

UNIT - 2

WORDS

AND

DEEDS



DISCOVERY OF

INDIA BY Pt. NEHRU

PRICE OF FLOWERS

BY P. K. Mukhopadhyay.



DEATH THE LEVELLER

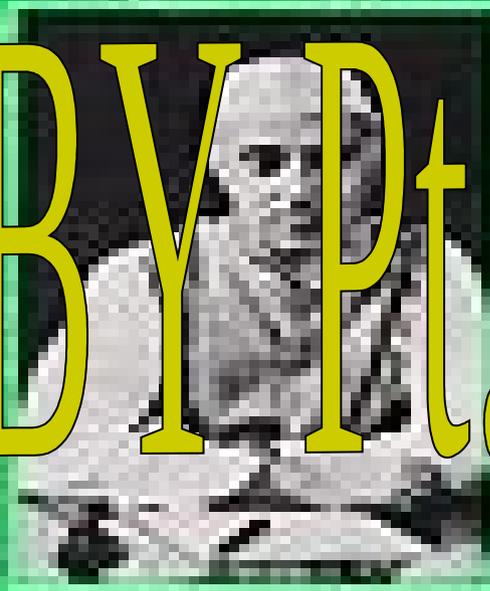
BY James Shirley

OXFORD INDIA PAPERBACKS

CONTEMPORARY INDIA

DISCOVERY OF

INDIA BY Pt. NEHRU



DISCOVERY OF INDIA BY Pt. NEHRU

The Discovery is not merely a chronicle of historical events or a treatise of Indian culture, it is a piece of literature conceived and executed by one who is probably India's greatest writer of English prose." (Foreword, *India Rediscovered*, Oxford University Press)

DISCOVERY OF INDIA BY Pt.NEHRU

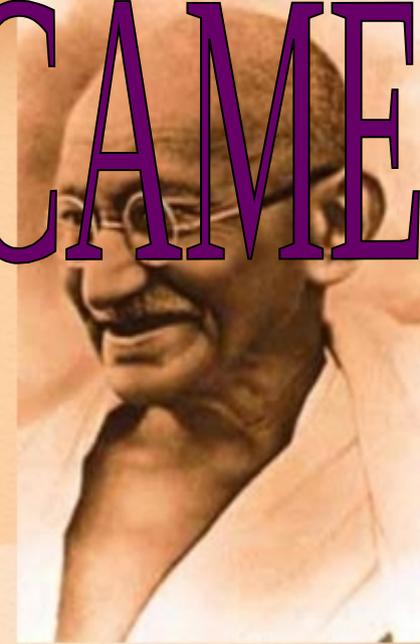


The *Discovery of India* was written by India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru during his imprisonment in 1942-1946 at Ahmednagar in the Ahmednagar Fort. Nehru was jailed for his participation in the Quit India movement along with other Indian leaders, and he used this time to write down his thoughts and knowledge about India's history. The book is widely regarded as a classic in India since its first publication in 1946, and provides a broad view of Indian history, philosophy and culture, as viewed from the eyes of a liberal Indian fighting for the independence of his country.

DISCOVERY OF INDIA BY Pt.NEHRU

In *The Discovery* facts, thoughts and feelings co-exist and create a sort of artistic harmony. Honeyed muse makes whatever Nehru writes pleasant and interesting. He writes English with exceptional mastery, grace and ease. Although he is a lover of words, his style does not suffer from verbosity. It is always limpid, lucid and unaffected. Words are at his command, and he employs them to present his sincere thought and experience in the clearest language. He never aims at artificial glow or forced beauty of words, and is as simple and unassuming in writing as he was in life. The famous dictum “style is the man” is true at least in the case of Nehru.

