

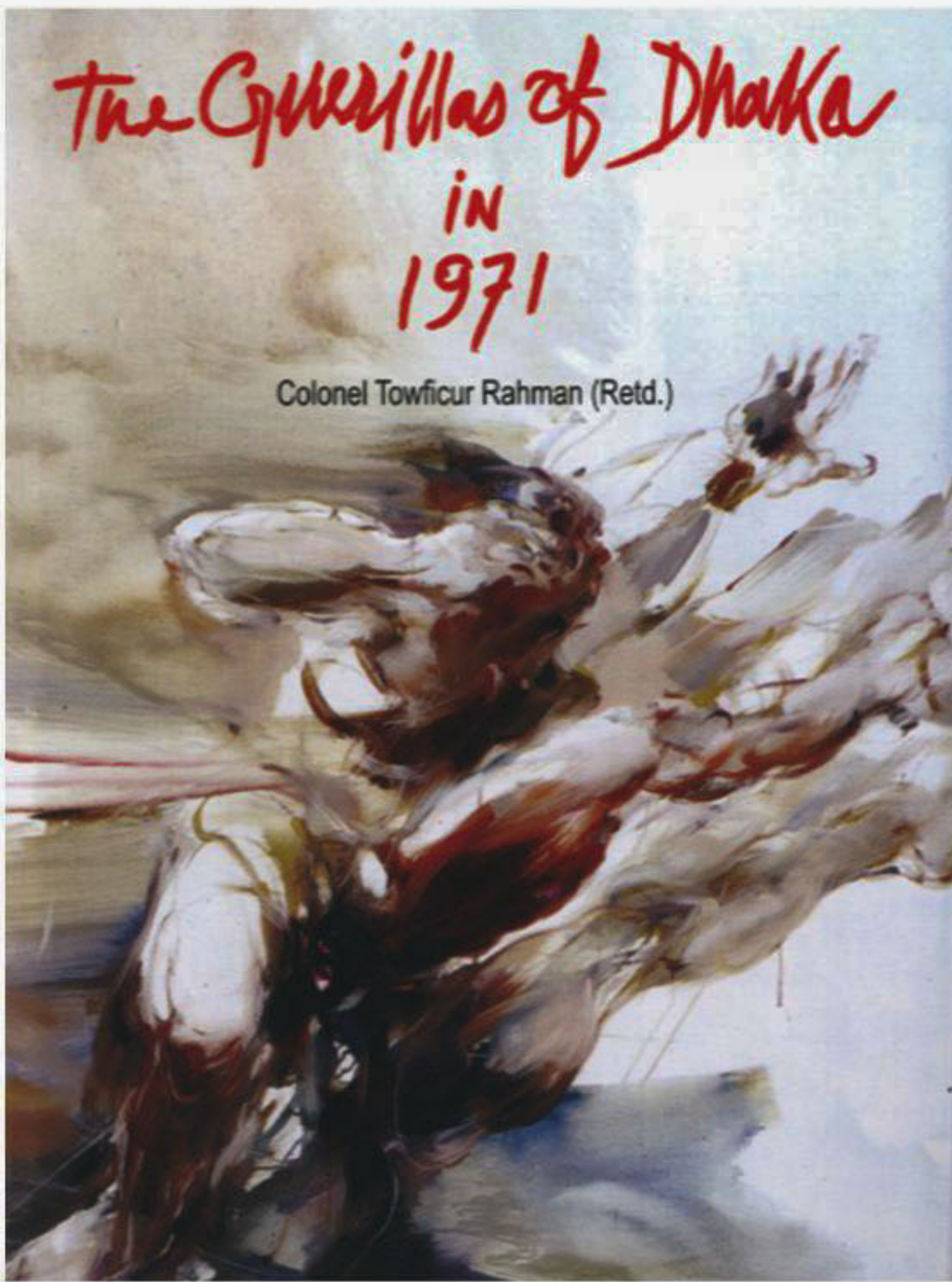
Valiant freedom fighters of the soil

AUTHOR: COLONEL TOWFICUR RAHMAN (RETD.)

