CHAPTER V

THE CONCEPT OF MOKSHA OR SELF-REALIZATION

IN THE NOVELS OF R. K. NARAYAN

“To discover one’s true nature is self – realization and this is equivalent to true freedom. The process of self – realization entails mastery over one’s ‘lower’ nature.” (1)

_Bhagvad Gita_ and its _Karma_ philosophy regard self – realization or enlightenment as the ultimate goal in a man’s life, although the methods for the attainment of this goal may vary from man to man. Soul i.e. _Atman_ acquires unanimity with the Supreme Soul or Almighty who is _Paramatma_ or God. This concept is represented by the well known saying ‘That thou art’ (tți Tvm\ Ais ) and ‘I am Brahman’ (Ah> b/HmaiSm) (2) The explicit identification of _Brahman_ and soul is vividly postulated in the various schools of Indian philosophy. The aim of life as conceived in the Upanishads and other holy scriptures is to overcome congenial ignorance i.e. _Avidya_, by attaining full enlightenment or _Gyana_. Prof. M. Hiriyana also sums up this essence and pith of Indian philosophy as:

“The goal of life, as already indicated, is the attainment of release (_Moksha_) from the empirical state of _Sansara_ and the recurrent round of birth and death. It is becoming _Brahman_, or what comes to the same thing, the realization of one’s own true nature.” (3)

Thus, _Moksha_ is a state of moral and intellectual perfection transcending the distinction between good and evil, between doubt and faith,
between being and non-being. This goal is attainable in present life as per the teachings, sayings of the Upanishads and “it is known as Jivan Mukti or liberation while still alive.” In the end, when the individual who has reached this stage, dissociates himself from physical accomplishments, he becomes Brahman itself; that is final release or Videha – Mukti.

However, only a few people succeed in attaining complete enlightenment, majority of the people are mainly the seekers. The Upanishads have classified these people into two broad categories. Firstly there are the people who follow the right path and secondly there those who yield to natural passions for want of self control. The first category of the people ultimately attains release from the cycle of birth and death. M. Hiriyani writes in his book Essentials of Indian Philosophy:

“The former category progresses from one state of existence to a higher without returning to the world of morals, until at last they find release from the cycle of births and deaths. This progressive realization (Karma – Mukti) of the ideal of life is what some Vedantins consider to be the sole form of release in the Upanishads.”

R. K. Narayan’s fiction corroborates with this eternal view of self – realization as well as the contents of Indian philosophy. This concept of attainment of Moksha as found in Indian philosophy is artistically incorporated in The Guide and The Man Eater of Malgudi. Narayan’s birth and upbringing in a traditional Brahmin family further substantiates this indelible mark of Hinduism on his personality and writing. Narayan is not inclined to the study of his novels as social documents. He writes:
“A novel is about an individual living his life in a world imagined by the author performing a set of actions (up to a limit) contrived by the author. But to take a work of fiction as a sociological document could be very misleading.” (7)

Narayan specifically mentions that there is “a nucleus of absolute truth in all my novels.” (8) This truth is conveyed and portrayed in different ways and in various colours with the aim to regenerate the consciousness and sensibility of the Malgudians, the common readers.

In one of the interviews Narayan already avers that one must have roots in family and religion. (9) This reiterates the argument that the author has perceived the significance and remedial impact of religion on human life. William Walsh eulogizes Narayan for embodying this pure spirit of Hinduism in his fiction:

“Again, one must say that there is deeply in Narayan the profound Hindu conviction, or instinct for the fundamental oneness of existence. But this sense operates in harmony with a quick feeling for the instantaneous present: an appreciation of the multiple and dispersed nature of existence. The tension between the one and the many, a sustaining theme of Hinduism, operates quietly and unpretentiously throughout Narayan’s fiction.” (10)

In Narayanian fiction God is always in His Heaven and everything is well under his benevolence. The author takes the optimistic view of life in accordance with ingredients and ingenuity of Indian philosophy, which always traces the will of God in all matters, actions and consequent results. This unflinching faith in the existence of God is displayed by almost all the
characters of his novels. There is concern, some kind of sadness in his fiction at the human capacity for victimization and deception but it is never expressed with sourness, bitterness, disgust or anger. The novelist allots sufficient time to the protagonists to acknowledge and trace their frailties and eccentricities. His protagonists travel from one stage of life to the other where they attain Moksha. In simple terms, it is a stage where one sheds one’s illusions, attachments and succeeds in merging his self with the universal self.

This stage of Moksha, although a very difficult stage, can be achieved with continuous practice and unflinching faith and devotion to God. William Walsh writes in this regard, “The complex theme of Narayan’s serious comedies, then, is the rebirth of self and the process and conditions of its pregnancy or education.” (11) Thus, Narayan’s comedies are also concerned with the theme of self – illumination though in different ways and manner. Margaret Berry writes:

“But this very complexity of roles underscores the larger theme of Narayan’s novels: the search for the True Self underlying the False. Only when characters are stripped of their excesses, attachments and illusions can they emerge on a plane above the empirical. The novels are essentially about this passage from ignorance to knowledge, and not about a linear resolution of events.” (12)
THE GUIDE:

MOKSHA THROUGH THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

The Guide (1958) is R. K. Narayan’s eighth novel. It is also the first novel in English to have won the first Sahitya Akademi Award. The Guide amply demonstrates India from the inside with its undying faith in God and goodness. C. D. Narasimhaiah avers:

“India’s undying faith in God and goodness, holy men and miracles is here rendered quite credibly by the novelist’s art even to the skeptical and questioning mind.”

“Here is India from the inside – Raju is India itself, its astonishing power, and deep inner reserves to revitalize itself and work its way to fulfillment.” (13)

According to K. R. S. Iyenger “The Guide is an advance on the earlier novels” (14) O. P. Mathur is of the view that the novel displays and treats the East–West theme on the more significant level of the unconscious and unobtrusive, the deep and comprehensive influence of the Western mode of life and values upon the traditional Indian society. (15)

David Scott Philip points out that Narayan has depicted Hinduism in the real essence. (16) Raju maintains the dignity and consciousness of Hindu thought in his last days. Vasant Sahani opines that Raju is a curious combination of disparate qualities, a romantic and a realist, a lover and a cheat, a clever manipulator and a drifter. (17)

Narayan has characteristically introduced the concept of attaining Moksha or salvation in this novel. Hindu philosophy considers three stages of
life through which a seeker attains \textit{Moksha} or liberation. These stages are – committing sin, repenting and attaining self-realization. Raju, the protagonist of the novel, passes from these three stages in order to achieve liberation from the world and unity with the Almighty.

Narayan presents Raju, the guide, who lives his life in the pattern devised by Manu in \textit{Manu Smruti}. This pattern of life encompasses four stages – \textit{Brahmacharya Ashrama}, \textit{Grihastha Ashrama}, \textit{Vanaprastha Ashrama} and \textit{Sanyastha Ashrama}. It is through these four stages that Narayan presents a gradual evolution and transformation in Raju’s character. Raju commits fatal sins, repents for his evil deeds and ultimately achieves self-realization.

Initially, in his first stage of \textit{Brahmacharya Ashrama}, Raju is a devoted, obedient and sincere son of his parents. His mother usually narrates the folklores of ‘Devaka’ and many more, and his father gives him elementary education on the pyol. During his childhood Raju has been brought up in a religious environment, which influences him towards the end.

“I washed myself at the wall, smeared holy ash on my forehead, stood before the framed pictures of gods hanging high up on the wall, and recited all kinds of sacred verse in a loud, ringing tone” \textsuperscript{(18)} (p. 11)

Raju’s childhood has been orthodox and rigid. His stern disciplinarian father does not provide him education in the fashionable Albert Mission School because the principles of this institution do not meet with the Hindu values. His father says:
"I don't want to send my boy there; it seems they try to convert our boys into Christians and are all the time insulting our Gods." (p. 25)

It is during his *Grihastha* Ashrama that man finds himself completely bound by the familial and economic bondages. It is here that man commits sins and welcomes all obstacles in his path of salvation. But a true seeker of salvation succeeds in keeping himself away from all bondages and progresses towards his goal. After the death of his father, Raju enters into *Grihastha Ashrama*. He takes over the charge of his family and opens a stationary shop at the railway station keeping in view the students of the recently started Albert Mission College. This bookselling business not only provides financial stability to Raju but also awakens in him the desire for reading.

