

INTRODUCTION

atics & liberation

I began my work with the study of Tulasi Das. His 'Ramacaritmanas' had a great influence on me, and I did not consider my daily routine completed unless I had read a few verses of this book. In the same way I studied, as was required in course of my teaching profession, the works of Milton, particularly Paradise Lost. My interest deepened in it with equal respect, and it was at this stage that I became studiously conscious of examining the similarities and differences in treatment of the same concepts by Milton and Tulasi Das. The subject-matter of my thesis makes it necessary to write an introduction which should not only introduce the contents of the thesis, but also enlighten on the biographical aspects of the two poets. That by itself will reveal why it was considered necessary to write a dissertation on the comparative study of both the poets. John Milton and Tulasi Das are the two voices of human soul in controversial times striving to explore, ventilate and solve many deeper issues of the human race, one in the West and the other in the East. Although there was a gap of about fifty years between the births of John Milton and

Tulasi Das, the states of affairs were not very dissimilar in nature in their respective countries. I shall describe here in brief some important biographical events which will serve as the source of information about both of them and their works.

I

In absence of any geneological records of the family of Tulasi Das, the account of his life is built by the scholars on the derivative sources only. This has led the opinions to vary. Some scholars believe that the name of his father was Murari Misra; and he was born at Rajapur in Banda district of Uttar Pradesh. The great-great-grand father of Tulasi Das was Parasuram Misra, who was originally a resident of another village, named Kesayan. Once he had been to Chitrakut, and there as it is said, he had a dream in which Hanuman asked him to go to Rajapur and settle there, where a great poet and devotee of Rama would be born as his great-great-grandson. Parasuram Misra then went to Rajapur and was warmly received by the people there. The son of Parasuram Misra was Shankar Misra, who had two sons, namely, Santi Misra and Rudra Misra. Rudra Misra had

four sons, the eldest of whom was Murari Misra, the father of Tulasi Das. W.D.P. Hill holds the view that it was Atma Ram Dube who was the father of Tulasi Das. This opinion is, however, accepted by many scholars and has received popular support also. According to some other scholars Tulasi Das was born at Hajipur near Chitrakut. Sir George Grierson holds that the poet was born at Tari in Doab. There are, and may be, many more opinions also in this connection. But the widely acknowledge place of his birth is Rajapur, which has been authenticated by W.D.P. Hill also.¹ There is no less controversy about the date of birth of Tulasi Das. According to some scholars Tulasi Das was born in 1532 A.D. The other dates of his birth are cited as 1523 A.D., 1527 A.D. and 1543 A.D. by various scholars. W.D.P. Hill has written that Tulasi Das died on Thursday, the 24th July 1623 A.D.² In his 'Notes on Tulasi Das' Sir George Grierson has made elaborate calculations to determine the exact dates of birth and death of Tulasi Das from some important events of the life of the poet. In view of these varying opinions it is difficult to say how long was the life of Tulasi Das. The scholars however, seem

¹ W.D.P. Hill: The Holy Lake of Acts of Rama: Introduction, O.U.P., Calcutta, 1971, p.ix.

² Ibid., Introduction, p.x.

to be unanimous to hold the view that the poet lived a long life which might vary from eighty to one hundred years. As regards the place of his death, the scholars are again unanimous; and they hold that the poet died at a bathing-resort, called Assi, on the bank of the Ganges in Varanasi. His house is still preserved and opened once a year for public worship. Another point, which has been also discussed with controversy, relates to the caste of the poet. W.D.P. Hill has accepted him to be a Brahmin Dube of Parasar^{-1 a}'gotra'. His mother's name has been known as Hulasi, for which there are references in the work of the poet also.

Tulasi Das was born as an unfortunate child. At the time of his birth he had all his teeth, and unlike other children, he did not cry at birth; but uttered the name of Rama, which led the boy to be called "Ram-bola". His father was told by the priest that the child was born under evil stars; and would be the cause of woes to the family. The mother feared that her husband might become desperate and kill the child. She, therefore, gave the child to a maid servant who was very kind to the child. Unfortunately the maid-servant died after some time, and

the father refused to take back the child. Being thus abandoned, Tulasi Das had to live in miseries. He had to beg from door to door in search of bread. In his poem, 'Kavitawali', Tulasi Das has written about his miseries:

His father and mother brought him into the world
and abandoned him.

Destiny had written nothing good upon his forehead,
He was low, a vessel for disrespect, a coward
Who was glad to eat even the scrips
Thrown out for dogs,³

He was later adopted by a devotee of Rama, who was known as Narhari Das. It was he, who gave the name 'Tulasi Das' to the child who was till then called 'Rambola'. Narhari Das described the stories of Rama, as available in Ramayanas and other books, to Tulasi Das.

