

Foreword ...

THE POETICS OF SATISH VERMA : A CASE OF SPIRITUAL STUPIDITY... DIVINE DUPING...

I usually don't watch T.V. Not that I don't want to: the T.V. remote, in fact, belongs not to me but to my little fairy. And the cartoon Network is all and always that is on. The other day, however, I was almost dragged by her to watch 'Mr. Bean' on the CN. If my memory fails me not, it was something about Mr. Bean celebrating Christmas. Mr. Bean, an innocent bachelor is more of a fool and an obstinate child combined than a scheming counterfeit. But the foolery he commits or performs to commit and the way he performs suggest a pinch of pathos verging on the periphery of deep perennial philosophy. The fool has his moments of suggestions of metaphysical musings. May be the script writer or the actor does it all unconsciously – a marvel of 'unpremeditated art' and the suggestions, thus conveyed during the performance, belong to the onlooker's sensitive, imaginative receptivity. So what? A suggestion is the suggestion. And the suggestion is Mr. Bean is Shakespearean, Learean, in fact.

Back to Mr. Bean celebrating Christmas. A particular shot caught my attention and left me pondering over the suggestion it had clicked. Mr. Bean all alone in a small den -- and that too on Merry Christmas which is a metaphor for sheer bliss of togetherness -- entertains himself, takes a Christmas Card, licks the edges of the envelope, once, twice thrice, then presses it, suddenly turns around, opens the door and from the slit drops the same card inside the room, comes back, pretending to have discovered a friend's wishes so unexpectedly and so suddenly picks up the envelope and is elated – fooling no one but himself. And the poetic bonus is that the onlooker, too, is entertained and amused. The amusement is born not out of empathy but out of dissimulating distance. The anti-mask funs around and funs with the mask. The mask is exposed by the anti-mask. Such exposures lead to laughter not unmixed with a pathetic irony.

The experience of reading the poetry of an unknown – or partially known – poet, though highly talented like Satish Verma is