“During the intervals between trains, when the platform became quiet, there was nothing more pleasing than picking up a bundle of assorted books and lounging in my seat and reading….I read stuff that pricked up a noble thought, a philosophy that appealed.” (p. 49)

Like everyman, Raju with his advanced and revolutionary ideas, novel schemes and adventurous nature grows up to be a resourceful, enterprising, unorthodox, modern young man and becomes a tourist guide. This job suits his temperament since he has an inherent curiosity to know about people and places. Raju, philosopher in disguise at this stage of his life guides the tourists to the scenes and sights of Malgudi, imparting information about the ancient geography and legendry of events in Malgudi. Due to his popularity and skill
tourists prefer him as a guide. Like an expert guide, he comments before the
visitors:

“It must be the source of Saryu mentioned in the mythical
stories of goddess Parvathi jumping into the fire; the carving on
one of the pillars of the shrine actually shows the goddess
plunging into the fire and water arising from the spot etc…” (p. 57)

“I gave statistics out of my head. I mentioned a relic as
belonging to the thirteenth century before Christ or the
thirteenth century after Christ, according to the mood of the
hour.” (p. 58)

Raju’s popularity as a tourist guide is universal. People from different
places, various walks of life contact him for his guidance.

“Do you know how well I am? People come asking for me from
Bombay, Madras and other places, hundreds of miles away.
They call me Railway Raju and have told me that even in
Lucknow there are persons who are familiar with my name.” (p. 59)

The zest for knowledge shapes Raju into a different kind of Narayanian
hero. The quest for knowledge adds wisdom to the scintillating personality of
the protagonist. This potential for knowledge of new things transforms an
ordinary Raju into a ‘Railway Raju’. (p. 55) All Malgudian as well as strangers on
the railway station visit his shop. They inquire the train timings, seek
information about historical places and other relevant information about
Malgudi.
Raju remains a lovable son, a true friend, a marvelous guide and a respectable citizen of Malgudi so long as he follows and adheres to the traditions, social and moral values and customs of the town. His adventure to enlarge his ideal of *Artha* from his ancestral shop to railway shop and then to the profession of tourist guide is supported and praised by all the Malgudians, including his orthodox mother. Raju remains noble so long as he observes the Indian philosophical ideals and ideas with specific limitation.

Raju may even be termed as an anti-hero in the novel. He bears close parallel with Eliot’s Prufrock in the poem *Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. Prufrock is much concerned with outward appearances and is self-conscious about his looks. He explains that “they will say: ‘how his hair is growing thin!’” which insinuates his lack of courage and pride. Throughout the poem he complains about not being able to do what he wants to do to get sympathy from his audience. Like Prufrock, Raju too is initially much conscious about his material appearance and position. He wishes to be financially successful in Malgudi. But in his attempts to achieve this, he goes too far like Heminway’s Santiago. He develops illicit relationship with a married woman, commits forgery and is ultimately paid for his deeds. Both Profrock and Raju display qualities, which are most commonly found in anti-heroes.

Indian philosophy describes the attainment of self-realization as a hard nut to crack. Raju is trapped by the tempting webs of *Artha* and *Kama* and commits sins which debar him from achieving self-realization. The advent of the couple from Madras heralds the illusory or *Mayik* phase of the protagonist’s life. Raju, on the brim of his youth is attracted towards the “lovely and elegant” (p. 65) lady named Rosie at first glance. The magnetic personality
of this post – graduate girl from Madras University who belongs to the devdasi clan stirs the inner emotions of the hero. Her first appearance on the railway station awakens the senses and poetic faculties of Raju’s mind who compares her to a film actress at the very first glance. Raju at once leaves this couple. He says, “I gave some excuse and sent them off to the hotel, and stayed back to run home and tidy up my appearance.” (p. 65) Thus, he wishes to change his appearance to attract Rosie later.

Thus, in the Indian mythological context, the arrow of Kama Deva (19), the God of Love strikes on Raju. Raju’s physical transformation coincides with his inner transformation. He fulfills Rosie’s demand to witness a cobra dance, he engages a clerk from municipal office to reach the house of snake charmer and reaches there with this woman. They enjoy the dance and return back to the hotel in the evening where the couple is staying. This small journey brings Raju and Rosie in a closer relationship, which in the times to come acquires an intimate bond.

According to P. Nagaraja Rao, traditional thinkers of Advaita analyze an object into five factors - reality (asti), intelligence (bhati), bliss (ananda), name (nama) and form (rupa). (20) Name and form constitute the stuff of the universe. The world is a medley of names and forms. They also constitute the concept of Maya in broader sense. Raju is also the victim of this illusion of form and name. The very figure of Rosie arouses his carnal desires.

“…she did have a figure, a slight and slender one, beautifully fashioned, eyes that sparkled, a complexion not white, but dusky, which made her only half visible – as if you saw her through a film of tender coconut juice.” (p. 65)
Raju’s role changes from a guide to a lover and later when Rosie becomes a stage dancer he becomes her manager, trainer, organizer and agent separated from his mother and rebuffed by his uncle. Raju contemplates to market the dance performances of Rosie.

“My activities suddenly multiplied. The Union function was the start. Rocket – like, she soared. Her name became public property. It was not necessary to elaborate or introduce her to the public now…. I became known because I went about with her.” (p. 182)

Raju is entrapped into the illusory world both as a manager of tinsel world and as a victim of it. He has no time to analyze or probe into his actions and thoughts. His hedonistic approach to life takes him thousand miles away from the ground reality. The Indian Charvaka materialistic philosophy is fully operative in his life.

“I showed respect for law by keeping the street – window shut when serving drink to non-permit folk. …We played Three-Cards sometimes for two days at a stretch. …I could get a train reservation at a moment’s notice, relieve a man summoned to jury work, get a vote for a co-operative election, nominate a committee man, get a man employed, get a boy admitted to a school ….all of which seemed to me important social services, an influence worth buying at the current market place.” (pp. 196-197)

The protagonist’s social illusions related to his vision of position and status lead him towards the materialistic world, but Raju forgets the essence of Hindu culture. He commits the cardinal Hindu mistake of falling into the trap
of Maya becoming imprisoned by the passion for attachments and the illusory bonds of self. Thus, it is in this Mayik world that Raju commits the sins for which he repents later during his jail days.

Indian philosophy devises the ways to enjoy Artha and Kama within specific limits and within certain rules and regulations i.e. Dharma. Raju flouts all limits and commits the mistake to possess anything that comes across his way. His possessiveness mainly centers on Rosie and her money. He loses all sense of moral proportion and ends up in jail for forging Rosie’s signature in a foolish attempt to keep her husband Marco out of her memory and life. His high-headedness results in his downfall who has already trespassed the Laxman Rekha or the boundary of Malgudian social order and ethical values. Consequently his downfall is imminent and natural. He disobeys his mother and uncle, cheats his friends, develops illicit relationship with Rosie, misappropriates the funds, exercises influence in a wrong manner, cheats the Malgudians and forges the signature. All these actions violate the social and moral value system of the traditional town of Malgudi. The principle of nemesis operates and the consequences of wrong actions are surely to be delivered.

One of the Sanskrit writers states, “kmaRnugo gC7it jIva 0k:” (Soul follows its Karma) As a matter of fact, what happens in the life of Raju, Rosie and Marco, is the result of their own deeds. It is their inherent weakness or misdeed that brings about their catastrophe. Raju becomes a prisoner not because of some divine agency, but as a logical result of deviation from moral duty. Raju violates the social norms and commits adultery while getting
involved with Marco’s wife. Consequently, the nemesis falls on him. Som Dev remarks:

“At first he grabs the wife of another person, and then he grabs the money. The first unsettles him socially, and the second sees him clapped into prison” \(^{(21)}\)

What Raju does in the novel, is the part of his own will and not that of the providence. Fate stands within the confines of his own doing and will.

The engagement of a star lawyer from Madras can not alter Raju’s ill fate. The Malgudi court sentences him for two years of imprisonment. Raju is degraded in the eyes of his beloved Nalini, his aristocrat friends like the police commissioner and mainly his mother. The remarks of his orthodox mother posit the sanctity of the moral and ethical values in Malgudi:

“She said to me, what a shame you have brought on yourself and all known to you! I used to think that the worst that could happen to you might be death, as when you had that pneumonia for weeks; but I now wish that rather than survive and go through this …”\(^{(p. 231)}\)

This brief span of *Mayik* or illusory world shatters and shocks Raju. He realizes his guilt and mistake, which propels him to take to sainthood after the completion of the prison term.