After sometime, Tulasi Das travelled to Varanasi; and studied Vedas, Vedangas, philosophy and Puranas. He studied 'Ramayana' of Valmiki in original Sanskrit language. Having spent a period of over fifteen years in scholarly pursuits at Varanasi, Tulasi Das returned to his native

³ Edmour J. Babineau: Love of God and Social Duty in the Ramcaritmanas, Motilal Banarasi Dass, Delhi, 1979, p.7.

village. He had acquired deep knowledge of scriptures and history. The great scholar having reached his village was shocked to find that his father had passed away; and the house in which the poet was born had disappeared. There is a group of scholars, of course, who hold the view that there is baseless exaggeration about the early life of Tulasi, as regards the misfortunes and miseries. They say that the father of Tulasi Das, despite his financial stringency, had never abandoned him. When Tulasi Das had returned from Varanasi, his father arranged for his marriage with a girl named Ratnawali, the daughter of Deenbandhu Pathak. Ratnawali herself died after sometime. Her father arranged for the second marriage of Tulasi Das which also ended with the death of his wife, all too soon. No further details are available about it. Tulasi Das was again married for the third time with a girl named Buddhimati, the daughter of Lakshman Upadhyay, a resident of Kanchanpur. This wife was an educated and beautiful lady. It is said that the father of Tulasi Das had taken dowry also for the marriages of his son to make the marriages an important and honourable event in the family. After this his father died. It is this event of the death of his father which Tulasi Das has referred to in his

'Kavitawali' as being abandoned by his father and mother after having been brought up by them into the world. These scholars say that the incident has generally been misinterpreted to build up a pitiable legend on the life of Tulasi Das. The words of Tulasi Das were intended not to describe the occurrence of any voluntary abandonment by the parents by way of accusation, but to express his humility as a refugee to Rama, whom he considered to be the supreme father and mother after his parents had died away. There is no evidence except the passing poetical references of this nature to establish that Tulasi Das was not born and brought up, and also married, under the care of his father. There are several occasions in Ramcaritmanas, where Tulasi Das has described the sweet and ideal relation between the son and the parent. He had experienced it in his own life also. The subject remains a topic for perhaps unresolved controversy. But it can safely be commented that most of the derogatory things about the life of the great poet were the creation of his opponents while he was at Varanasi in the midst of hostility and critical confrontations from the orthodox Brahmins of the age.

Tulasi Das was very fond of his wife. His affection

had grown so deep that he could never think of life without her. One day Tulasi Das had been out and the brother of his wife came to see her. She accompanied her brother to her native village. When Tulasi Das returned home he did not find his wife and felt very sorry. According to some scholars, this was Ratnawali, his first and the only wife. According to others, this was Buddhimati, the third wife of Tulasi Das. There is, however, no difference of opinion about the events that followed. Tulasi Das, having learnt from his neighbours that his wife had gone away to her native village, went out at once to meet her. He reached the village of his wife and found her there. There are interesting controversies on how he reached the village. Some scholars say, he had crossed a furious river at night by swimming. Some say that he sat on a floating dead body in the river, and sailed to the other side of the river to reach the village. According to the social custom it was not liked by the people of the village that a husband should visit his wife in this manner. His wife was also annoyed at his conduct. When Tulasi Das met her she scolded him thus:

Are you not ashamed, running you have come
 O husband! what shall I say? This love I spurn
 So much love as you show for me

A body of bones and skin
 If you show for Rama, the Lord
 The fear of rebirth shall touch you not.⁴

This gave a shocking retort to Tulasi Das. Infinite repentance followed at his own amorous conduct. His eyes become wide open, for he was too blind in love for her. A miraculous change occurred, and he left the place at once without speaking a word. His wife realized how seriously her husband had taken her words. She felt that Tulasi Das would, perhaps, return no more. Having reached Varanasi, he stayed on the bank of the holy Ganges meditating on Rama. This was the beginning of his spiritual career. Then he visited many places of pilgrimage, including Ayodhya, Vrindaban, Prayag and Chitrakut.

While residing on the bank of the Ganges, Tulasi Das used to go out for his morning prayers on the other side of the river. He used to pour some water from his jar daily at the root of a tree. That tree was the abode of a ghost. One day it so happened that Tulasi Das had no water left in his jar to pour there. He silently stood

⁴W.D.P. Hill; The Holy Lake of the Acts of Rama:
 Introduction, O.U.P., Calcutta, 1971, p.x.

there, and began to pay respect to the tree. A voice was then heard saying, "O Saint! I am pleased with you. Speak, what do you want? I must help you." Tulasi Das replied, "O gentle brother, I desire to see Rama, my beloved Lord. You may help me if you can." The ghost said, "I am a ghost, a cursed and condemned being, prohibited to glance at holy things. I can not show Rama myself; but I shall tell you how you may succeed in fulfilling your desire. There is a place, called Karnghanta, where a discourse on Ramayana is held every day. A crowd assembles there to participate in the discourse. In that crowd there is a leper also who comes to hear the discourse. He sits at the corner, and does not leave unless all have gone away after the discourse. This leper is Hanuman himself, the favourite devotee of Rama. You must approach him and he will enable you to see Rama." Tulasi Das went to Karnghanta and found everything as the ghost had spoken to him. After the discourse was over and all the people had dispersed, Tulasi Das followed the leper. When he found the leper alone, he clasped his feet. Hanuman tried to persuade him to go away, and a leper as he was, not to touch him. Tulasi Das paid no heed to it and continued to show his faith and reverence. Hanuman was ultimately pleased and revealed his

true self. He said, "O Tulasi! you may now go to Chitrakut and pray to Lord Shiva there. After six months you will succeed and your desire shall be fulfilled."