Publisher: Howladar Prokashoni

REVIEWED BY DR. MOHAMMED FARASHUDDIN

Of the few books written in English on the liberation struggle and the war of independence of Bangladesh, some cover either a specific battle of the war in a particular locality or aim at glorification of the contribution of individuals. The *Guerillas of Dhaka* in 1971



(The Book) adroitly, authoritatively and objectively written by Colonel Towficur Rahman (Retd.) is a refreshing departure from the milieu. The book is a major contribution in the "hit, run and win" tactics adopted by the mostly teen aged Mukti Joddhas who were by and large apolitical and

yet left a posh living for uncertain, thornful, but most difficult conditions to accomplish a dangerous mission to fight against a modern, well-equipped Pakistan Army.

"My decision to join the war of liberation to fight the enemy is the best decision I have ever taken, though it was also the hardest one" reflects the author Colonel Towficur 45 years after he and thousand others decided to jump into a war which was the most unequal in military strength but the need of the hour under the "Joi Bangla" rallying point. They saw, hard of and experienced the most humiliating, brutal, barbarous and merciless killing, looting, rape and arson perpetrated by the occupation army of Pakistan on the innocent unarmed civilians of the fifty six percent people of the country. The Book chronicles a reliable, neutral and impersonal yet emotional experience by a 16 year young boy, the heinous genocide unleashed by the Pakistani army in Dhaka, Chittagong and elsewhere on the fateful night following 25th March 1971 as well as the 'janajuddha' the guerilla warfare in particular, leading to the ignominious surrender defeat of that army to the *Mitra Bahini* of Bangladesh and India on the Victory Day, December 16, 1971.

Colonel Towficur Rahman (Retd.) spell bounds his readers into a breathless reading of his valuable addition to the literature on our War of Liberation catapulting them into a state of psychological participation in the struggle triggered by the clarion call of Bangabandhu, "the struggle this time is for our (economic) emancipation, the fighting this time is for our independence."

The book provides a firsthand account of the situation in the then Pakistan in the aftermath of the general election held on 30 December 1970 in which the Awami League under its leader Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman espousing the cause of Bangalee nationalism captured 167

out of 300 seats in the National Assembly. But the Military Junta refused to hand over power to the leader of the Majority Party, postponed the Assembly session and gave every indication of ruthless suppression of the will of the people. Young Towficur residing with affectionate parents and brothers in *Rashid Building* in *Chankharpool* used to hear the discussion about the miserable fight of the Bangalees, witnessed the 7th March upsurge and had to bear innumerable pains: The killing of two tender aged shopkeepers, Abul and Karim next door, burning of their shop, brutal murders at the Jagannath Hall, army's insistence of undressing of males to prove they were non-Hindus and so on. Towficur and his two friends Belal and

cherished independence.

The author's humane qualities in describing the warmth of the kishan family at Koroiri village also reveals how much universal mobilization took place within East Pakistan for snatching away the independence from the occupation force devoid of any moral strength. The Book also occasionally opens up the penchant of the young *muktijoddha* Towficur for the tender care of his mother.

The Book written in excellent yet easily understandable English is authored by Colonel Towficur Rahman (Retd.). It is bound to act as an eye opener to many like me who are curious to know to appreciate the sacrifice made by so many for achieving the political independence of

dear motherland and demonstrates the usual impatience at the 'slow' pace of solution of all the problems of the country. The *Guerillas of Dhaka* in 1971 is and should be a valued treasure in the library of every individual wishing well for the country. The readers of the Book would certainly enjoy to learn that celebrity artists such as, Md. Shahabuddin Ahmed, Nasiruddin Ahmed Bachchu, Raisul Islam Asad and Azam Khan contributed to the creation of Bangladesh as guerilla fighters. The Book also confirms that most of the inhabitants of the country under occupation of the barbarous army were freedom fighters in their heart, soul and activities. The kind of Dr. Syed Mahbub Ali, Najibullah Jon, Chairman Ahmed Ali, Hamid Master, Ferdous Najmi, Nazimuddin Ahmed, Ariful Moulta, ATM Moniruddin, Mr. and Mrs. Nedu Khan and innumerable others including the caring homemakers contributed, in no less way than the freedom fighters on record, for the liberation of Bangladesh. The Book's description of the guerilla operations such as the DIT Tower bombing, the Muslim Commercial Bank Raid and the Kakrail Petrol Pump blast shows how difficult it has been to plan, organize, maintain time and to actually operate such guerilla attacks. The successes in these operations have been enormously enthralling to the freedom fighters in redoubling their efforts as these have been chilling to the demoralization of the enemy.