The Indian view of life is marked by the absence of bitterness at the face of misfortune in the life of people, there is neither a shouting against injustice, nor a railing against God. \(^{(22)}\) *Karma* induces in an Indian a mood of acceptance and understanding as he knows that there is no dark fate governing the universe. One moves by one’s deeds. *Karma* is central to the
Indian philosophy. Raju, the realist accepts his guilt laden existence in the jail, learns to adapt the situation and time and acquires a positive new dimension here. He works incessantly on a vegetable patch in the backyard of the superintendent’s home growing brinjals, beans and green cabbages. This surely indicates his vitality and faith on life accepting life as it comes in its stride. He says:

“I loved every piece of work, the blue sky and sunshine, and the shade of the house in which I sat and worked, the feel of cold water; it produced in me a luxurious sensation. Oh, it seemed to be so good to be alive and feeling all this; the smell of freshly turned earth filled me with the greatest delight.” (pp. 227-228)

Raju enters into the second stage. It is in jail that Raju starts repenting his ill deeds. According to Hindu philosophy, Moksha can still be achieved if man realizes his ill deeds and attempts to clean his mind and soul of all evils. Detachment from the material world and sincere efforts to rectify the sins could win him the spiritual height. Raju too realizes this and like a true seeker detaches himself from all worldly bondages and moves towards the true path of self-realization. Raju’s life in jail is a fine example of a Sanyasi, he likes the prison life and wants to “stay in this prison permanently”. (p. 228) He establishes intimacy and personal rapport with 500 prisoners of the jail. He also gets along well with the prison staff and is respected and adored by all inmates of jail. During respite, he tells them stories and philosophies of life. They often refer to him as “Vadhyar – that is teacher.” Raju, the “model prisoner” (p. 226) is transferred to the superintendent’s office as a personal servant enjoying his confidence. Mani, former secretary of Raju, is his only visitor in the prison, all
other friends and relatives seem to have forgotten him. Mani tells him the news of Rosie’s departure from Malgudi. But Raju maintains poise at this news, which reinforces his internal transformation. There is a great change between Raju who was guarding her memory jealously and the Raju who receives the news of her departure in a stoic manner.

In jail, Raju realizes the hollowness and emptiness of worldly relationship. All his social illusions, wild fancies and corporal attachments disappear due to the new phenomenal change of place confronting him with the abstract realities of life. William Walsh (22) describes Raju as an “institutional figure” who reveals a great adaptability. But more than an institutional figure, he is an experimenter and researcher in his journey of life learning from each situation and incident of his life.

Raju refines and refrains from worldly attachments. This quality of detachment, a cardinal principle of Indian philosophy, develops during his prison life. The prison of Malgudi virtually becomes for Raju a self – realization center, an abode where he reviews his illusions and delusions.

“….I felt choked with tears when I had to go out after two years, and I wished that we had not wasted that money on our lawyer. I'd have been happy to stay in this prison permanently.” (p. 228)

Evolution in the life and personality of Raju is not a mere momentary phenomenon but quite on the contrary, it is a gradual ongoing process that is initiated in jail. All types of culprits listen to his views and are guided by him. Raju shares a spiritual bliss and magnetic moral power with the spiritual Master in A Tiger for Malgudi, the tamer of the tiger Raja. But the spiritual
awakening process in Raju is far more practical and substantial than the master since Raju is taming and guiding the most brutal human beings in jail.

“Whether they were murders or cut-throats or highwaymen, they all listened to me, and I could talk to them out of their blackest moods.” (p. 226)

Opting for the spiritual life after his prison term is therefore an automatic choice that corresponds to the sensibility of Raju. It is during this prison term that he enters into Vanaprastha Ashrama first and then into Sanyastha Ashrama when he comes to Mangla village. There is some ambiguity in the initial portrayal of Raju’s life in Mangla village, but it can safely be concluded that the renunciation of Raju is purely in accordance with his views, ideas and sentiments which have germinated and nurtured due to his introspection in the prison. Raju has distanced himself from social attachments and social circle of urban Malgudi. Now his illusion is of a higher order i.e. the illusion associated with the circle of birth and death. The Vedanta philosophy also recognizes these types of illusions in the form of rope and serpent. (23) The dilemma is clearly visible in Raju’s conversation with Velan on his arrival in the village temple:

“A woman once went wailing to the great Buddha, clasping her dead baby to her bosom. The Buddha said, ‘Go into every home in this city and find one where death is unknown; if you find such a place, fetch a handful of mustard from there, and then I’ll teach you how to conquer death.” (p. 15)

Thus, to “conquer death” is the sole motto of the protagonist who has already realized the futility of the material world and mundane relationships. He desires to interlink his self with the Supreme Atman which is the ultimate
ideal of all the Indian philosophical systems variously termed as *Moksha*, bliss, ultimate reality, *Brahman* etc. So Raju’s renunciation can be termed as *Satvik* in pursuit of this ideal conforming to the dictate in the *Bhagwad Gita*.

![Verse](XVIII/9)

(A prescribed duty which is performed simply because it has to be performed, giving up attachment and fruit, that alone has been recognized as the *Satvik* form of renunciation)

One characteristic feature of the Indian philosophical system is the permissibility of salvation for all humans irrespective of caste, colour and their previous *Karma*. The only pre-requisite is true devotion or *Shraddha* on the part of the seeker. Rishi Valmiki was initially a dacoit, sinner and a liar. He was known as “*Angulimar*”, one who used to cut the fingers of passers-by and wear them on his neck. But he approached God and performed penance selflessly to please God, he obtained the status of a *Rishi* or a realized soul. Similarly Guru Ravidas and the Sanskrit poet Kalidas belong to the same category. Raju too can be atoned and pardoned since he has an unflinching faith in God.

![Verse](IV/36)

(Even though you were the foulest of all sinners, this Knowledge alone would carry you, like a raft, across all your sins.)
Raju finally succeeds in obtaining an equanimity and tranquility of temper and is not unduly bothered by the memories of his past. This calm and balanced approach bears a semblance to a yogic stance.

“Raju said with a philosophical weariness, ‘Such things are common in life. One should not let oneself be bothered unduly by anything.’” (p. 16)

Thus, the possessive and egoistical or Ahankari nature of Raju is totally annihilated. This shift from the self – ego to God is a positive step in the process of his evolution and self – realization. He is one in communion with God who has submerged the ego with this Supreme Ego.

“Velan rose, bowed, low, and tried to touch Raju’s feet. Raju recoiled at the attempt. ‘I’ll not permit anyone to do this. God alone is entitled to such a prostration. He will destroy us if we attempt to usurp His rights.’ He felt he was attaining the stature of a saint.” (p. 16)

His advice to the villagers is to offer everything to God. He ceremoniously placed the basket of edibles at the feet of the image of God and said:

“It’s His first. Let the offering go to Him, first; and we will eat the remnant. By giving to God, do you know how it multiplies, rather that divides? ….” (p. 18)

The status of Raju also changes in the village and his abode is a spiritual center for the villagers. Raju no doubt tries his best to fulfill the aspirations and wishes of his devotees. He grows a beard and reads the Bhagwad Gita, which enhances his spiritual status both inwardly and outwardly.
“He came to be called Swami by his congregation, and where he lived was called the Temple. It was passing into common parlance. ‘The Swami said this or that’ or ‘I am on my way to the Temple’. People loved this place so much that they lime-washed its walls and drew red bands on them.” (p. 91)

Raju, acquiring universality in his personality, discerns the same Atman in all. This slow and steady evolution highlights the Indian philosophical principle of universality or cosmopolitanism. His influence in the village is unlimited. He not only chants holy verses and discourses on philosophy, but he even comes to the stage of prescribing medicine to the villagers. Even people bring to him their disputes and quarrels over the division of ancestral property.

Raju has been described a “spiritual martyr” (26) who finds himself accidentally involved through the misunderstanding of a village idiot in undertaking a fast to propitiate the god of rain. Initially, Raju is not ready for such activity, he feels trapped but later, he resolves to stick to it. He acknowledges his limitations to Velan and consequently declines the preposterous pressure of villagers for undertaking the fasting. It can be opined that Raju is miles away from illusion now. He narrates to Velan the candid story of his life in a desperate effort to explode the legend about himself.

This act of exposing his past reinforces the view that Raju has understood the quintessence of the Indian religion and philosophy. There are no traces of duality or fickle mindedness in his philosophy, the only thing left is the sense of service for the betterment and contentment of humanity. He says, “If by avoiding food I should help the trees, bloom and the grass grow, why not do it thoroughly?” (pp. 237-238) Thus, for the first time he learns the thrill
of full application outside money and love. He plans to perform the fasting and this is the first thing he does in which he is not personally interested.

There is a close parallel between Raju in *The Guide* and Thomas Becket in Eliot’s *Murder in the Cathedral*. Becket in the play is completely transformed from the physical world of pleasure into the world of spiritual glory and wins over the element of evil by his martyrdom. Similarly, Raju who has enjoyed all sorts of material pleasures, dissociates from this material world, renounces all social bondages and ends up a saint who wishes the well-being of all villagers of Mangla. According to Catholic belief, there are three characteristics of a martyr. Firstly, he should sacrifice his life and accept death. Secondly, the death is thrust upon him due to hatred for Christian life and truth and thirdly, he should voluntarily accept death to defend Christian religion and truth. \(^{(27)}\) Initially, Raju does not wish to continue with his role of a saint. Sainthood is thus thrust upon him. But later, he performs fast to please the God of rain. He sacrifices his own life for the villagers.

The interview of Raju, now a Swami with James J. Malone, a Californian film producer, bears the echoes from the *Bhagwad Gita*. Raju is now a *Nishkam Karma Yogi*:

“Let us chat. Okay? Tell me (J. J. Malone), how do you like it here?”