Tulasi Das, accordingly, went to Chitrakut and began to worship Shiva. One day while passing through the forest, he beheld two handsome and peerless princes, riding on horses with arrows and bows in their hands. Their unique beauty filled the mind of Tulasi Das with rapture. He had never seen such princes before. After they had disappeared Hanuman presented himself in the disguise of a Brahmin and asked Tulasi Das if he had seen anything on his way. Tulasi Das described the princes he had seen and Hanuman then told him that they were Rama and Lakshman. Tulasi Das became very sorry at his ignorance. Hanuman disappeared. On another day Tulasi Das came by chance to behold a 'Ram Lila' with Rama, Lakshman, Seeta and many of the followers of Rama. The performance referred to the conquest of Lanka by Rama and his coronation as the King of Ayodhya. It was a marvellous scene, and Tulasi Das was fully absorbed in watching the performance. After everything was over, Hanuman appeared in the form of a Brahmin, and asked Tulasi Das if he had seen anything in the forest. Tulasi Das narrated

the beatific vision of Ram Lila and said that it was a wonderful sight. Hanuman said that the Ram Lila was performed to enable him to have a vision of Rama; and that was not the normal season for Ram Lila which should occur in either September or October only. Tulasi Das was again sorry, and regretted his failure deeply in recognizing his Lord. Hanuman consoled him, and said that in the dark age of 'Kali', which is full of evils, Rama could not be seen directly. Yet another incident followed when Tulasi Das was preparing sandal paste to worship the idol of Rama at Chitrakur. Suddenly Rama appeared in the form of a handsome child, and said to him, "O Saint, apply the sandal paste to my forehead also." Tulasi Das looked at the child and fell in rapture. He forgot himself totally, and could not move his hands even. The child took the paste himself and put it on his own forehead. He applied it to the forehead of Tulasi Das also. In the meantime, Hanuman who was watching the whole scene, sitting on the branch of a tree, spoke these words:

At the bathing resort of Chitrakut,
 Many saits had assembled
 Tulasi Das prepared sandal paste
 And Rama applied to his forehead.⁵

⁵ Ramcaritmanas, 43rd ed. Samvat 2041, Gita Press Gorakhpur, Introduction p.2.

This was to enable Tulasi Das to recognize Rama. Suddenly the sight disappeared.

There are some other interesting events which are popularly acknowledged to have occurred in the life of Tulasi Das. In India popular traditions have played very important role; and many valuable informations have thus been bequeathed to the succeeding generations. Indians hold the tradition in high esteem, and do not disregard, or dismiss the ideas derived from them by saying that they are merely fiction. A great deal of truth underlies these traditions. Scholars have mainly to depend on such traditions in order to discover facts about the life and works of Tulasi Das. Since Tulasi Das had left home in search of Rama, his endeavours had been to serve and adore Rama and his devotees. He began to write poems in Sanskrit in praise of Rama. These poems, written in day, vanished at night. He became worried and prayed to Shiva, who appeared in a dream and bade him write in Hindi; and assured that the work would become immortal. Tulasi Das, accordingly, began to write the poem in Hindi to celebrate the glory of Rama which he named as 'Ramcaritmanas'. He began the work

at Ayodhya, the birth place of Rama, while staying there. The date and the place of its beginning have been described by the poet in 'Ramcaritmanas'.⁶

Tulasi Das by the virtue of his devotion to Rama had achieved transcendental realization. His name was remembered by all with reverence. A Brahmin widow had once come to Tulasi Das with the dead body of her husband and begun to cry. Her pitiable sight moved Tulasi Das. He touched the dead body while reciting the name of Rama, and the dead body was restored to life. This news was conveyed to Akbar, the emperor. Tulasi Das was summoned to Delhi and asked by Akbar to perform some miracles. The poet humbly said that he did not know any miracle. He was a humble servant of Rama only. The emperor was offended and ordered the poet to be imprisoned at once. Tulasi Das prayed to Hanuman and Hanuman sent innumerable monkeys who began to create troubles in and around the palace of Akbar. The emperor then visited the prison, and at once released the poet with due honour. He fell at his feet; and Hanuman then withdrew all the monkeys.

⁶ Ramcaritmanas, B.K., 11. 33d, 5-8.



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There was another incident of a thief entering the house of Tulasi Das at night. The thief entered the house and collected the belongings of Tulasi Das. He had nothing but a few utensils and little clothes, just enough to cover his body. The thief wanted to take away all that from the house of the poet. As he came out, he found that two young and brave princes, one fair and one dark, were guarding the house of Tulasi Das. They had arrows and bows in their hands. The thief was frightened, for he understood that they were Rama and Lakshman. He fell at the feet of Tulasi Das, and begged of his pardon. Tulasi Das came out and found none. He realized that it was Rama who was giving him all kinds of protection, while keeping himself awake all the night. Tulasi Das was pained at this thought; and he gave away all his belongings to the poor with the hope that Rama would thus not be troubled any more at night. The thief also became his disciple and began to worship Rama.

