

## Tiya - A Parrot's Journey Home

Pawan Kumar Singh

**Samarpan (2009). *Tiya - A Parrot's Journey Home* (New Delhi: HarperCollins Publishers), pp.174, Rs. 150, ISBN 978-81-7223-832-2 (Spirituality)**

*Tiya* might find two categories of readers: those having no exposure to Vedantic literature; and those having some or full exposure to Vedantic literature. Category one would enjoy reading the book. Category two would visualise while reading the book. A gross look would say *Tiya* is an absorbing story with subtle indications; a subtle look would say *Tiya* is a subtle invitation to explore the very purpose of life. Lessons in the book are like invitations - non-imposing in nature.

Three broad themes emerge from the book. First, it is about inner call challenging one to identify the purpose of life. Second, it is about various facets of life engaged in varieties of entanglements. Third, it is about moving from duality to non-duality, from engagement to indifference, from chattering to deep positive silence, from an attitude of rejection to an attitude of acceptance, and from wavering to stillness. The messages have been conveyed through the story of *Tiya*, a parrot being the central player. Long back, I had seen a painting by Madhav Menon in Thiruananthapuram museum depicting two birds sitting on two branches of a tree. The bird sitting on a lower branch gets subjected to the vicissitudes of life, whereas the bird sitting on an upper branch remains indifferent to the dualities in life. The painting is based on Upanishadic anecdote. The book *Tiya* further helps to understand what preparation and experience the bird on the lower branch needs to have, in order to qualify to ascend to the upper branch.

*Tiya*, the parrot, ordinarily lives a happy life on its banyan tree. There are fruits to eat and there

are friends to chat. It gets an inner call to explore real meaning of life. *Tiya* leaves banyan tree in search of higher purpose of life. *Tiya*, the tender bird, witnesses struggle of all possible degrees. After arduous life-threatening long journey while staying at various places and experiencing varieties of tendencies in the external world, it returns to its own banyan tree with insignificant changes externally and significant changes internally. The author has personified the inner call received by *Tiya* as Hans, the swan that represents wisdom. The major portion of the book is about adventurous journey of *Tiya*. But the message is subtly intertwined everywhere. I would like to make an analogy of this book with the human body. The human body appears to be full of skin but more than 70% of human body is made of water that is not apparently visible. Similarly, the book may appear to be a story; in essence, it keeps reflecting continuously Vedantic profundity, but lightly. Challenging on the self and de-egoisation of self have been continuously emphasised with a soft hammer.

*Tiya* is written in four chapters. Chapter I describes life of *Tiya* on a banyan tree. Chapter II, the longest chapter, describes the adventurous journey of *Tiya*. Chapter III describes continuous companionship between *Tiya* and Hans, one's inner voice. Chapter IV describes *Tiya's* journey while crossing the land of eternity and finally reaching back to the old banyan tree after experiencing a lot of lessons about life.

Various anomalies emerging from an impurity of the mind are operative in this world. Some of them are as follows: those who are powerful

tilt rules in their own favour; what may appear to be attractive at the first sight may be harmful ultimately; instead of rectifying ourselves we keep maligning others; dominants do not allow others' potential to fructify; many are engaged in exhibiting hollow sympathy; some are confined to secluded megalomania; some remain stagnant due to preference for security and passive peace; some love being garrulous fighters; some breathe false vanity and keep suffering from a superiority complex; some prove their points by being abrasive and unkind to others; some are glued in greed; some are captivated by hypocrisy so that their help harms others; some take being a workaholic as a virtue; some want to achieve the goal without paying a price; some are in the business of exploiting others; some are continuously engaged in self-aggrandizement and so on. The book *Tiya* paints visual pictures of such tendencies through prose and takes you to various levels of experiences.

The language of the book is lucid. It flows like a natural stream. It is difficult to keep the book aside before having completed reading. Slang generally detracts from the positive effect in communication, but to know how it can create a powerful impact, this book can be recommended. Use of space among letters in a word, and sometimes no space among words in a

sentence creates a very special effect. *Tiya: A Parrot's Journey Home* is written by Shri Samarpan, a monk of the Shri Ramakrishna Order. I have met him and heard him. He is an excellent speaker. After reading his book, I find him a writer par excellence. Some persons make a simple thing complex. Some can explain complex things well but the technique remains complex. Some develop the art of explaining complex things in a simple way. Thus the message enters through one's right brain or goes straight to the heart. The receiver in this case does not create a wall of his own intellect. Had *Tiya* been a pedantic book on a profound theme, it would have been lost in the bulk of similar books. But *Tiya* is a simple book on a profound theme. That is its uniqueness.

### Author's Profile

**Pawan Kumar Singh** is a Professor in the area of Organisational Behaviour and Human Resource Management at Indian Institute of Management Indore. Apart from OB and HRM, his teaching, training and research interests are in the field of Human Values, Spirituality, Managerial Insight in Literature and Indian Scriptures, Business Communication, and Management Development. He can be contacted at [pawan@iimidr.ac.in](mailto:pawan@iimidr.ac.in) for further discussion.