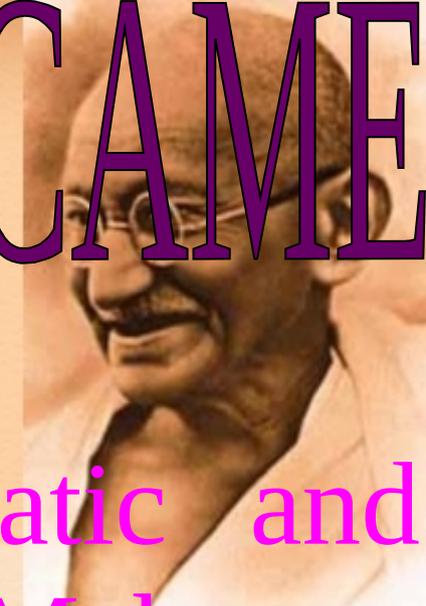
AND THEN GANDHI CAME



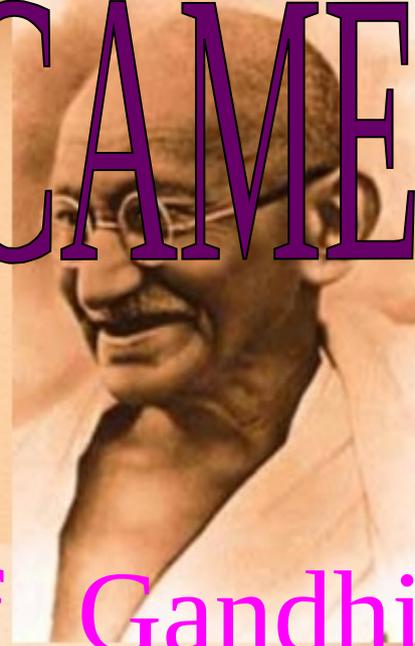
And then Gandhi came. He was like a powerful current of fresh air that made Indians stretch themselves and take deep breaths. He seemed to emerge from the millions of India, speaking their language and incessantly drawing attention to their appalling condition..

AND THEN GANDHI CAME

This chapter traces the dramatic and unexpected emergence of Mahatma Gandhi on the political scene in India in 1918–20. Gandhi initially hovered on the periphery of nationalist politics and later focused on the fight for freedom. This chapter explores how Gandhi managed to dominate the Indian National Congress for the next quarter of a century...



AND THEN GANDHI CAME



The sprawling photographs of Gandhi illustrate how he entered the Congress and made it a democratic, mass organization. The peasants rolled in and the Congress assumed the look of a vast agrarian organ with a strong sprinkling of the middle class. Industrial workers too came in as individuals..

PRICE OF FLOWERS

By P.K.Mukhopadhyay

Gupta was an Indian living in London. Once he met an English girl **Alcie Margaret Clifford** called **Maggie** in a vegetarian restaurant. She was thirteen years old and working as a typist in a nearby office. She belonged to a poor family. She wanted to know if Gupta was an Indian. Her brother **Frank** was in Military service in India. India was supposed to be a land of tigers, snakes and fevers. So her mother was anxious about her son.

PRICE OF FLOWERS

By P.K.Mukhopadhyay

Gupta offered to go with Maggie to her house to meet her mother. He told the mother that she need not worry about her son's safety in India. He was shown a crystal ring sent by Frank. The mother and the daughter wanted him to look into the crystal ring and say how Frank was. But Gupta told them that he would not see anything. Later he became close to the family. He took Maggie out several times.

PRICE OF FLOWERS

By P.K.Mukhopadhyay

One day Gupta received news that Maggie's mother was not well. He went to their house immediately. Maggie told him that her mother was worried about her son and hence sick. She wanted him to gaze into the crystal again and say that the son was safe. Gupta did not hesitate to tell such a lie to the mother. The mother soon became well.

PRICE OF FLOWERS

By P.K.Mukhopadhyay

Later Gupta was shocked to learn that Frank had died in the war. He had died even before the false information was given to the mother. Gupta felt very sad about it. He was leaving for India to take up anew job. Maggie met him before his departure. She gave him a shilling to buy flowers and place them on her brother's grave in Punjab. After she had gone Gupta wiped the tears from his eyes and went upstairs to pack this bags.

PRICE OF FLOWERS

By P.K.Mukhopadhyay

Bitter-sweet: The main character in this story to most would be the narrator but to me it is the girl, a very young girl (whom the narrator calls a “child”), reasonably smart, stuck in a challenging underpaid job to support her poverty stricken family and nursing a lot of hope- that she would become a secretary some day and move out of the slums, that her brother who has gone as a soldier to India would come back alive, her sick mother would become well. Everything about her is bitter-sweet!

PRICE OF FLOWERS

By P.K.Mukhopadhyay

Sacrifice: The most touching part of the story is the girl's sacrifice- though most would see it as something very small. She gives the narrator a few shillings to buy flowers for her brother's grave in India. Do note that this is a girl who can afford a decent meal only on her pay-days, who had dire need of every shilling that life threw her way. Her brother had been a soldier who died in a war but she was a soldier in her everyday life- sacrificing just as unconditionally.

PRICE OF FLOWERS

By P.K.Mukhopadhyay

Spiritual: It is rather satirical but the characters in the story think that most Indians are 'Sadhus' but on a good note- across the world people still associate India with spirituality. After all, India is the cradle of so many religions. The “event” that defines the story is the narrator (a Hindu and Indian) lying to a very sick woman that he divines her son to be alive and well by looking into a crystal ring that a supposedly-holy man from India had given, proves something very profound- Faith is the greatest healer!