One day a murderer visited Varanasi begging for alms, reciting the name of Rama. He was doing so in order to be absolved of his sins. Tulasi Das took him to his house and gave him consecrated food to eat. After that he

declared him as purified and sang the glory of Rama. The orthodox Brahmins, and they were very large in number, were offended; and challenged Tulasi Das to justify his action. To grant purification to a murderer was an inconceivable idea in those days. It was debated and decided by all the Brahmins that if Nandi, the bull of Shiva, would be pleased to eat the food from the hands of the murderer the action of Tulasi Das would be considered as justified. The man was taken to the temple where he offered food to the Bull and it was astonishing to behold the Bull eating the food. This incident led to the conversion of thousands of people to the cult of Tulasi Das, the path of devotion. The 'Kaliyug' was terribly offended and appeared in person before Tulasi Das. He threatened to devour him up, if he did not stop his teachings and acts of devotion to Rama. Tulasi Das then prayed to Hanuman. Hanuman advised him to write a poem of prayers for Rama and said that he would get it sanctioned by Rama to serve as a defence against 'Kaliyug'. He told him also that there was no other way to get rid of Kaliyug, for Kaliyug was the king and had the authority to rule over the people of his age. Tulasi Das wrote a poem which was named as 'Vinay-Patrika'.

It is said that in old age Tulasi Das happened to visit the village of his wife who had once reproached him for loving her blindly. He halted at the same house and began to cook. His wife whom he did not recognize gave him rice, fuel and vegetables. A little later she recognized him but did not disclose her identity. She offered him pepper, camphor and salt; but Tulasi Das said that he had them all with him. In the morning she disclosed everything and offered to accompany him, but he refused to accept her proposal. She rebuked him again for collecting pepper, camphor and salt but not taking her with him.⁷

RAMCARITMANAS

Tulasi Das begins the work with prayers to all the gods, sages, saints, poets, philosophers and finally the whole universe considering it as the manifestation of Rama and Seeta. He prays even to the wicked, that they may be pleased to abstain from creating obstructions in his work. He considers his 'Ramcaritmanas' a pious work; and compared to the enormous magnitude of the planned book, he finds his

⁷ W.D.P. Hill, The Holy Lake of the Acts of Rama, Introduction, O.U.P., Calcutta, 1971, p.xi.

talent totally inadequate. He hopes that only the God, whose glory he wishes to celebrate, may help him. After this he describes the marriage of Shiva and Parvati and some other legends relevant to the birth of Rama. Dasrath, the King of Ayodhya, has three queens but no son. The names of his three queens are Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyee in order of seniority. Dasrath expresses his grief to Vashistha, the priest, who advises him to perform a yajna, for acquiring son. He does it and gets four sons who are named as Rama, Bharat, Lakshman and Satruhan. +Rama and Bharat are dark; and Lakshman and Satruhan fair. When the children have become adolescent and acquired education, Vishwamitra, a high sage, visits the palace of Dasrath, and asks him to allow his two sons, Rama and Lakshman, to accompany him to his hermitage to remove the menace, regularly caused by the notorious demons. Rama and Lakshman then follow the sage and kill Tadaka, Subahu and many of the other demons. Later Vishwamitra takes them to Janakpur, and on his way to Janakpur, Rama grants salvation to Adh Ahilya, the cursed wife of Gautam. At Janakpur they join a 'Swayamvar' which has been declared to be held for the marriage of Seeta, the daughter of Janak. A bow which is

known as the bow of Shiva, is to be lifted. The person who can do this shall marry Seeta. All the Kings who have assembled there fail to move the bow even a little. On his turn Rama succeeds, to the amazement of all. Parasuram, the legendary foe of kings and embodiment of terror, comes to the place. After an interesting scene and dialogue with Lakshman and Rama he agrees to accept the supremacy of Rama. Seeta is married to Rama, which is followed by the marriages of all the brothers of Rama in the same family of Janak with the princesses. This is the story of the first canto of 'Ramcaritmanas' and Tulasi Das gives it the title Bal-Kand.

In the second canto, named Ayodhya-Kanda, conflicts of domestic rivalry occur in the family of Dasrath. Dasrath proposes to crown Rama as the King of Ayodhya and to retire himself. Kaikeyee, having been persuaded by Manthara, a maid-servant, decides to mar the celebration; and demands that Rama should be sent to forest to dwell there for fourteen years and Bharat crowned as the King of Ayodhya. Dasrath receives a shock; and ultimately dies. Bharat is not in Ayodhya when these events happen. He is at the native place of his mother, Kaikeyee. Vashistha sends for him at once. Bharat returns to Ayodhya, which looks deserted, and he is

shocked deeply to hear what has happened in his absence. Rama, Lakshman and Seeta have already left for the forest, and Dasrath for the Heaven. He finds that his mother is the principal cause of all these calamities, and rebukes her for her mischievous conduct. In stead of accepting the crown he decides to leave for the forest in search of Rama, Lakshman and Seeta. He takes his trusted followers also with him. Rama receives them in the forest with utmost courtesy and kindness. He consoles Bharat and persuades him to obey the will of their father; and asks him to return to Ayodhya to look after the subject and the family for fourteen years. He assures him of his return to Ayodhya at the end of the period. Bharat asks for the wooden sandal of the feet of Rama, which Rama gives him with pleasure and love. Bharat returns to Ayodhya, worships the sandal of Rama and spends his days like an ascetic doing penance on the outskirts of the city. He lives a severe life at home as Rama lives in the forest.

The third canto is named as Aranya-Kanda. Rama meets sages and saints at various places of the forest and then settles down at Panchawati. Supnakha, the sister of Ravan, happens to see Rama and is fascinated by his grace.