No appreciation will be too high for the task made by Colonel Towficur actually fighting for our independence and also for keeping records for so neatly publishing this treasure, *The Guerillas of Dhaka* in 1971. For me this review opens the window to reiterate my most profound and respectful salutations to our valiant freedom fighters without whom I would not have been what I am today.

The reviewer is a renowned academician and former Governor of Bangladesh Bank.

"My decision to join the war of liberation to fight the enemy is the best decision I have ever taken, though it was also the hardest one"

Kamal thus agonizingly decided to join the Freedom Fighters and had a very invigorating session with Rezaul Karim Manik (BP, Shaheed). They undertook the most hazardingly dangerous trip by rickshaw, bus, boat, on foot and running to reach the *Khelaghar* training camp in Agartala, India. Even if the journey to safety was a typical one, the four week training (condensed from six months) on guerilla warfare planning, strategies and operational tactics was the most demanding under extremely adverse living conditions. The respect and admiration with which the author describes the camp commander at the *Khelaghar* training camp, Captain ATM Haider very aptly demonstrate how the likes of Towficur have been totally inspired emotionally and prepared physically to win the struggle for the

Bangladesh towards the establishment of the welfare state in which the deprived would have their smile back in the Sonar Bangla.

The *Guerillas of Dhaka* in 1971 also provides a reminder warning about the so called Sixteenth Division freedom fighters the misdeeds of many of whom are breaking hell in the life of people. The Book mistakenly mentions that the vanquished Pakistani Army surrendered their sword and honor to the Indian Army in the then Race Course of Dhaka on 16 December 1971. Actually, the surrender instrument was handed over to and accepted by the Commanders of the joint force of India and Bangladesh.

The author has revealed through the valuable expression in the book his highest level of patriotism for the

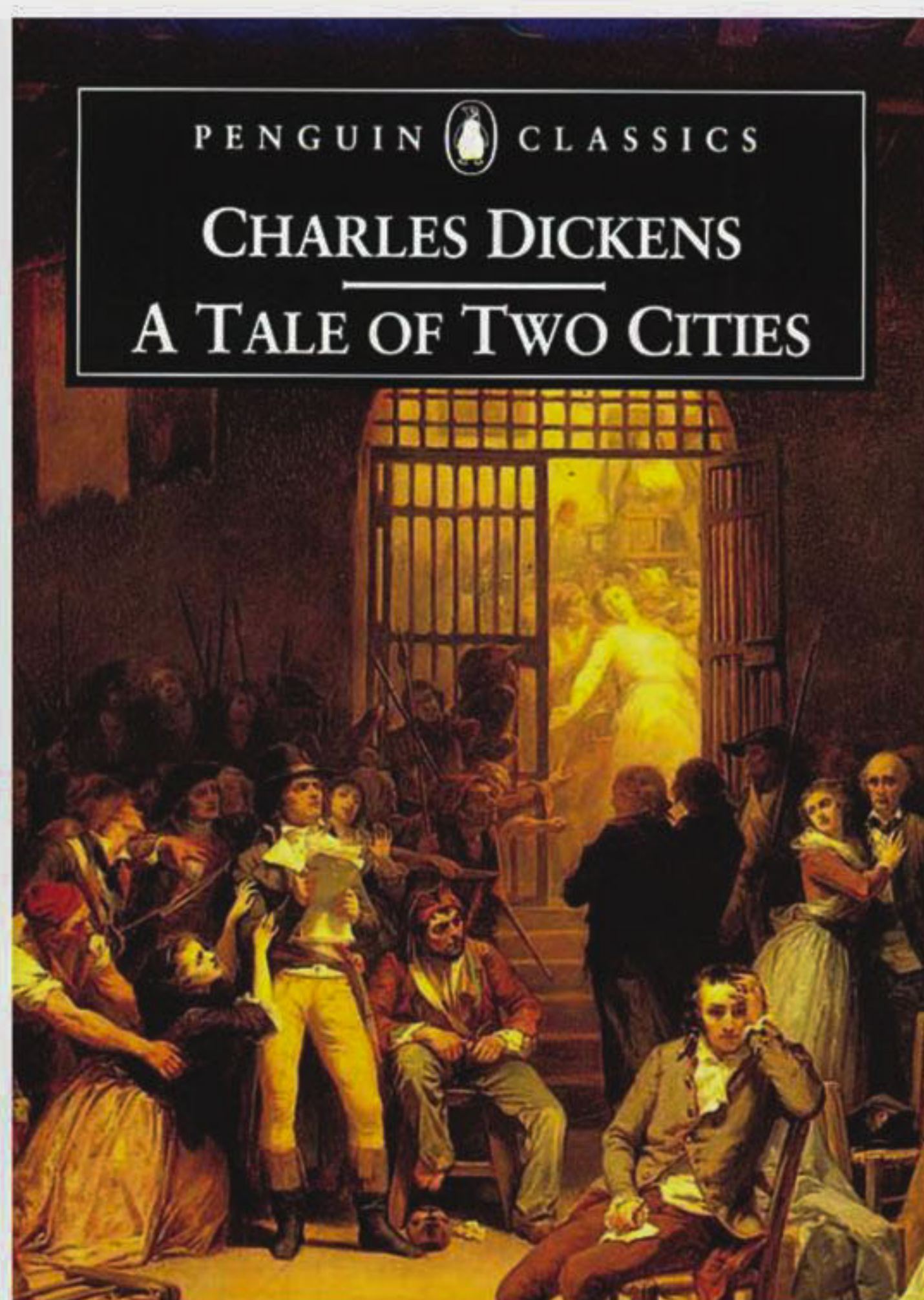
A saga of love, sacrifice and the French Revolution