PRICE OF FLOWERS

By P.K.Mukhopadhyay

Optimism: Though left unsaid- the girl walks away never giving up. She still holds on to dreams of making her family's life better even though she has additional burden thrust on her after her brother died.

And to all those soldiers in plain clothes, braving the cruel world, fighting everyday battles with a smile, dreaming of a better future even with major disadvantages- I salute you!

PRICE OF FLOWERS

By P.K.Mukhopadhyay

Justify the title of the story.

The title of the story 'The Price of Flowers' is very appropriate. Flowers express our emotions of varied sorts. In our happy moments, they bring us joy and on sad occasions they bring us consolation. Flowers have no price tag. They express our emotional attachment.

Maggie is the central character of the story. Her brother Frank is a soldier posted in Punjab in India. Unfortunately, Frank is killed while fighting on the North-west Frontier. He is buried at Fort Monroe near Dera-Ghazi-Khan in Punjab. Maggie wishes to place some flowers on the grave of her dead brother. Therefore, she gives Mr Gupta a shilling of her hard earned money to buy flowers. Mr Gupta knows that Maggie is a poor girl. She cannot afford to spend a shilling on flowers. So he has a mind to return the shilling. But he realises that flowers have an emotional value. He also realizes that the girl will experience great relief if flowers bought by her own money are put on her brother's grave. He therefore accepts the shilling. He lets the girl have the consolation of placing flowers at his grave as a token of a sister's love for her brother.

The price she paid for the flowers symbolises love, affection, sacrifice and was thus beyond measure. Hence, the title is just and apt.



DEATH THE LEVELLER

BY James Shirley

JAMES SHIRLEY – Biography

Shirley was a respected playwright who survived many upheavals in his lifetime: a personal religious conversion to Catholicism, the English Civil War, the Puritans and Oliver Cromwell, outbreaks of the Plague and exile in Ireland. He and his wife died as a result of privations following the Great Fire of London in 1666

JAMES SHIRLEY – Biography

He was born in London in 1596 and after a good education he took Holy Orders in 1620. His first published work was a romantic poem in 1618, generally agreed to have been entitled 'Narcissus'. However, in 1625 he converted to Catholicism and had to resign his headmaster's post in St. Alban's Grammar School. In order to earn a living for himself and his wife he turned to the theater and began writing plays. His work was influenced by the work of Fletcher and Beaumont.

JAMES SHIRLEY – Biography

In 1636 he went to Dublin where he wrote for the Werburgh Street Theater, reputed to be the first theater in Ireland. By 1642, when Cromwell closed all the theaters in England, Shirley had written 36 plays. In his time, he had a good reputation as a dramatist. His plays were witty and satirical, the themes relating to current styles and attitudes. His poetry was less well known, although this poem, taken from one of his plays, has survived the passing of time. Some of his plays continued to be produced in the 18th century.

This poem is a dirge spoken at the funeral of Ajax and taken from Shirley's play 'The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses.' The death of the mighty hero Ajax makes the poet aware of the essential mortality of humanity. The tone is resigned and fatalistic; death is the controller of all destinies and makes everyone equal eventually. The king and the peasant, the soldier and the slave - all are subdued by death.

There is no reason against Fate....

Early or late

They stoop to fate...

The theme of the poem is that death is something that should not be apprehended or fought but we as humans should understand that death is a reality, and that we should always keep that in mind. Should we find ourselves and the feet of the natural force of death, Shirley is proposing that we should live our lives differently as to not fear death when it comes for us. He is using imagery that forms the depiction of human glory being limited and hasty in the last moments of our lives, before death takes us away, such as in the first stanza, they way the state of war was described might not have ever happened if people knew that they were mortal and would, too, someday die.

STYLE: The rhyme scheme is set throughout the poem of A-B-A-B-C-C-D-D. Shirley uses an oxymoron with the addition of flowers, a symbol nature and peace, to bring light to the pessimistic sequence of death he has displayed throughout the poem, creating a theme. He is using imagery that forms the depiction of human glory being limited and hasty in the last moments of our lives. Death is personified in the poem.

TITLE: *The first four lines of each stanza discuss the concept of human victory and man made notions of success. They also identify that the shadow of death looms in each of these setting. The second four lines of each stanza undercuts all human success with the assertion that death is the termination point for everything we do, hence the title, "The Great Leveller." Shirley believes this to be the critical component in the symbolic meaning of the poem that death is something that plagues mortals and is inescapable.*