She offers to marry him, but Rama sends her to Lakshman. Lakshman sends her back to Rama, saying that Rama is the Lord and he is his servant only. Supnakha feels insulted and becomes enraged. Lakshman chops her nose and ears off. She rushes back to Khar and Dusan, her brave brothers. They declare war and are themselves killed by Rama. Supnakha then goes to Ravan and arouses him to vengeance. Ravan goes to Mareech and asks him to become a golden deer to tempt Seeta. Mareech very reluctantly obeys Ravan. Seeta beholds the deer with golden spots on its body. She expresses her desire to get the skin of the deer. Rama goes away chasing the deer, who runs very fast to take Rama far away. Being ultimately hit by the arrow of Rama, he reveals his real form and cries out 'O Lakshman!' The voice is heard by Seeta; who asks Lakshman to run to Rama's help believing that Rama is in trouble. Ravan finds Seeta alone, forcibly puts her in his chariot, and drives away. Rama returns with Lakshman having killed Mareech. They find Seeta missing, and frantically search for her; but to no avail. This is followed by the fourth and fifth cantos named respectively as Kishkindha-Kanda and Sundar-Kanda. They meet Hanuman who introduces them to Sugreeva who has been driven away by his brother, named Bali, the

King of Kishkindha and of the monkeys. Rama kills Bali and crowns Sugreeva as the King of monkeys. Sugreeva sends out all the monkeys in search of Seeta. Hanuman crosses over the sea and meets Seeta. Having heard the sorrows of Seeta, and having talked to her, he sets the city of Ravana on fire. When he returns to Rama with the news of Seeta he is received with overwhelming gratitude by Rama. A bridge is constructed and the army of monkeys and bears march on. Here is the beginning of Lanka-Kanda. Rama has crossed the sea, and now he sends Angad, the son of Bali, to the court of Ravan as his envoy to honourably ask him to return Seeta. A very interesting dialogue takes place between Angad and Ravan; and the latter is humiliated in his own court by Angad. Ravan, too proud as he is, does not care for insults and in an attempt to ridicule Angad is himself ridiculed. Ultimately a war is declared and the demons are killed including Kumbhkaran and Meghnad, the most mighty ones. Last of all, Ravan is killed; whose fall is followed by hymns of praise to celebrate the victory of Rama. Vibhisan, who has earlier defected from the camp of Ravan in spite of being his own brother, is enthroned as the King of Lanka. In the meantime, fourteen

years have passed away. In the last canto, namely, the Uttarkand, Rama returns to Ayodhya with Seeta, Lakshman and a host of his monkey supporters. They stay in Ayodhya for some time with Rama. Rama is crowned formally and Ayodhya returns to a new life of peace, prosperity and harmony. Rama gives a touching send off to the monkeys who with reluctance return home. Hanuman only stays back with Rama. The last part of the canto deals with the origin of the story of 'Ramcaritmanas' and philosophical discourses.

I I

The life of John Milton has been written in a number of books, and his career has been shown as eventful in all of them. The opinions do not vary in respect of the date and place of birth of John Milton. There is no uncertainty about the information regarding his parentage and friends also. But the opinions vary widely about the political, literary, religious, educational and philosophical ideologies of Milton. They have been discussed for centuries; and Milton has had both supporters and opponents. But the events, through ages, have led only to the enhancement rather than

waning of his fame. In spite of all that can be said about the complexity and toughness of the subject-matter of his works, it can not be denied that Milton has become more readable and understandable in the modern time. His stature has attained an imperishable eminence; and his works have drawn innumerable scholars to explore new and useful informations for the posterity. I have dealt with certain aspects of Milton's Paradise Lost in the following chapters with a view to making a comparative study with Ramcaritmanas of Tulasi Das. Here I propose to write in brief only about the life of John Milton in order to enable the interested readers to have a glance at his life, whose work I have made a topic for my thesis.

Milton was born in 1608 in a Protestant bourgeois and cultured family. His great-grand father and grand-father were Roman Catholics but his father became a Puritan Anglican. The grand-father of the poet had expelled John Milton, the elder, from his house. It was done because the poet's father had become a Bible-reading Protestant which could not be tolerated by the old school. The father of the poet had come to London twenty five years

before John Milton, the poet, was born. He was a successful scrivener who had prospered to make enough money for himself and his children. The profession was primarily of legal nature and also usury to some extent. By 1632 John Milton, the elder, had retired after setting up his younger son, Christopher, as a lawyer. But he was in a position to provide his elder son, John Milton, with all kinds of opportunities for good education, including expenses for his continental tour for fifteen months. Milton, the poet, did not like the involvement of his family in business-like legal profession. After the father of the poet had retired to rural Horton, the younger Christopher Milton inherited some of the functions of his father, particularly of collecting debt for his clients. He had inherited some of his father's property. These things required one to be a little too much of worldly pursuits, Milton, the poet, disliked and frequently expressed his disapproval of the view of his brother. The legal profession was never his choice nor it could yield a desirable result in his uniquely chosen career to become a great poet. But Milton, however, never hesitated to seek and apply the legal process to enforce what he believed to be his rights. He possessed an extensive and remarkable knowledge of the law. Milton did not like the