AUTHOR: CHARLES DICKENS

REVIEWED BY MAHFUZ UL HASIB CHOWDHURY

A Tale of Two Cities is one of the greatest novels by Charles Dickens (1812-1870). It tells the story of the French Revolution that had a profound influence on France and England and their capitals Paris and London respectively during 1789 to 1799. The French Revolution was carried out by the peasants and workers of France who had been suffering years after years from extreme poverty and exploitations imposed on them by the ruling authority of France. Louis XVI was the king of France during that time. The king and his associates had no compassion for the poverty-stricken masses of their country. Most of the people were hungry and penniless while the royal family and the aristocrats lived in a lot of luxuries and comfort. Class discrimination prevailed acutely all over France during that time. Finally, common French people lost their patience and revolted against the king. The revolutionaries invaded the Bastille fort on 14th July 1789, released all the prisoners and detained the king and the queen who were later on executed. They also killed many aristocratic people who were close to the king. Violence and bloodshed spread all over France which led to a reign of terror.

Charles Dickens depicted in his novel *A Tale of Two Cities* how the French Revolution impacted the lives of ordinary French and English citizens. This novel tells a story of love, dedication and vengeance. Doctor Manette, one of the leading characters of the novel, had been in prison for eighteen years on false charges. He had seen a heinous crime committed by two French landlords which is why he was imprisoned. Anyone who witnessed and spoke against injustice and offences in France during the rule of Louis XVI had to face similar consequences. When Doctor Manette was released from prison after eighteen years, his daughter Lucie Manette and his old friend Jarvis Lorry met him in Monsieur Defarge's house



in Paris. Monsieur Defarge was Doctor Manette's clerk many years earlier. Doctor Manette was in a disoriented mental state after his release from prison. He could not recognize anyone, not even his daughter. However, Lucie Manette took Doctor Manette to her house in London. Lucie Manette lived in London because her mother was an English woman. She took care of her father Doctor Manette very affectionately and gradually cured him. Charles Darnay, a young Frenchman who belonged to a landlord's family, also moved away to England. He did not like his father and uncle because they were repressive landlords. They exploited their tenants severely. That's why Charles Darnay did not want to stay with them. He had no greed

for ancestral wealth.

Charles Darnay got introduced to Doctor Manette and Lucie Manette while they were living in London. Charles Darnay fell in love with Lucie Manette in course of time. Sydney Carton, an Englishman, also came to know Doctor Manette and his daughter. He had a noteworthy facial similarity with Charles Darnay. He started to love Lucie Manette as well. Charles Darnay hailed from a wealthy French family while Sydney Carton had no significant identity. He was a very ordinary man with no remarkable job or earnings. However, Charles Darnay succeeded in his pursuit and married Lucie Manette with her and her father's consent. Sydney Carton, nevertheless, continued to love Lucie