“I am doing only what I have to do; that’s all. My likes and dislikes do not count.”

“Can fasting abolish all wars and bring peace?”

“Yes.”

“Have you always been a Yogi?”

“Yes, more or less.” \(^{(p. 244)}\)
The critics like S. R. Ramteke consider Raju as a fake saint. Ramteke takes Raju’s actions as deception. He writes, “The crocodile, an archetypal symbol of hypocrisy, provides a fitting parallel of the fake saint in Raju.” (28) Raju also invites comparison with Kalo, the protagonist in Bhabani Bhattacharya’s *He Who Rides A Tiger*. Both Raju and Kalo initially deceive the society and are carried away by their deception until a point comes when it is difficult to undo the enormous lies. Meenakshi Mukherjee rightly observes:

“In Bhattacharya’s book Kalo’s deception is a deliberate act of revenge against society. Raju in *The Guide*, on the other hand, drifts into the role of a sadhu willy-nilly, and once he finds himself cast in the role of an ascetic he attempts to perform the act with gusto, partly for the sake of self-preservation, partly because it suits his personality, wonderfully.” (29)

Meenakshi Mukherjee’s views about Raju’s deception does not seem appropriate. It is just a superficial observation of Raju’s action. She ignores Raju’s psychological and spiritual transformation. Although Raju plays the role of a saint initially, he is so much caught and absorbed in the role that he attains the height of a true saint in the end. In the beginning ascetism is entrusted upon him by the people, partly because his outward appearance looked like a sadhu and partly because the people needed a mentor whom they find in Raju. At this time, Raju is also in need of an anchor. He is tired of running. Finally, it is the unconditional faith of the people that gives him the spiritual strength to submit to God’s will.

Raju is a *Nishkam Karma Yogi* in the sense he always promotes the interests, tastes and likings of others by sacrificing his own aspirations and desires. He promotes the research of Marco, the dancing capabilities of
Rosie, the well being of the jail-mates and the villagers, and in the end sacrifices his life for the genuine and universal cause of humanity. He performs all these actions in a missionary and servile mood.

Thus, Raju gains purity of thought and action on the path of Moksha. Gaining absolute control over mind is within his reach now. Gaining control over the five senses is the most difficult part in the life of a human being on the path to attaining Moksha. But it is a goal not unachievable. Raju in the end of life lives with complete control over his senses and lives not for himself, but for the villagers of Mangla.

The Indian philosophy, homocentric and optimistic in its nature upholds the belief that the universe is ruled by an omnipotent and omnipresent power. True prayers, true beliefs, true devotion and true meditation are rewarded by God. Narayan seems to record this essence of the Indian philosophy in the end of the novel. Raju’s sacrifice is blessed with the rain in Mangla and Malgudi. This endorsement of Indian values establishes The Guide as a real mouthpiece of Indian philosophy, culture and religion. The end of the novel is a vindication of Indian rituals, mysticism and spiritualism that are the various manifestations of Indian philosophy. Critics hold divergent views about the ending of the novel but keeping in view the mind set of Indians including Narayan, this end is apt and natural.

The Malgudian society in The Guide is religious, traditional and God-fearing inherently believing in the moral ethics of the Indian philosophy. The Malgudian society does not fully approve of Rosie’s dancing performances, Raju’s mother dislikes a Nag–Kanya or a dancing girl, Macro’s bitter comments on this act of dancing, substitutes the traditional Malgudian bent of
mind. The rural folk of Mangla village are more devoted, innocent and honest. These people recognize the miracles, the seasonal changes, divine order, the coincidence of festivals in the memory of gods etc.

“He (Raju) counted the seasons by the special points that jutted out, such as the harvest in January, when his disciples brought him sugar-cane and jaggery cooked with rice; when they brought him sweets and fruits, he knew that the Tamil New Year was on; when Dasera came they brought in extra lamps and lit them, and the women were busy all through the nine days, decorating the pillared hall with coloured paper and tinsel; and for Dipavali they brought him new clothes and crackers.” (p. 90)

The urban and rural society of Malgudi is intensely religious. It does not believe in an abstract or dry religion but grooms its faith in a living, dynamic religion. These people accept Raju as a saint or spiritual master. Velan reaffirms his faith in Raju after listening to the story of his previous life. The Malgudians do not subscribe to the principle that once sinned is sinned forever, on the contrary, they accrue proper opportunity for the spiritual survival of all.

Rosie, born in a devdasi clan, is ignorant of her patronage. A post graduate in Economics, she typifies the woman liberation movement in India thus moving from the habitual world of deep rooted religion and mystic belief into a world marked by sophistication and cynicism. Rosie is viewed not as the wife of Marco or the beloved of Raju but as an individual with aspirations, desires and volition of her own.
Rosie is a lovely, elegant woman, Raju is bewitched by her charm from the very first day of her arrival to Malgudi. “She was not very glamorous … But she did have a figure, a slight and slender one, beautifully fashioned….” (p. 65) She has an inherent passion for dancing, as she reaches Malgudi, her first question to Raju on the railway platform is, “Can you show me a cobra – a king cobra it must be – which can dance to the music of a flute?” (p. 64) Her devotion to dancing parallels Macro’s love for history. She wants to attain the perfection in the art of dancing. Like Raju, she is also on a quest for self.

No doubt a wronged wife, Rosie might have resisted the physical urge in her if her husband Marco had been a least kind and considerate, but his inhuman intellectual coldness spoils and destroys her innocent love and loyalty to him. Rosie makes the best efforts to be a good wife but her attempts are let down by the high-headedness and hard-heartedness of Marco. Like a typical Indian woman, Rosie endures his idiosyncrasies and finds a friend in Raju. She has a special corner for Raju, but this is primarily due to the fact that Raju helps her in her dancing pursuits. On many occasions she also insults him. In the hotel room, she orders him to go out of their room. She says, “Do you not understand? We want you to leave.” (p. 135) She is willing to compromise with her husband, she is even prepared to leave and sacrifice her dancing career just to please him. She makes her best efforts to regain his faith and love. She says:

“But I followed him, day after day, like a dog – waiting for his grace. He ignored me totally…. I followed him like a shadow, leaving aside all my own pride and self – respect.” (p. 151)

When she asks him, “Have you not punished me enough?” (p. 151), he replies, “Don’t talk to me. You can go where you please or do what you please.” (p. 151)
But like any Indian woman, she says, “I want to be with you. I want you to forget everything. I want you to forgive me.” (p. 151)

Rosie epitomizes an Indian woman oscillating between tradition and modernity. She is a woman in transition who can neither totally break from tradition nor accept modernity. Narayan presents her as a woman with deep faith in the traditional Indian values governed by the Indian ethical code. She tries her best to gain the sympathy and forgiveness of her husband. Despite his indifferent attitude, she addresses him respectfully and regards herself guilty of neglecting her wifely duties. Rosie realizes the absence of Marco, when she was at the apex of her career. She at once orders the copy of the book authored by Marco and laments for her loss. She still has respect for him in a typically Indian manner. She repents and says, “After all, after all, he is my husband.” (p. 201) She also repents for her past follies and says:

“I do and I deserved nothing less. Any other husband would have throttled me then and there. He tolerated my company for nearly a month, even after knowing what I had done.” (p. 201)

Rosie represents a traditional Indian woman in her desire to study “ancient work of art, the Natya Shashtra of Bharat Muni, a thousand years old, and various other books, because without a proper study of the ancient methods it would be impossible to keep purity of the classical forms.” (p. 122) She wants to take lessons from a Sanskrit pundit who can help her in understanding the old Sanskrit texts.

“I shall also want him (pundit) to read for me episodes from Ramayana and Mahabharata, because they are a treasure house, and we can pick up so many ideas for new compositions from them.” (p. 123)
She performs her *pooja* before her dance performance. “At one corner of the room she’d have a bronze figure of Nataraja, the god of dancers….She would have incense sticks burning.” (p. 122) before her dance performance.

She acquires the status of a divine damsel for Raju who forgets his earthly life in her company. He confesses:

“I could honestly declare that, while I (Raju) watched her perform, my mind was free, for once, from all carnal thoughts; I viewed her as a pure abstraction. She could make me forget my surrounding.” (p. 125)

Like Rosie, Nalini also acts in accordance with the Indian philosophical theory of *Karma* or philosophy of acceptance in overcoming her miseries. Her weakening mind also highlights the common plight of modern woman in Indian context. Although Shanta Krishnaswami takes a sympathetic view for her coming back to Raju, (30) but it can not be justified in the country where Sita and Savitri are the ideals of womankind.

