exposition is simple, clear and eloquent. His Poetry excels in height, depth, dimension and projection. Some of his Poems attain epic heights.

■ A DREAM FOR ONE WORLD

Dr. Sudhir Bera's poetical works in English 'A Dream Of One World' with editions and reprints has earned world-wide acclaim.

WORLD OPINIONS on A DREAM FOR ONE WORLD : (placed seperately hereinbefore.)

■ **Books Of Poems In Bengali** : Dr. Bera's books of poems in Bengali: Lagna, Sahana, Surya-Rag, Anyadin, Abhijnan, Jal-Janata-Nari, Nirvachita Kovita volume I, etc. have several editions and reprints.

■ **Books of Children's Poetry** : Ektu Khanik Sonar Manik, Ora Alo, Bang Babaji, Pratham Baba, Yadi Hotem etc. have earned him world renown.

■ **Organisational Achievements** : With exceptional organizing ability. Dr. Bera is at the helm of hundreds of national and international organizations and institutions, professional and non-professional. literary, social, cultural, journalistic, sports etc.

A. NATIONAL

(i) **Literary** : Treasurer, United Writers, Working President of All India Juvenile Literary Conference, Secretary-cum-Executive Trustee of All India Children's Literary Foundation; Vice-President of Nikhil Bharat Banga Sahitya Sammelan. Kolkata Branch, President, Jatiya Sahitya Prakashan Trust. Sevak Sahitya Sansad, Padma Ganga Sahitya Sansad, Akhil Bharat Bangiya Kavi Parishad, Esperanto Di Bharato, Kolkata, Vice-President, Authors Association of India, Executive Member, Authors Guild of India etc.

(ii) **Cultural** : Chief Adviser, Calcutta Festival, Working President, International Baul Institute, President, Akhil Bharat Banga Sanskriti, India Culture Centre, Lokayata Sanskriti Parisad, Indian Puppet Theatre, Chief Adviser, NabayugNatya (Yatra) Co. etc.

(iii) **Educational** : Dr. Bera believes that Swamiji's man-making is possible only through well-coordinated Primary, Secondary and Higher education. He advocates National Educational Policy. He has founded a number of Secondary, High and Higher Secondary Schools. He was founder President of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar College at Betai, Nadia, Rammohan College of Radha Nagar, Hooghly and Mayna College of

Midnapur District (now East Midnapur) got upgraded affiliation through Dr. Bera's effort. He was a prominent leader of International Society for Education through Art (INSEA) Movement and played a decisive role in its activities in this country.

(iv) Journalistic : Ex-Vice President of National Union of Journalists, West Bengal Branch, President. West Bengal Journalists Association DISHARI, President. Veteran Journalists' Association, national President. Forum for All Media Men, President, Jana Sanjog Manch, Associate Member of Public Relations Society of India, Member of Asiatic Society. Calcutta, Member, Institute of Journalists (M1.I), London.

(v) Social Service : President, Gangasagar Mela Seva Samity, Mass Welfare Society, Lokamata Rani Rashmoni Mission, Forum for Rural Development (Jharkhand), Coffee House Social Service Association, Ramakrishna- Vivekananda Manab Vikash Trust, Chief Adviser Aurobindo Udyan, Diamond Harbour, President, Jatiya Arta Tran Samity, Patron*in Chief, Paiker Vani Vidya Varati.

(vi) Sports & Games : Chairman of Organizing Committee of XXI National Championship of Weight Lifting & Body Building, India, Chairman, XIX State Boxing Championship, Founder President, West Bengal Archers Association, Founder Vice-President, All India Archery Federation, President, West Bengal Tae-kwon-Do Association, Chairman. XIX National Tae-Kwon-Do Championship, President, Simulia Athletic Club, Kolkata.

(vii) Great Men's Commemoration : President, Ram Mohan Smriti Sanrakshan Samiti, Lokomata Rani Rashmoni Bicentenary Celebrations Committee, Biplabi Rashbchar Bose Centenary Committee, Bipin Behari Ganguli Centenary Committee, Dr. B.C. Roy 80th Birthday Celebrations Committee etc.

B. INTERNATIONAL

Chancellor, World Poetry Society (1976-78). Treasurer. International PEN, West Bengal Branch, Fellow, International Academy of Poets (FIAP), and also Fellow, International Bio-graphical Association (FIBA), Fellow of World Literary Academy (FWLA). Cambridge, UK, Annual Associate (AAABI) & Research Fellow. American Bio-graphical Institute, USA and its international Adviser, Member, International Parliament for Safety & Security, Secretary, World Constitution and Parliament Association, All India Branch, International Adviser, Cultural Foundation of Korea, fellow, World Literary Academy (FWLA), Sanfrancisco, USA etc.