Manette and one day he promised to Lucie Manette that someday he would prove his selfless love for Lucie. Anyway, as French Revolution broke out all over France, people got hold of all the landlords of France and started killing them on guillotines. Gabelle, an old servant of Charles Darnay's family, sent a letter to Charles Darnay informing that he had been arrested by the revolutionaries. He requested Charles Darnay to come to Paris to get him out of prison. Charles Darnay left for France without informing his wife. He just left a letter at home. As soon as Charles Darnay reached Paris, he was detained by the revolutionaries as he belonged to the family of an exploitative landlord. Lucie Manette and Doctor Manette left for France too as they were highly worried about Charles Darnay's safety. Charles Darnay was thrown into prison by the revolutionaries and Doctor Manette found no way to get him liberated. A striking thing happened at that point. Sydney Carton appeared in Paris too. He came to know from Doctor Manette about Charles Darnay's arrest. He bribed the prison guard and took Charles Darnay out of prison and moved inside prison to replace Charles Darnay. Charles Darnay reunited with his family. As the novel ends, Sydney Carton gets executed by the revolutionaries. Sydney Carton sacrificed his own life to restore happiness in Lucie Manette's family. He saved Charles Darnay in exchange for his own life just to prove his selfless love for Lucie which was an act of supreme self-dedication.

A Tale of Two Cities illustrates how general people can overthrow a government if they are tormented continuously. At the same time, this novel tells a love story too with special emphasis on the sacrificial attribute of Sydney Carton's character.

The reviewer is a literary enthusiast. Email: mhasib.chy@gmail.com

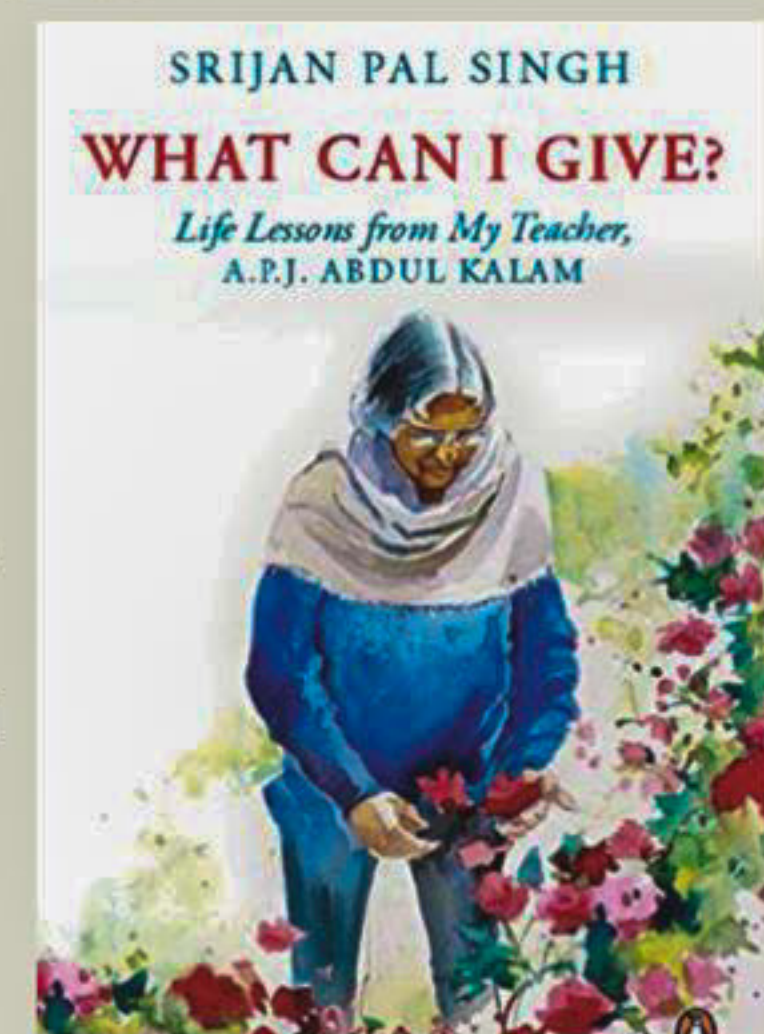
OMNI BOOKS

WHAT CAN I GIVE?

