

K.N.Y. PATANJALI  
Impish Chronicles  
And  
Doggish Dabbler

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**Impish Chronicles**  
And  
**Doggish Dabbler**

First Published in 2008  
Copies: 1000  
Price : Rs. 150/- (Within India)  
\$ 10/- (Outside India)

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KNY Patanjali (Doggish Dabbler)  
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Lay out:  
Lepakshi

Published by:  
SPEARHEAD COMMUNICATIONS,  
8-2-601/B/19, Plot No: 19,  
Bhanu Co-Op. Housing Society,  
Road No: 10, Banjara Hills,  
Hyderabad-500034, India.

Printed at:  
CHARITHA GRAPHICS,  
Azamabad, Hyderabad-20

## **THE MANTEL BEARER OF MILITANT IRONY**

We know that we are venturing for an adventure here - perhaps, a pointless one- by attempting to introduce Kakarlapudi Narasimha Yoga Patanjali, one of the tallest living legends of Telugu fiction. He has been the darling of the Telugu reading populace for the last three and a half decades. He is justly regarded as the mantel bearer of the militant irony in this part of India. As this happens to be Patanjali's first major publication in English, we thought of rendering a brief note of introduction bridging the readers and their author.

K.N.Y. Patanjali

Patanjali hails from Alamanda, a sleepy village from Vizianagaram District of north-coastal Andhrapradesh, India. Gurazada Venkata Apparao (1861-1915), the father of modern Telugu literature, also hailed and launched his historic endeavour for a cultural renaissance at the dawn of last century from this very region. In fact, Patanjali has been dutifully carrying forward Gurazada's mission for the last four decades. Rachakonda Viswanatha Sastri -Raa Vi Sastri- (1922-93), who championed the cause of underdogs of the society through a literary career spreading over fifty years, remains the guiding spirit for Patanjali. Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), Mark Twain (1835-1910) and Gabriel Garcia Marquez (1927- ) are a few men of letters that exerted their influence on Patanjali's literary persona.

Patanjali stood by the most progressive sections of the contemporary social order and 'Spirit of Renaissance' forms the core of his creative gut. One can find a measured blend of this 'moral' attitude and an engaging element of magical realism -or marvelous reality- in most of Patanjali's writings (where dogs demonstrate enviable eloquence and devils exercise exceptional energies of narration). This concoction certainly serves as an elixir of life for the injured emotions of the 'serious readers' who forgot to laugh years ago while freeing the relatively lighthearted readers from the monotony of re-reading the same-old-rubbish for decades. A wise man of the West once observed that 'wit or humor founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd' form as crucial necessities of satire. Patanjali's work stands as a clean and tidy testimony of this tenet.

Patanjali went on publishing a dozen individual books - most of which were collections of short stories and novels. His first publication "DIKKUMAALINA COLLEGE" (A godforsaken college) - an anthology of short stories in Telugu - came out in the early seventies

of the last century. His novella on the institution of Police, 'KHAKI VANAM' (Khaki jungle) won him many laurels. 'GOPATRUDU', adjudged as his magnum opus by critics, gives a close-up portrait of the politico-social process of a non-issue mounting into an issue of utmost significance. In the year 2000 major works of Patanjali were brought as a volume. Osmania University recently awarded a PhD for a research work submitted as an analytical study of Patanjali's works.

Patanjali, a journalist with a standing of 36 years, is the Editor of SAKSHI, one of the largest circulated Telugu dailies. His columns in many news papers and magazines were instant hits. Some of them were brought in the form of a book (PATANJALI BHASHYAM) many years ago. His leaders in different news papers on myriad issues of public concern are also being brought as a book. He also composed prefaces and forewords for works of many contemporary writers.

These two works - "**Impish chronicles**" and "**Doggish dabbler**" -not only represent the caustic and sarcastic tenor of Patanjali but also stand as a proof of his immense love and illimitable regard for the age-old tale telling traditions of India. Thus they occupy a very special place in his writings. While the earlier of them was translated by Mr.Mandalaparthi Kishore the latter was translated by the author himself. We take this opportunity to thank Mr.Ramkaran and Ms.Smitha for their valued help in honing the texts of these translations. We gratefully acknowledge the illustrious cartoonist Mr.Shankar Pamarthi who contributed the caricatures that appear in this book. Eminent advertiser Mr.Ramakant. T endowed us with the illustrations on the cover page. Mr. Lepakshi laid out this book. We thank them too.

It gives enormous pleasure to all of us to be part of this endeavour. With a hope that this publication will endear its readers, we take leave from you.

**-Publishers**

K.N.Y. Patanjali

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# **IMPISH CHRONICLES**



This is the autobiography of a legendary devil, found inscribed upon the countless silky wings of butterflies. I believe this is composed in the language of fiends. Out of sheer love for the art of translation, I ventured to interpret it even though I barely know the alphabet of that dialect. My principal principle in this endeavour of rendition was that there need be no relation whatsoever between the original and the translated text. Hence, a little freedom might have been taken by the translator here and there. I am confident that it will not bother anyone anyway.

- *K N Y Patanjali*



**T**his happens to be my autobiography, but I wish it to be more about others than myself. Do you commend yourself in your autobiography, or do you condemn others? I have contemplated this question for centuries. Finally, I found that the bliss you get from deriding others is far superior to the pleasure you get from praising yourself. Hence, I have decided to dedicate my enterprise to the more appealing alternative.

Whether it be a devil's story or someone else's, an autobiography is best written in a language one is not good at. I'm following that principle because there is every likelihood that this autobiography of mine will be read not only by our devil brethren but by others too. And I also believe that the world can get better, at least to some extent, by reading my autobiography.