profession of law or usury, but he maintained a good relation with his parents, who were interested and involved in this job. The poet actively questioned ethical credibility of usury; but was passively reconciled to himself to think that, after all, it was lawful. He deemed it wise to maintain silence in order to keep the balance, at least for the time being. The other topic, on which the poet disagreed with his father, was the proposal for Milton's joining the Church if he did not like law. Milton's father, himself being a lover of music who had composed poems and participated in "The Triumphs of Oriana", a tribute to queen Elizabeth, became amenable to discussion when his elder son had decided otherwise. His only apprehension was, as it was often thought, that poetic career would not yield regular income and it might make Milton poor. The thirty-one year old Milton was provided with money for a tour to Italy by his father even though it was not certain that John Milton would flourish in his career as a poet. This shows that the differences in the family of Milton were of the nature of mutual deliberations involving the genuine appreciation of common interest. This bore a benign influence on the poet in developing an intensively

cultured outlook. This served as a boon to Milton; for he could cultivate the capacity to review the past, to screen it and then to produce something relevant in his works by way of synthesis. What was the matter with his family was not fanaticism but the need for personal independence, which enabled, the poet to write verses which were considered marvellous when he was about ten years old; and he was thence-forward brought up deliberately to be a man of genius. A colossal pride must have been latent in a family where such a thing was accepted as normal. Milton's mother was also of equally great influence. Not much is known about her, except that she was the daughter of a London merchant, and had been a widow before she married the father of Milton. Perhaps she had weak eyes; and it is said that Milton inherited his blindness partly from her. She was rich and charitable and her soothing generosity had deep influence on Milton in his childhood.

Some of the other influences and contacts which Milton had were of varying nature. Interestingly enough, it is found that the people with whom he happened to have

acquaintances were not of his age. The records show that his relationships were mainly with tutors, such as Alexander Gill, his Headmaster at St. Pauls; Thomas Young, his extra-private tutor; the librarian of the Bodleian Library, Oxford; and Charles Diodati whom he met at St. Pauls. The influences of Richard Stock, the rector of his parish, were obviously of some value to Milton. Milton was to repudiate many of the views of Stock, on polygamy, divorce, purpose of marriage and so on. But Stock's preachings may have started Milton thinking on some of these topics. One of the views of Stock which became acceptable to Milton was that man should be charitable to himself and his family as well as to others. While at Cambridge, it is said, Milton had some trouble with the college authorities which resulted in his rustication for a short period. The nature of his offence is not properly explained; but it seems to be more of ideological than personal character.

Milton's life was full of serious, yet interesting, events. Even in his private life he has a record of marrying thrice, once before and twice after becoming blind. To describe the political, literary, social, religious

and educational controversies, that involved him and evolved from him, will be a long and perhaps unnecessary attempt for my purpose here. Before I end, I may only say that even in his last years he had the serenity of mind. In spite of his ill-health, and massive ideological pressure on his brain, he used to go for a walk, though blind. He used to receive distinguished visitors courteously. His daughters had left him alone; but he blamed them not, for he considered himself to be responsible for it. He died probably on November 8, 1674. All the dates and events of his life are authenticated by documents, except ironically enough, the date and time of his death. It is said that he died with so little pain or emotion that the time of his expiring was not perceived by those in the room. Paradise Lost is his immortal document of a great and revolutionary age for the posterity.

PARADISE LOST

The epic is written in twelve cantos and each canto is named as Book. In Book I, Milton introduces the whole subject, Man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed. Then he describes the cause of his fall, the serpent, or rather Satan in the

serpent, who revolting from God and drawing to his side many angels, was driven out of Heaven with all his crew into the great Deep. There after Satan is presented with his fallen angels into Hell, a place of utter darkness. Satan calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him. They are shown as lying on a burning Lake, thunder-struck. They confer their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions who lay till then confounded. They rise and Satan addresses them, comforts them with new hopes yet of regaining Heaven, but tells them lastly of a new world and new kind of creature to be placed therein according to an ancient prophecy or report in Heaven. To find out the truth of this prophecy and to determine thereon he refers to a full council. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan rises, suddenly built out of the Deep. The infernal peers then sit in Council. In Book II the consultations begin. Satan debates whether an other battle be hazarded for the recovery of Heaven. Some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred to search the truth of the prophecy in Heaven concerning the creation of another world and another kind of creature equal or not much inferior to themselves. They suppose this must have

happened by this time. Satan undertakes alone the voyage, is applauded and honoured, for all others are reluctant and diffident. The Council ends, and all engage themselves, according to their inclinations, in horrible employments available there to pass away the time till Satan returns. Satan passes on his journey to Hell Gates, finds them shut and frightfully guarded. When the gates are opened he discovers the great Gulf between Hell and Heaven. With difficulties he passes through directed by Chaos, the power of that place, to the sight of this new world which he sought. In Book III God, with his son sitting at his right, is shown on the throne. He sees Satan flying towards the newly created world. He foretells the success of Satan in perverting mankind, clears his own justice and wisdom from all imputations, having created Man free and able enough to have withstood his tempter; yet declares his purpose of Grace towards him in case he falls not of his own malice, as did Satan, but by him seduced. The son of God renders praises to his Father for the manifestation of his gracious purpose towards Man. The God again declares that the Grace can not be extended towards Man without the satisfaction of Divine Justice. Man has offended the majesty of God by aspiring to God-hood