Rosie remains a traditional woman for a comparatively short span of time. Her illicit relation with Raju violates the Indian ethical code that promotes the ideal of loyalty to one’s spouse. Rosie’s sufferings, it could be inferred are an example of poetic justice. A woman in transition, she can not uphold the tradition and subscribe to the old moral and ethical value system, nor is she bold enough to forsake the tradition. In the portrayal of Rosie, Narayan presents a modern liberated Indian woman. Narayan has apparently offered a novel paradigm of Indian ethical code in much the same way he has offered a new variable of a *yogi* in the character of Raju. Thus, the Indian philosophy and religion are critiqued in the novel in the contemporary context.
R. K. Narayan has very artistically inseminated the Indian philosophical ideas in this novel. The Vedantic philosophy of self – realization, the concept of Maya, ignorance or Avidya, the ideal of Niskama Karma or action without attachment, the values of ethical systems and the consequence of its violation, the search for ancient culture, traditions and customs, the theory of Karma or action, the four ideals of Purushartha and other Hindu concepts such as ascetic purification, yoga, renunciation, cyclic progression of life and death – all philosophical ideas are comprehensively amalgamated in this novel.
A TIGER FOR MALGUDI:
TRANSFORMATION INTO A SANYASI

A Tiger for Malgudi published in 1983 is a magnificent novel about a tiger said to have possessed the soul of an enlightened human being. The novel established the fact that R. K. Narayan, committed as he is to Hindu way of life, consciously turns to legends and fables, which have given him sustaining power all through his career as a novelist. In this novel, he dramatizes the harmony that is possible and the self-awareness that could be visualized when the human and the animal world are viewed as a simultaneous order.

“Now, in my story the Tiger Hermit employs his powers to save the tiger and transform it inwardly… and with the right approach you could expect the same response from a tiger as from any normal human being.” (31) (pp. 9-10)

R. M. Verma remarks, “Narayan is at the peak of his creative originality in A Tiger for Malgudi” (32) which has deep spiritual meaning and dimensions. R. P. Chaddah writes, “This is almost a spiritual odyssey from the early wild days through circus and then to the training by the ring master.” (33)

A Tiger for Malgudi is a practical document of the Indian philosophy. R. L. Dickinson writes, “It’s a nice little tale of redemption and self-awareness.” (34) Moksha, the crux of Indian philosophy is endorsed in this novel in a direct and emphatic way. The other facts of Indian philosophical thought, namely, the four ideals of Artha, Kama Dharma and Moksha, the tradition of Guru – Shishya, the last yogic spiritual resort i.e. Samadhi, the Ashrama Dharma, the
concept of Sansara, the idea of renunciation and detachment, the magic power of yoga, the philosophical discourses on the Bhagwad Gita and self evolution, self – realization, the three Gunas and various other interpretations of Hinduism are beautifully conceptualized in this novel.

R. K. Narayan experiments in this novel with the theme of transformation of the self which is the focal point in all ancient and modern Hindu philosophy. In Hinduism, all the systems of the Indian philosophical thought have stressed on the need to dissolve the darkness within to attain illumination - the knowledge of the true self. P. Nagaraja Rao truly summarizes this in the following manner:

“The soul of man is covered with thick layers of unreality. The removal of these layers enables the soul to shine in its effulgence. The soul has merely to uncover the sheaths to realize its nature. Reflection of the true nature of the self is the method. Ignorance is the veil and sin that hides truth. The hinge of ignorance is the ego. We must dissolve this pseudo – self.” (35)

(It is I who remain seated in the heart of all creatures as the inner controller of all; and it is I who am the source of memory, knowledge and the ratiocinative faculty. Again, I am the only object worth knowing through the Vedas; I alone am the father of Vedanta and the knower of the Vedas too.)
The above cited verse from the *Bhagwad Gita* states that God is omnipresent. This universal concept of Hinduism is stressed upon by Narayan in the introduction of *A Tiger for Malgudi*. Narayan reinstates the truth of this universality of soul in all living creatures – in man, beast and bird – the animate and the inanimate.

“...That deep within, the core of personality is the same in spite of differing appearances and categories, and with the right approach you could expect the same response from a tiger as from any normal human being.” (pp. 9,10)

Narayan has purposely selected the most powerful and frightening animal from the animal kingdom as the main character in the novel. The tiger is a symbol of violence, arrogance and egotism. Raja, a tiger also states in the novel that his supremacy and domination in the animal kingdom of the Mempi forest can not be challenged. He is the acknowledged master, leader and king of the animals. His pride does not tolerate the least show of disrespect to his supreme authority by anybody. He punishes the disobedient ones brutally and at once.

“...but in course of time considered myself the Supreme Lord of the Jungle, afraid of no one, striking terror in others. It was naturally a time of utter wildness, violence and unthinking cruelty inflicted on the weaker creatures....I delivered the fatal blow in any case when I wished and strode about as the king of the forest.” (p. 13)

Narayan knowingly picks up the elementary passions i.e. *Tamsik Gunas*, in the most natural form in a beast. In the *Bhagwad Gita* indolence, ego or *Ahankara*, ignorance, illusion – all are attributed to *Tamo Guna* which
generates possessiveness, anger or Krodha, self – righteousness and a sense of attachment. Raja is also occupied with these layers of darkness. In a gradual development from innocent childhood to a sensible juvenile youth one witnesses these changes.

“I remember my cub hood when I frolicked on the sandy bank and in cool stream, protected and fed by a mother. I had no doubt whatever that she would live forever to look after me: a natural delusion which afflicts all creatures, including human beings.” (pp. 12-13)

Narayan in the portrayal of the ferocious nature of the tiger explores and exposes such human weakness and wild emotions which are manifested in some men. The author in a systematic manner traces various stages of evolution in the tiger. Kalesh (37) and Vikara (38) are the elementary hurdles on the way of evolution and the annihilation of these evils is the first step on the way of transformation in the self.

Raja fiercely fights with his would be wife to posit supremacy and authority. “We butted into each other, scratched, clawed, wrestled, grappled, gashing, biting, tearing each other, and I also stood up and threw on her and struck.” (p. 19) After this bloody fight both lay unconscious and on the advice of a jackal that “If you can not discover a reason to be enemies, why don’t you consider being friends.” (p. 20), they first became friends and later husband and wife. The inherent message that annihilation of ego and mutual respect are the essential tools for a harmonious married life is distinctly conveyed here. Once this agreement is reached between the spouses, love and then their progeny, the four cubs are born.
The conjugal life of Raja does not prove to be fortunate and long lasting. His family is ambushed and subsequently killed by the villagers and hunters. Raja, as an animal, is unknown to the sentiments of sorrow, repentance and the meaning of death. As an animal he only understands the meaning of revenge, possession, attack, target, arrogance etc. When the tiger looks at the cart in which the cubs and their mother lay, he gets extremely angry and says:

“A blind, impossible anger stirred within me: I just wanted to dash up, pounce upon every creature, bite and claw and destroy.” (p. 24)

The life of tiger Raja offers a close parallel to the circle of human engagements in Sansara. The instincts and emotions of a tiger are more or less human without any artificiality. The life of the tiger with his tigress and cubs also reflects on human domestic instincts. The similarity of the familial ties in the animal kingdom and human world also justifies the Indian philosophical concept of the Grihastha Ashrama in which enjoyment of Kama in accordance to Dharma and propagation of progeny are the main features of this stage of life.

The tiger in the Hindu mythology is the Vahan or vehicle of goddess Durga who epitomizes power to destroy the demons. Durga Saptati (39) refers to:

— iv^yu^6am smp/Wam\ m<gpit Sk>6ixt> Wal8`m\ kNyaiWa: krvalqe3 ivIsTsa>yaiWaraseivtm\ a
hStEXck/ gdbaisqe3 ivixqam\ S4ap> gu’>tjRnlm\ ibWa/a’a mnlaiTmka> xix6ra> dugaR>i5ne5a> Waje aa (XII /1) (p. 171)
The three eyed goddess appears most frightening sitting on the shoulder of the tiger to a worshipper of the Goddess Durga.

So the tiger, the king of all animals signifies here a dualistic role. This is a symbol of power, strength, valour and secondly the eradicator of all evils. Narayan’s use of animal allegory is not without an inherent artistic and philosophical purpose.

The life of the tiger with the tigress and its cubs also reflects on human domestic instincts. The ultimate demise of his family and remorse of the tiger on this tragedy indicate his preference for family life.

The induction of the circus people in the life of Raja symbolizes the “active phase of human life.” The pursuit of Artha is introduced to mark the human instincts for money and Maya. The tiger is enforced in this material world from the carefree life of the jungle by the captain – the proprietor of the Grand Malgudi Circus. This mixing of the civilizations, firstly the advanced human civilization and secondly the remote, ignorant civilization of a forest is remarkably portrayed by Narayan. Here Raja is introduced to the materialistic world represented by the captain as the head of the family members, the circus staff and other wild creatures and the people of Malgudi as the spectators of the circus.