■ **Awards** : Awarded title "Medini Gourab" (Glory of Midnapore) in 1976 by men of his district, "Kavi- Surya" in 1980 by Bangiya Kavi Parisad, "AICA" award for 1988 by All India Critics Association for his outstanding contributions in Indian poetry, "Kala Siromoni" for, 1991 as best Indian Poet, "Michael Madhusudhan Award" 1990. "Premendra Mitra Puraskar" 1993, "Rani Rashmoni Puraskar" 1993, "Jibanananda Das Puraskar" 1994, "Saraswati Award" 2002, "Leadership Award" 2002, awarded "Diploma di Merito" by University Delle Arti, Termy, Italy, D.Litt (Honoris Causa) by World Academy of Art & Culture, California, USA, etc.

■ **Represented India** : Represented India at the World Literary Congresses 39th at Tel Aviv in 1974, 42nd at Sydney, Australia, in 1978, at the Pacific Writers Conference at Manila in 1978, and 3rd, 4th, 5th & 14th World Congresses of Poets at Baltimore, USA in 1976, at Seoul, Korea in 1979, at Sanfrancisco, USA in 1981 and at Mexico in 1994 respectively, Delivered lectures in the renowned Universities and learned congregations of the World on diverse topics such as "Population Problem with special reference to Demographic Imbalance" in Michigan University, on "Freedom of the Press" in Buffalo.University, "India's Cultural Heritage" in Rontgen University USA, "Peace Mission of India and Lord Buddha" in Soka University of Japan, "Islam & World Peace" at Kualalampur University in Malayasia.

■ **Who's Who In the World** : For outstanding contributions in diverse fields of Art, Culture, Literature, Humanity, World Brotherhood and World Peace, Dr. Bera's biography and achievements find a pride of place in the World famous Biographical Reference Books as under:

International Who's of Who of Intellectuals, Dictionary of International Biography, Men of Achievements of the World, World's Who's Who in Poetry, World's Authors & Writers Who's Who published from Cambridge, UK; Marquis Who's Who in the World published from Chicago, USA; International Roll of Honor published by American Biographical Institute USA; International Register of Personalities published by International University Foundation, USA; IndoAmerican Who's Who, Indo-European Who's Who, Indo-Australian Who's Who, Indo-Japanese Who's Who published from Delhi; Who's Who in India Published from Bombay; Who's Who of Indian Writers published by SahityaAcademi.New Delhi, etc.

■ **Man of the Year**: Dr. Bera has been declared "International Man of the Year 1991-92" by International Biographical Centre, Cambridge, UK and World's "Man of the Year 1992" by American Biographical Institute, USA.

A DREAM FOR ONE WORLD

"The Indian poet, Dr. Sudhir Bera, appeals in his poetry collection 'A DREAM FOR ONE WORLD' to all his brothers and sisters throughout the world to create a world for all mankind; despite their religions, the language-barriers and the colour of the skin. The poet who is— according to Dr. Bera— "the prophet of to-morrow"—must stimulate that creation, because literature and poetry make life and love blossoming and the language of poetry touches people in the heart and breaks through language-barriers. The poet feels that poetry makes the world happier and raises human beings above the level of animality of which we still have trace in us.

Not only in this poem but also in many others, the poet is concerned with life, the existence and the sense of life. He wants to live his life as it is recorded. He does not long for immortality, but wishes to experience life here below intensely. With the same intensity he sees life around him. He compares life's rough reality in a big city, where his "Street Boy" has to keep going and feel happy despite his misery, with the well-educated, but often sickish children, who cannot or dare not shout or have their fling. The poet advocates for vitality and joy in life; for naturalness of the human being in life as it exists though he himself "never got so far as the door to the inner sanctum of what men feel". The poet sees himself as only a small particle in creation. He is aware of his limitations but in his seeking after the highest he can obtain in this life, he is already happy when he has obtained something.

The poet sees the relation with his fellow human beings which is present not only now, but which was pre-existing long before, but hitherto unknown. We only have to wait for the veil to be lifted, the veil of oblivion and then realise that there is and was existing a deep relation and especially between poets—the prophets of to-morrow—which does not disclose itself until the moment of recognition, despite the fact that they traveled the same tray and took the same great pains.

Throughout his work the poet is concerned with mankind, the standard of all things. He loves people and wishes to forge them into unity by means of poetry and literature. In my opinion he excellently succeeds in his attempt to depict in his work the various aspects of man and his life.

Jan Oostveen

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