Learnings from My Teacher, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

BY SRIJAN PAL SINGH

A book in memory of the country's most loved teacher. DrKalam is often remembered as a teacher par excellence, whose words, thoughts and very life were lessons in many ways. This book is dedicated by his student Srijan Pal Singh, who worked closely with him, right till the last day of his life. Recollecting his mentor's values, oaths and messages to the youth, Srijan beautifully shares the lessons DrKalam taught beyond the classroom. A peek into his daily



routine, travels, reflections on various national and international issues, anecdotes and quips, this book helps readers get up-close and personal with the greatest Indian of contemporary times. Featuring many little-known stories and never-beforeseen photographs, as well as certain expressions that were classic DrKalam, this heartwarming memoir will inspire and enlighten, immortalizing the words and actions of a beloved leader.

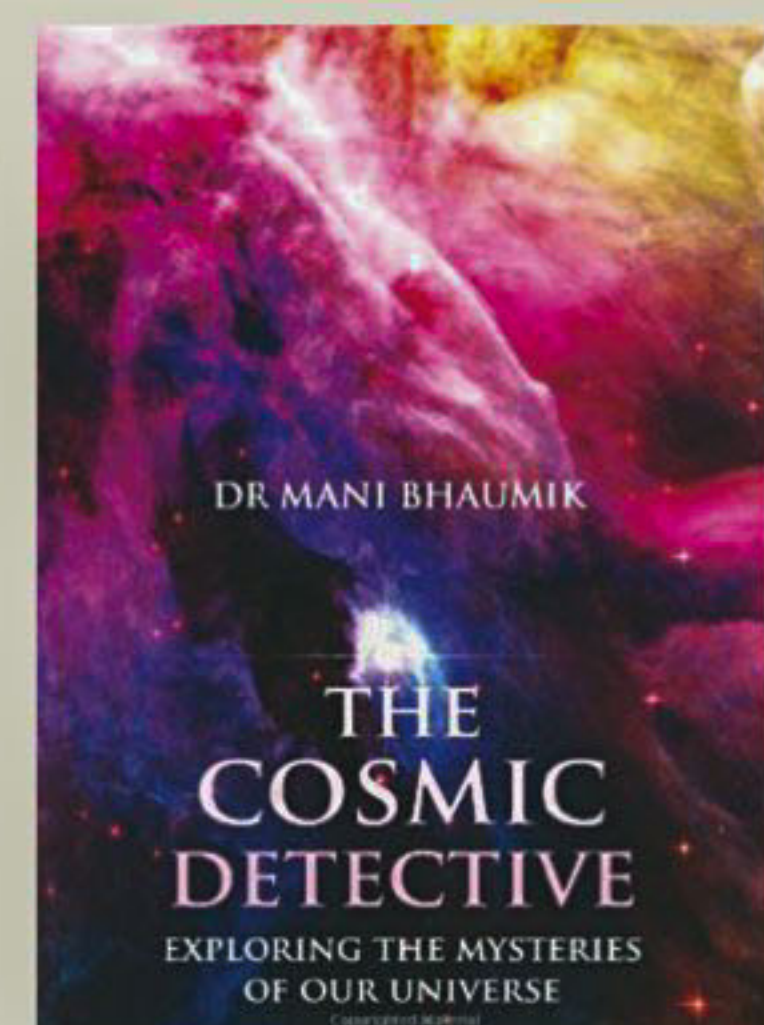
THE COSMIC DETECTIVE:

EXPLORING THE MYSTERIES OF OUR UNIVERSE

BY DR. MANI BHAUMIK

THIS slim primer on Cosmology for general public is an Official Product of International Year of Astronomy 2009, declared by the UN General Assembly. Are you feeling a little lonely in this vast universe? Find out who your neighbors are in this spectacular and thrilling guide to the deepest mysteries of the cosmos.

International Best-selling author and world-renowned scientist Dr. Mani Bhaumik takes readers on a whirlwind tour into space with *The Cosmic Detective*. Addressing his readers as cosmic detectives, the author actively enlists his sleuths in finding solutions to questions that have puzzled space



scientists for ages. How and when did the universe begin? What are the stars made of? How far away are the most distant galaxies? What is a quasar? Explore these fundamental cosmic riddles and more in this fascinating journey of discovery and wonder. Find out about nebulae and black holes, navigate the galaxies and the enormous expanses beyond, dive into the heart of neutron stars and walk on distant planet as you join the author in investigating the most bizarre aspects of the cosmos. And in the broader context of our own existence in the universe, Dr. Bhaumik reveals that when we explore the cosmos, we also explore ourselves.