Raja is more or less an instrument of attaining Artha, he performs his actions not as an actor or a participant, but under compulsion. This portrayal of fear and compulsion is correlated with human world where one confronts such situations in one’s routine life. The personality of the tiger also undergoes transformation in the process of his education and actions in the circus.
“My only aim now was to please Captain, and when I did that I
got the reward, pieces of meat and water and undisturbed
sleep in my cage.” (p. 55)

So this compulsive relationship between the ruler and the ruled are
purely materialistic and mundane in their nature. The only positive side of this
relationship is that Raja is disciplined and administered to a new type of life
i.e. the human civilization. This gradual development awakens the reasoning
and analytical faculties of Raja’s mind. His invincible ego or Ahankara is
annihilated by the captain tactfully. When the ego vanishes, he knows to learn
a new meaning of life. So the circus life is also more or less a school for Raja
where he learns new Vidya or knowledge of life.

“Ultimately, by sheer doggedness he made me realize that I
was to ignore the goat…. Here I was disciplined enough not to
move a muscle in the presence of that supposed goat.” (p. 63)

The wheel of Sansara rotates on its full turn, when the captain reaches
an agreement with a film producer. Now he wishes to improvise the role,
habits and activities of Raja to the new requirements of the tinsel world. Raja
is not ready for this change and screams loudly, “Oh, captain, don’t be
foolhardy, your life is in danger, go away, leave me before any calamity
befalls you.” (p. 114) But the captain did not relent and is consequently killed by
Raja. The wife of the captain also commits suicide. This ends the worldly life
of the captain and his wife. Raja also frees himself from the shackles of this
hollow life.

With this mishap, Raja also ends his worldly life. He calmly walks off
the place and takes shelter in the school building from where he is rescued by
the Swami. Narayan has interestingly interwoven the yogic – spell of saints to
take this wild animal. Regarding the power of Yoga, P. Nagaraja Rao remarks:

“It is on the record that the practice of Samadhi gives rise to super normal powers in the yogi. He develops certain super normal powers at this stage. The yogis are able to tame ferocious wild animals." (41)

The above statement reinforces the supernatural powers of the yogis. The portrayal of this kind of relationship between a beast and a yogi has its origin in the Indian philosophy and religion. There are many mythical illusions related with animals. Narayan in the introduction of the novel A Tiger for Malgudi refers to one such mythology:

“During Kumbha Mela festival, which recurs every twelve years at the confluence of the three river Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati in Allahabad, vast crowd gathers for a holy bath in the rivers. Amidst that ocean of humanity also arrives a hermit with his companion, a tiger. He does not hold the any man on a leash since he claims they were brothers in previous lives. The tiger freely moves about without hurting or scaring anyone.” (p. 7)

Unaware of the spiritual or supernatural powers of the Swami, the ferocious animal first tries to resist him but finding himself helpless before him, he completely surrenders himself to the gnomic and occult powers of the Swami. Raja voluntarily accepts the authority of the Swami and follows his dictates like a disciple as per the Guru –Shishya tradition. Both Swami and Raja need each other. Raja has completed his Grihasth Ashrama and needs an illuminated soul for his further mental and spiritual growth.
This entry of Raja into the *Vanaprastha Ashrama* is devised by his Master, who telepathically instructs him to leave his arrogant and violent style of living.

“You are now an adult, full grown tiger and assuming you are fifteen years old, in human terms you are seventy years old, and at seventy and onwards one’s temper gets toned down through normal decay. ...You can not continue your ferocity forever. You have to change.” (p. 145)

This point is further reinforced when Raja refers to his feeling of guilt consciousness, when he is “oppressed with a sense of guilt.” (p. 159) When he kills or hunts any living creature in the forest, he experiences a feeling of remorse. He says, “But now-a-days, the moment I had eaten my fill I’d be seized with remorse. And so, when I returned from the jungle I’d lie low, out of sight of my master.” (p. 159) Raja tries to purify himself by reducing his frequency of seeking food thus suffering hunger for consecutive days. The meditations of his Master are instrumental in this transformation of Raja.

“Nowadays he (Master) encouraged me (Raja) to remain close by when he meditated as it might help me too. ...At such moments I felt lighter at heart and my physical self also became secondary.” (p. 165)

Raja’s visionary and hearing senses are gradually weakened, restricting his subsequent movements. The Master remarks, “Raja, old age has come on you, beautiful old age, when faculties are dimmed one by one, so that we may be restful.” (p. 174) The Master arranges for his transportation to the zoo, where he can be in the safe custody of authorities properly nourished
and cared. Raja’s departure to the zoo to a new life or janma confirms the Indian philosophical concept of Punarjanma.

“Both of us will shed our forms soon and perhaps we could meet again, who knows? So good bye for the present.” (p. 176)

Raja thus enters into Sanyastha Ashrama in total spirit. Ranga Rao remarks in this respect:

“After The Vender of Sweets, we have in this novel finally Sanyasa in total spirit and content: time to ‘shed purpose of every kind’; and move from time to timelessness.” (42)

Raja achieves self –realization under the guidance of his Master, his Guru. This Atman – Gyana or self – realization is the basic aim of Indian philosophy. Raja can now appreciate and acknowledge the reality of life in the zoo. Raja succeeds in discerning the triple merits, namely, Satva, Rajas and Tamas i.e. purity, passion and ignorance respectively which are the three cardinal qualities of a seeker.

\[
\text{सत्वं रजस्तम इति गुणं: प्रकृतिसम्भवा: ।}
\]
\[
\text{निबन्धन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ।।}
\]

(43) (XIV / 5)

(Satva, Rajas and Tamas – these qualities born of nature tie down the imperishable soul to the body, Arjuna)

Raja thus epitomizes the three Gunas as prescribed in the Indian philosophy. He represents the Tamasic Guna in the initial stage of his life while living in the forest. His Rajasik Guna is overwhelmingly expressed in the company of the captain. His emotions and desires correspond to Rajas Guna at this stage of his life. Satva Guna overpowers Rajas Guna when he is in the
company of his spiritual Master where he is leading a pure, calm, selfless life in Mempi hills.

R. K. Narayan has portrayed in *A Tiger for Malgudi* an ideal *Guru – Shishya* relationship. The tiger is one of the most dangerous and freedom-loving animal, difficult to be tamed. But once tamed, he proves to be a disciple par excellence. A tiger can be domesticated and enslaved with love and wisdom, not by fear and violence. So the message is that the relationship based on love is everlasting, enduring and fruitful. Both the captain and the Swami wanted to master Raja with an altogether different approach, but the Swami succeeds in his efforts because he has a moral reason to master the beast. On the other hand, the captain who believes in the *Charvaka* principle of enjoyment and materialistic concept perishes in the end. The captain’s death symbolizes the impermanence of his worldly life which is further corroborated by the death of his wife. The death of the couple signifies the similar end of worldly people. Narayan spares the lives of Raja, the seeker and the Master, the Swami – a reiteration of his faith in the Indian spiritualistic values and *yogic* powers.

The master in a truly Indian philosophical spirit is interested in unraveling the mystery of this universe and the self. “*Ah> b/HmaiSm*” (44) i.e “I am *Brahman*” is another correlated search for the self in our *Shashtras*. It manifests the search of an individual for self – realization and integration with God. That the Master is also endeavouring to attain this stage of oneness with God is reflected from his argument with the people in the school ground who had gathered there to entrap Raja.

“Someone said, ‘What a reckless man you are! What are you?’”
“You are asking a profound question. I’ve no idea who I am! All
my life I have been trying to find the answer. Are you sure you
know who you are?” (p. 118)

The Master is a true Vedantin who firmly believes in the benevolence
of God. He has overcome his fears, anxieties and dilemmas after studying the
Indian scriptures. When the Chairman, the second Honorary Magistrate of
Malgudi asks the Master to sign an affidavit absolving them from all
responsibilities for his life or death during his encounter with Raja locked in
the school room, he writes and signs these documents in Sanskrit, “the
language of the God” (p. 143) although he knows ten other languages including
Japanese. His reaction is also typically Indian:

“Life or death is in no one’s hand: you can’t die by willing or
escape death by determination. A great power has determined
the number of breaths for each individual….That’s why God
says in the Gita, ‘I’m life and death, I’m the killer and the
killed…Those enemies you see before you O Arjuna, are
already dead, whether you aim your arrows at them or not!” (p.
142)

The master conceptualizes in the manner of the ancient sage Patanjali,
the great seer who devised the system of Yoga. Patanjali considers mind as
the main obstruction on the way of self – realization and contemplation. He
prescribes Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Dharma and Dhyana as the
essential steps for the control of mind which ultimately result into Samadhi.
The Bhagwad Gita also considers practice and renunciation as essential
devices for controlling the mind:

असंसंसारं महाभारते मनो दुर्निशांहं च हृम्।
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येन च गृहते॥
(45) (VI/ 35)