and therefore with all his progeny must die unless some one can be found sufficient to answer for his offence. The son of God freely offers himself, the Father accepts him and ordains his incarnation, pronounces his exaltation above all names in Heaven and Earth, commands all the angels to adore him which is done. Meanwhile Satan alights upon the bare convex of this world's outermost Orb, where wandering he first finds a place called the Limbo of Vanity. He comes to the Gates of Heaven. On his way to the Orb of the sun he finds Uriel, the regent of the Orb, but changes himself first into the shape of a meaner angel. He pretends to have a desire to behold the new creation and Man whom God had placed there. He inquires of him the place of his habitation, and is directed. He alights first on Mount Niphates. In Book IV Satan, confounded with conflicting emotions, enters into Paradise. He wonders at the excellence of beauty of Adam and Eve and their happy state, overhears their discourse and gathers that the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge was forbidden them to eat under the penalty of death. He plans to seduce them to transgress. Meanwhile, Uriel descending on a sun-beam warns Gabriel, that some evil spirit escaped the Deep and in the shape of a good

Angel came down to Paradise. Gabriel promises to find him out before the dawn. Night coming on, Adam and Eve discourse of going to their rest. Gabriel, drawing forth his Bands of Night watch to walk the round of Paradise, appoints two strong Angels to Adam's Bower, lest the Evil Spirit should be there doing some harm to Adam or Eve, sleeping. They find Satan there at the ears of Eve, tempting her in a dream. They bring him to Gabriel who questions him but is scornfully answered and resisted. Obstructed by a sign from Heaven he flies out of Paradise. In Book V Eve relates her troublesome dream to Adam who likes it not and comforts her. God, to render Man inexcusable, sends Raphael to admonish him of his obedience, of his free estate, of his enemy near at hand. Raphael comes down to Paradise and is greeted and entertained by Adam and Eve. They discourse at table and Raphael performs his message, minds Adam of his state and of his enemy, relates who that enemy is and how he came to be so, beginning from his first revolt in Heaven and the occasion thereof. In Book VI, Raphael relates how Michael and Gabriel were sent forth to battle against Satan and his angels and how on the third day in spite of their terrible resistance Satan and his legions were driven out,

deep down with horror and confusion into the place of their punishment by Messiah. Book VII describes the creation of the world in six days. In Book VIII Adam inquires concerning celestial motions and is doubtfully answered by Raphael. Raphael exhorts him to search rather things more worthy of knowledge. Adam asserts and still desirous to detain Raphael relates to him what he remembered since his own creation, his placing in Paradise, his talk with God concerning solitude and fit society and his first meeting and nuptial with Eve. After repeated admonitions Raphael departs.

In Book IX Satan, who had earlier withdrawn for a while from the Paradise, returns with meditated guile as a mist by night into Paradise and enters into a sleeping serpent. Adam and Eve in the morning go forth to their works which Eve proposes to divide in several places, each labouring apart. Adam does not consent apprehending the danger, lest that enemy of whom they were forewarned should attempt finding her alone. Eve feels insolent at the thought and feels desirous of giving a trial of her strength. She insists on going apart and Adam yields at last. The serpent finds her alone. He approaches in

a subtle manner, first gazing, then speaking with flattery extolling Eve above all other creatures. Eve wonders and asks the serpent how he attained human speech. The serpent answers that by tasting the fruit of a certain Tree in the garden he attained both to speech and reason. Eve requests him to bring her to that Tree and finds it to be the same forbidden Tree of knowledge. The serpent grows bolder, and with wiles and arguments induces her at length to eat the fruit. Eve is pleased with the taste and deliberates whether to impart thereof to Adam or not. She brings the fruit at last to Adam, relates to him what persuaded her to eat it. Adam, shocked and amazed, perceives her lot and resolves through vehemence of love to perish with her and eats the fruit. The consciousness of their nakedness grows now in them and they begin to cover the hitherto uncared for parts of their bodies. Further, they begin to quarrel and accuse each other also. In Book X the guardian angels forsake Paradise and return up to Heaven. God declares that the entrance of Satan could not be prevented by them. He sends his son to judge the transgressor. The Son descends and awards sentence accordingly. He takes pity and clothes them both and reascends. Sin and Death, sitting till then at

the Gates of Hell, resolve to sit no longer there confined to Hell, but to follow Satan upto the place of Man. They pave a broad high way or bridge over Chaos according to the track that Satan first made to make the way easier from Hell to this world. Satan arrives at Pandemonium and relates with boastings his success against Man; but in stead of applause is entertained with a general hiss by all his audience, transformed with himself also suddenly into serpents, according to his doom given in Paradise. They are deluded with a show of forbidden Tree springing up before them; they, greedily reaching to eat the fruit, chew dust and bitter ashes. God fortells the final victory of his Son over sin and death. Adam more and more perceiving his fallen state heavily bewails and rejects the condolence of Eve. She persists and at length appeases him. To evade the curse likely to fall on their off-spring she proposes to Adam violent ways which he does not approve. He puts in her mind the hope of a late promise that her seed should be revenged on the serpent and exhorts her with him to seek Peace of the offended Deity by repentance and supplication. In Book XI the Son of God presents to his Father the prayer of our

first parents, now repenting, and intercedes for them. God accepts them but declares that they must no longer abide in Paradise. He sends Michael with a band of Cherubin to dispossess them after revealing the future things. Adam shows to Eve certain ominous signs. He discerns Michael and goes out to meet him. The Angel speaks out their departure and Eve laments. Adam pleads but submits. The Angel leads him upto a high hill, sets before him in vision what shall happen till the flood. In Book XII Michael continues from the flood to relate what shall succeed; then, in the mention of Abraham, comes by degrees to explain, who that seed of the woman shall be, which was promised, his incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension, the state of the Church till his second coming. Adam greatly satisfied and recom-
forted by these relations and promises descends the Hill with Michael, waken's Eve, who all this while had slept, but with gentle dreams composed to quickness of mind and submission. Michael in either hand leads them out of Paradise, the fiery sword waving behind them, and the Cherubin taking their stations to guard the place.