I have tried my best to convince millions of my fellow devils about the nonexistence of devils. I brandished that valuable book – which cost me two annas (12 paise) – before them and read out to them the fantastic facts it preached. But they did not care

to believe my words. Instead they tried to deride me and demean my knowledge. Some of them even tried to have me excommunicated. However, I, being of royal descent, was spared.

Although my knowledge is par excellence, I do have to survive among these simple, ubiquitous people. I adopted diplomatic tact and acknowledged the existence of devils. Only after such subtle discretion on my part did my devilish brethren begin to accept me.

Thereafter, I, a devil born by the blessings of Lord Shree Anjaneya, have been showered with reverence. They may call me bloody names in my absence but none will ever say anything to my face.

The first thing I should like to state about Me is that I have never believed in the existence of devils. Because I know for certain that there isn't a devil – not now, nor ever. As I told you earlier, I bought a book for two annas in my childhood and studied it cover to cover. Thus did I come to know that there are no devils. Since then I have spent the whole of my life arguing with fellow devils against the existence of devils. It took me a long time to realize the truth that everything but myself is untrue. It has been a long time since I came to this realization. The day I did, I also realized the greatness of the knowledge I gained from that two anna classic.

At the time this wisdom dawned on me – which was about two and a half hundred thousand years ago – there used to be two types of devils. The bald and the bushy. As I grew older, I could identify two more types. The brainies and the brainless. And a

little later I detected three more types. They are the bushy-brainless, the bald-brainy, and the bald-brainless.

\* \* \*

I stopped my autobiography at this point and went out on an errand. When I returned, I found my Maama (maternal uncle) reading the manuscript. He beckoned me closer and caught me by the ear.

“What’s this silly scrawl?” Maama said.

“Is this the way one should write?” he admonished.

“There are a thousand and odd fools available in the world to scribble the truth in a realistic manner, dear,” Maama explained.

“So you write about yourself in an autobiography?” he jeered.

“That too in a realistic way?” Maama laughed.

I was a bit offended. And slightly irritated.

“Don’t I have the right to write whatever I like?” I protested.

“Not only has you, no one on the face of this earth had any such right!” he asserted.

“I must write to the liking of someone else and you must trumpet to my tune. That’s the rule,” he said.

“But did you not hear the story of that poor mimic parrot which heeded others’ advice and wasted its artistic flair?” I asked.

My Maama was stunned.

“So, such things do happen?” he asked.

As my Maama recovered from his daze, I narrated to him the tale of the mimic parrot.



## **THE PARABLE OF THE MIMIC PARROT**

Long, long ago, a youthful parrot lived in the woods of Golkonda. It was a handsome and graceful bird. The deity of the woods was pleased with the grace and good looks of the parrot, and one fine morning appeared to the bird.

'You are so elegant, my dear parrot. I grant you a boon.'

The parrot was delighted and paid rich obeisance to the deity. Naturally, the deity's pleasure multiplied.

'O great deity of the woods, I am immensely indebted to you for the benevolence you have bestowed upon me. I wish to be a mimic bird with no peer. That's all I ask,' begged the parrot.

'Let it be so!' said the deity and vanished.

That was the turning point in the life of the parrot. It learned to roar like a tiger and bray like a wild ass. It sang like a cuckoo and neighed in the manner of a horse. It could bleat like a wild goat. In fact it learned to make, with practically no effort, the sounds of every creed of wild life.

For some time, the mimic earned the effusive praise of its flock. It was lost in ecstasy as it sang in the voice of every kind of bird and spoke the speech of every kind of wild creature. Except that of a parrot.

Taking note of its inability to speak its own language, the elders of the flock sent word to the mimic. 'We are happy that you are able to produce myriad melodious speeches,' they said. 'But we are sad that you have ceased to screech like a parrot. Therefore, we direct you to live and speak like a parrot hereafter. However, you are permitted to entertain us with your talent during fairs and festivals.'

The mimic parrot was terribly hurt and went into a sulk on a lonely twig.

'What's so great about a parrot that sings like a parrot and an ass that brays like an ass? What is artistic about it? Isn't there someone in this great community of parrots who appreciates my flair? Is there no one with a taste for grace? Isn't there at least one creature that is sensitive to the mystic beau-

ties of art?'

As the mimic parrot sulked and moped, a tomcat scaled up that very tree. The parrot noticed this and roared like a tiger, sang like a cuckoo and meowed like a cat.

The tomcat approached the mimicking parrot. 'O great parrot! I humbly acknowledge your superiority. Till now I had been thinking that parrots were meant for me to gobble up. I never thought that they can be such magnificent entertainment. I appreciate you. You are really great. And, if you don't mind, would you kindly accompany me home? I shall provide you a splendid cage and serve you all kinds of nuts and fruits. Live safely in my cage and show off your art of eloquence in whatever manner you may. I shall also appoint security personnel who will safeguard your wellbeing against my fellow cats,' said the tomcat. The artistic bird was moved to tears.

'My dear cat, I am jealous of your taste, which my fellow parrots lack. I am glad that there is at least one creature which recognizes my talent. I shall gladly follow you. I am confident that there cannot be any threat to me from those who love and value art.' So saying, the parrot went and settled down happily in the court of that cat.

The tomcat developed a special liking for the parrot. It began to spend most of its time in the company of the mimic bird and heaped praise on it. It conferred distinctions on it such as Prince Parrot, Mimicry Maestro and Revolutionary Birdie.

Many years passed thus. Suddenly, the tomcat

**End of Preview.**

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