(The mind is restless no doubt; and difficult to curb, Arjuna; but it can be brought under control by repeated practice of meditation and by the exercise of dispassion, O son of Kunti)

The Master’s advice to Raja to overpower his senses and mind has echoes of Patanjali’s *Yoga Darshana* and the *Bhagwad Gita*:

“The eye is the starting point of all evils and mischief. The eye can travel far and can pick out objects indiscriminately, mind follows the eye, and the rest of the body is conditioned by the mind. Thus starts the chain of activity which may lead to trouble and complication, or waste of time.” (46)

This great spiritual Swami has transgressed to this state of spiritual perfection after graduating from the *Grihastha Ashrama*. He renounces the familial bondages on order to step in to *Sanyastha Ashrama*:

“I was a man of the world, busy and active and living by the clock, scrutinizing my bank book... One day it seemed all wrong, a senseless repetition of activities, where one’s head always throbbed with the next plan, counting time or money or prospects....At midnight I softly drew the bolt of our back door, opening on the sands of Saryu...while others slept very much in the manner of Siddhartha.” (p. 161)

The Swami’s renunciation of the *Grihatha Ashrama* is not circumstantial. He has renounced the *Grihastha Ashrama* on his own volition. Consequently, his wife’s overtones to bring him back to the family fold are rendered futile. This worldly man who is prone to passions forsakes the social and earthly life in search of a higher spiritual life, unlike Margayya in *The
Financial Expert or Jagan in *The Vendor of Sweets*. The Master's renunciation of the *Grihastha Ashrama* is on purely spiritual grounds.

“If you think over it, you will realize that the surrender has been rather on his part: it was total, he took nothing for himself except a piece of loincloth for all the wealth he had accumulated! However please know that he left home not out of wrath, there was no cause for it, but out of an inner transformation.” (p. 171)

The Indian ethical ideal comprehensively described as *Dharma* orders the desires of man around four principles called *Purusharthas* (aspirations). P. Nagaraja Rao describes them as under:

“The first of these are desire for wealth and possession (*Artha*), and the gratification of desires (*Kama*). ... There are two other values and these are spiritual. They are righteousness (*Dharma*) and liberation (*Moksha*).” (47)

These four *Purusharthas* are amply illustrated in this novel. The Swami and the tiger Raja both were enmeshed in the earthly pursuits. The Swami is a man of worldly matters living a social life in the initial stage of his life. Likewise Raja also expects “the deferential withdrawal” of other creatures from his path. He uses the earliest opportunity to punish the disobedient ones. He hunts all types of animals in Mempi forest. He also assists the captain in improving his financial position by partaking in the circus activities.

*Kama* or the gratification of desires and propagation of one's progeny is the second *Purushartha* in the Hindu philosophy. The Swami passes through this aim of life successfully which is also hinted by his wife who
comes to the jungle to take him back. She reminds him of his past life with her and urges him to go with him:

“I have borne your vagaries patiently for a lifetime: your inordinate demands of food and my perpetual anxiety to see you satisfied, and my total surrender night or day when passion seized you and you displayed the indifference of a savage, never caring for my health or inclination, and with your crude jocularities even before the children I shudder.” (pp. 170 - 171)

Dharma, the third of the four aims helps in the fulfillment of the spiritual needs of human beings. Dharma is the kingdom of God on earth. The life of Dharma leads to Moksha. The Swami describes to Raja the process of his gradual shifting into the life of Dharma:

“I was a man of the world, busy and active... - and I abruptly shed everything including clothes, and fled away from wife, children, home, possessions, all of which seemed intolerable.”

(p. 161)

Same is the case with Raja. When he kills the captain his reaction is a peculiar one, “that such a flimsy creature no better than a membrane stretched over some thin framework, with so little stuff inside, should have held me in fear so long.” (p. 115) Both the Swami and his disciple Raja break all the barriers to attain their last ideal of Moksha.

The fourth and the last ideal of Moksha is the supreme spiritual ideal and leitmotif of Indian philosophy. Moksha is a state of undiminishing bliss which puts an end to all tensions and sacrifices and quells all doubts and discontentment. There is no return to Sansara once one attains Moksha. It is
the realization of one’s own nature or Swarupa. It is the natural state of the 
Atman. This state of realization is attained by the Swami:

“I achieved complete anonymity, and shed purpose of every 
kind, never having to ask what next. And so here I am, that’s 
all you need to know.” (p. 162)

Raja also abandons his ferocity and prefers moderate diet fully 
incorporating the teachings of his Master in his life which manifests Raja’s 
sublimated state of spirit. This manifests an elevated state in the life of Raja.

God is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. The 
objectivity of the world is due to its Creator, the God. The world has a law 
abiding nature. God is Brahman in empirical dress. Dr. Radhakrishnan also 
justifies the conceptualization of God as a Supreme and Cosmic Power by 
Shankara. P. Nagaraja Rao also remarks, “Shankara’s Advaita accepts the 
existence of one reality… It is Brahman that appears as the world of souls and 
the universe of matter.” (49) In A Tiger for Malgudi the conceptualization of God 
is also in coherence with the Vedantic philosophy.

“He (the Swami) described God in his own way as the Creator, 
the Great Spirit pervading every creature, every rock and tree 
and the sky and the stars; a source of power and strength.” (pp. 
157 - 158)

In a discourse between the Master and Raja – the Guru and the 
Shishya – Raja conceives of God as enormous tiger. His perception of God is 
also worth mentioning, “God must be an enormous tiger, spanning the earth 
and the sky, with a tail capable of encircling the globe, claws that could grind 
the mountain, and possessing, of course, immeasurable strength to match”. (p.
The reaction of the Master on this issue is again very balanced and in tune with the dictates of the Indian philosophy.

\[ \text{सत्यानुरूपम् सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत।} \\
\text{श्रद्धामयोऽवयं पुरुषो यो यथा श्रद्धा: स एव स: II} \]

\[(50) \text{ (XVII / 3)}\]

(The faith of all men conforms to their mental constitution, Arjuna. This man consists of faith; whatever the nature of his faith, he is verily that)

In the similar way, the Master reflects on the nature of man and God.

“It’s often said that God made man in his own image, it’s also true that man makes God in his own image. Both may be right; and you are perfectly right in thinking of your God as a super tiger. Also it may be true. What we must not forget is that He may be everything we imagine and more.” (p. 158)

Madhusudan, the cine director and producer nicknamed Madan, a minor character in the novel offers a dialogue on Ahinsa. In spite of his linkage with the tinsel world, Madan has not lost his finer sensibilities and sense of appreciation for basic human values. He exclusively selects the subject of non-violence to be pictured in his prospective film.

“Non-violence is India’s contribution to civilization. I got the idea from your own speech before the tiger act; violence can be conquered only by non-violence.” (p. 82)

R. K. Narayan, the visionary could foresee the role and significance of films in the contemporary society and the recurrent references to films in his novels posit the need to correlate the films with the ancient Indian thought and values. His attitude towards the portrayal of sex and violence in films is not
totally traditional or conventional. “Life is created and made possible only through sex and violence.” (p. 81) opines Madan but he at the same time acknowledges their limitations too. He says, “Everyone knows how important normal sex is and what an evil sex can turn out to be without a proper philosophy of life.” (p. 82)

Narayan has explored the ideals of Kama and Artha which according to the Indian philosophy are essential for an individual in a family or Grihastha Ashrama. The role of popular cinema in determining and influencing the social and moral values can not be undermined. Therefore, the selection of the subject of non – violence for a prospective film is not without inferences and meaningful suggestions. The captain who represents the values of the materialistic society is not devoid of rudimentary Indian qualities of character. He thus upholds the cherished ideal of Guru – Shishya relationship and would always pay homage to his Guru before the commencement of the show:

“All that I wish to say is that the great circus master Dadhaji of Poona adopted me and trained me ...taught me how to educate the animals...I cannot begin the show without bowing in homage and gratitude to the memory of that great master ...

“...” (p. 67)

In the character of the captain, Narayan has incorporated in him the qualities promulgated by the Indian philosophical thought and ethics. His devotion to his wife Rita is in conformity with the hypothesis of Grihastha Ashrama, his activities in the circus are in pursuit of Artha and money, the captain leads his life as per the dictates of Indian philosophy and ethics. The Grand Malgudi Circus owned by the captain is the main source of
entertainment for the Malgudians and the captain contributes in his own way to the material advancement of the town.

“He liberally dispersed money to smooth out the passage of all kinds of transactions and favours, and in a short while Malgudi became more famous for its circus than for its mountain and river, and Captain was viewed as the wonder man who had transformed the town.” (p. 36)

Renunciation is one of the major themes of R. K. Narayan’s fiction. Swaminathan in *Swami and Friends* renounces his school, in *The Bachelor of Arts*, Chandran renounces his home and parents for a brief span of time after his failure in love, Savitri in *The Dark Room* leaves her home and takes shelter in a temple, Krishnan bids good bye to Albert Mission College which is a symbol of Western civilization in *The English Teacher*, Srinivas also leaves home and his relations in the beginning of the novel in *Mr. Sampath*, Margayya renounces his illusions and attachments in the end of the novel *The Financial Expert* to work under the banyan tree once again, Vasu renounces his native village for the purpose of material pursuit in *The Man Eater of Malgudi*, Raju, the guide becomes the saint renouncing the worldly affairs in *The Guide* and Swami and Raja both prefer to live a spiritual life in the end in *A Tiger for Malgudi*.

The act of renunciation in the later novels of Narayan acquires the maturity and purpose of self-illumination. Sriram, a member of an aristocratic family renounces his house and relations in a quest for self harmony in *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Raju and Rosie renounce their respective surroundings in search of self in the end in *The Guide*. Jagan is ready to renounce his son and shop in the end of *The Vendor of Sweets* for the
purpose of self-realization; Daisy and Raman also epitomize this theme of renunciation in *The Painter of Signs*. The Master and the tiger Raja are the superb examples of renunciation in *A Tiger for Malgudi*, the Talkative Man renounces his commandant wife and comes to Malgudi in *The Talkative Man*. Nagaraja represents the modern form of renunciation i.e. the renunciation of illusions and worldly desires within the framework of the *Grihatha Ashrama* in *The World of Nagaraj*.

कार्यमिच्छेव यत्कमं निवत्ते क्रियतेऽज्ञुः
सृणं यक्त्वा फलं चैव स ल्यागः सात्तिको मतः॥

(A prescribed duty which is performed simply because it has to be performed, giving up attachment and fruit, that alone has been recognized as the *Satvika* form of renunciation.)

Hence, the two texts discussed above – *The Guide* and *A Tiger for Malgudi* critique this idea of “*Satvika* form of renunciation” in a most comprehensive manner. The Vedantic philosophy of self and self – realization, the concept of *Maya* or illusion, *Avidya* or ignorance, the concept of *Nishkama Karma* or action without attachment, the four ideals of *Artha*, *Kama*, *Dharma* and *Moksha*, the four *Purusharthas* and *Ashrama* have been artistically incorporated and widely discussed in these two novels. Raju and Raja, the two protagonists bear a resemblance in their names which is not coincidental or accidental. A visionary, perceptive and subtle writer that Narayan is, the striking similarity in the names of a human and a beast is most significant and meaningful. *The Guide*, the spiritual odyssey of a human is juxtaposed to the animal world in *A Tiger for Malgudi*. The parallel in the
human and the animal world refers to the primordial world and the primordial reality reinforcing the Indian philosophical belief that there is one soul i.e. one Supreme Reality that breathes in all living creatures.

Raju, the tourist guide is initially entrapped in the illusory world when the materialistic Charvaka philosophy guides and governs his life. He commits the crime of forging the signature of Rosie and is accordingly punished and sent to the prison. His foul deeds pay him. He receives his ill fate as per his evil Karma. But landed into the prison life, he finds time for his moral and social transgression. The prison accrues to him an ideal opportunity to journey into the innermost regions of his soul and shake off his material and social illusions. Thereafter, evolution in the character of Raju is a ceaseless and ongoing process.

Raju has been described as a spiritual martyr, one who finds himself in a precarious situation on account of the misunderstanding of a village idiot. Martyrdom is thus imposed upon him under certain unavoidable circumstances. But a close scrutiny of Raju’s actions, thoughts and behaviour significantly indicates a metamorphosis in Raju who has in the process been enlightened. The sacrifice of Raju followed by the rains in Mangla village could very well be treated as a vindication of Indian philosophy and its various paradigms.

If The Guide is the spiritual odyssey of a human, A Tiger for Malgudi on the contrary presents an insight into the animal world. Narayan has experimented here with the popular theme of transformation in a beast. The novelist’s choice for the most powerful animal from the animal kingdom as the chief protagonist in the novel is full of inferences and hidden meaning.
Narayan is in fact exploring as well as exposing human weaknesses, follies and foibles in both man and beast. At the lowest level of physical existence Raju and Raja share the *Tamasik Gunas* when the pursuit of *Kama* and *Artha* is their topmost priority in life.

The life of the tiger Raja offers a close parallel to the circle of human engagement in *Sansara*. Both man and beast require the guidance of a worthy *Guru* to attain liberation from *Sansara*. The tiger Raja under the guidance of the Swami attains knowledge. His entry into the *Vanaprastha Ashrama* is devised by Swami. Raja’s departure to the zoo is symbolic of a new *janma* or life corresponding to the Indian philosophical concept of *Punarjanma* or reincarnation. Raju, the human attains knowledge by an exploration of the self and achieves sainthood. He too acquires entirely anew attire inwardly and outwardly. Thus, Raju also enters into his new *janma* or life.

The act of renunciation in *The Guide* and *A Tiger for Malgudi* could be described as *Satvik* which is deeply religious, spiritual and fully in conformity with Indian paradigms of renunciation for the purpose of *Moksha* i.e. self-illumination or self-enlightenment. Raju and the Master represent the release of a kind of *Videha – Mukti*, when a person attains release of bodily self whereas Rosie in *The Guide* and tiger Raja in *A Tiger for Malgudi* symbolize a kind of *Karma – Mukti* i.e. release from action, another paradigm of Indian philosophy. The Narayanian idea of *Videha – Mukti*, the physical release is fully applicable to both Raju and the Master. This is clear from the use of Narayan’s narrative technique employed in these two novels. Both the novels are third person narratives, a narrative device well suited for the detached and
philosophical presentation of characters and events. Both the characters in *The Guide* and in *A Tiger for Malgudi* comment on their previous actions in a disinterested and detached manner.

Another striking similarity between these two characters is that they renounce the world and later contemplate in the traditional Indian way, one in the forlorn Mangla village and the other in the solitude and natural surroundings of Mempi hills. After years of rigorous and deep contemplation they both realize the absolute truth of life. Contemplation for self – realization is an inseparable part of the Indian philosophy. Rosie also tries to dissociate herself from illusory life slowly and steadily first by distancing herself from the *devadasi* clan as well as from the plans and schemes of Marco, her husband, and identifying her inner instincts of dancing with the old Bharat Natyam form of dance and finally by devoting her life to as per se the philosophy of *Nishkam Karma Yoga*. Likewise, the tiger Raja gradually develops his inner instinct for liberation. He leaves the jungle life and joins the company of human civilization a higher species and thereafter devotes himself to his spiritual Master who enhances his spiritual faculties to finally achieve *Mukti* or liberation. P. Nagaraja Rao comments on the final fruits of this *Moksha* or liberation:

> “Philosophy has a practical purpose, namely, to put an end to all human sorrows arising from man's environment, bodily, natural and supernatural. *Moksha* is a state of experience which puts an end to all tensions and strife and quells all doubts and discontent and is full of undiminishing bliss. There is no return to *Sansara*, once we attain *Moksha*. It spells the radical termination of all sorrows.”  

(52)
Thus, this quintessential lesson of *Moksha* is depicted and described elaborately in *The Guide* and *A Tiger for Malgudi*. The protagonists in these novels initially lead a hectic, indulgent and active life. Narayan reiterates that *Moksha* can be had by all types of people in all circumstances. The only prerequisite is true devotion and an unshakable faith in God. The Indian philosophy regards *Moksha* as the final goal of an individual’s life. R. K. Narayan in these two seminal texts reinforces the concept of *Moksha* or self-illumination.
REFERENCES


3. Ibid, p. 28

4. Ibid, p. 28

5. Ibid, p. 29

6. Ibid, p. 29


9. Ibid. p. 176


11. Ibid, p. 168


19. *Kama Deva* in the Indian mythology, the God of Love. Once directed by other Gods to arouse Shiva’s passion for Parvati, he disturbed the great God’s meditation on the mountain top. Enraged, Shiva burned him to ashes with the fire of his third eye. He is also depicted as a handsome youth, attended by the heavenly nymphs, who shoots love-producing flower-arrows. *The New Encyclopedia Britianika*, Vol. 6, p. 699

20. Rao P. Nagaraja, *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, (New Delhi: Indian Book Company, n.d.) p.113


25. Ibid, p. 88


31. Narayan R. K., *A Tiger for Malgudi* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1983), pp. 9-10 (All subsequent references to the novel are to this edition and have been incorporated in the text.)


37. **Kleshas**: There are five kinds of *Kleshas*. They are *Avidya* (ignorance), *Asmita* (identity), *Rag* (desire), *Dwesha* (male) and *Abhinivesha* (attachment).

38. **Vikaras** – There are six kinds of *Vikaras* – *Kama* (desire), *Krodha* (anger), *Lobha* (greed), *Moha* (attraction), *Mada* (pride) and *Matsara*.


44. Radhakrishnan S. *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, pp. 608-621


51. Ibid., p. 722