I I I

What may be of general common interest for the scholars in both of these poems i.e. 'Ramcaritmanas' and Paradise Lost may be guessed even at a first hand reading of these books, the long narrative style, the multiplicity of myths and traditions, the ideologies involving many values of human society and the panormic view of a landscape full of gods and demons; serpents, animals, trees, lakes, mountains and flowers. These, of course, have not been primarily the concern of my thesis. I have taken up a subject-matter of comparative approach to different aspects of some important issues in which the past and present were synthesized in literary models by the poets. How Tulasi Das and Milton have drawn from their traditions and how they have presented them with alterations, additions and combinations of many complex problems making everything relevant to the contemporary society. Both the poets have similar approach in adding their own contribution to what was already existent while striving for the great human cause. If any one tries to find out anything other than this, I am afraid, he may be searching in vain. Being a comparative study my thesis dwells upon the methods of approach to some common issues and ideologies with which the two poets were deeply concerned in

their epics. Far from reviewing all the aspects I have selected only a few of them and have attempted to identify the spheres in which the views of the two great poets may be examined in the same ways. If anything new emerges out of my work I must consider my attempt amply awarded. The poets may be better understood when read together than in isolation, and I have brought them closer to each other in my work. 'Ramcaritmanas' and Paradise Lost are both doctrinal to a nation. Not only that, they are prophetic too. They are great memoirs of those values on which the society and its civilization are erected. They exhibit the literary, theological, philosophical, political and social trends of their age. There is scope on every one of these for the scholars to write useful books. The moment one has made himself familiar with Milton's God, one feels tempted to think of Tulasi's Ram also. I have also, now and then, fallen into this temptation in my thesis.

The works of the two poets being in two different languages, present a problem of reading and recitation, I have read the works of John Milton and I have read the works of Tulasi Das, both in the languages in which they

were written. The problems of getting synonymous expression have been always difficult to solve and I have now and then faced the same problem which may have resulted in weakening the emphasis on certain points. I have quoted the verses of Tulasi Das in English translation taken primarily from my own unpublished scripts of 'Ramcaritmanas'. Since I had completed the translation of 'Ramcaritmanas' before I started my research on this comparative study, it became easy for me to take quotations at ease from whatever part of the epic I needed. There are certain words, even verses, in 'Ramcaritmanas', which being read in Hindi may give two or even more meanings. While selecting such words and verses in translation only one meaning can be derived. My quotations, therefore, are not likely to create confusion. I have chosen the most popularly accepted meanings of such words and verses for my purpose. There may be variations in spelling of names of proper nouns and I must say, it is due to the differences in phonetics of the two languages. Ram, Ramayan, Bharat and Seeta may be written as Rama, Ramayana, Bharata and Sita also which are acceptable to the scholars. In my reading of Paradise Lost and borrowing quotations from it there has not been any difficulty. This is because my thesis is

written in English which is the language of Paradise
Lost also.

I have based my study mainly on the poetical works
of John Milton edited by Helen Derbishire ed. 1958 and
published by Oxford University Press, New York, Toronto,
and 'Ramcaritmanas' published by Gita Press, Gorakhpur.

CONCLUSIONS

In the foregoing chapters I have tried to bring the two poets of two countries together in order to evaluate them and stimulate new thinking on comparative study of the great works of these poets. The scholars in India have long been in contact with the English people and English language. Not only this, English has been treated always on the basis of top-most priority in India, particularly in the Universities and other institutions of learning. English literature has influenced Indian literatures in all the languages to a great extent. In spite of this there has been little work done on the comparative aspects of these two. I have in my own way attempted to present the comparisons between the works of John Milton and Tulasi Das who had written before the two countries and their languages came in contact. They wrote not under the influence of each other, on the contrary they were totally ignorant of each other. But their convictions in the ethical, philosophical, social and theological spheres were so identical that being put together the two poets would seem to belong to one country and one culture only. Milton appears more akin to Tulasi Das than

to many of the poets of England in the same way as Tulasi Das appears more akin to John Milton than to the poets of India. Both could be read together so identically in many ways that one could hardly believe that they had not been directly influenced by each other. In spite of this, not much has yet been done on this subject.

In my introduction I have glanced at the vastness of the subject and have already said that my choice and endeavour has been to study some of the points only. In chapter two I have outlined how the two poets judiciously delved deep into their respective traditions, grasped fully the theology and literature and reproduced the ideas derived from them into new frameworks. It was not a total borrowing or imitation. They attempted and succeeded to a very large extent in bringing about a synthesis between the past and the contemporary values. The holy sources, considered till their times as non-human, were transformed in their contemporary society into codes of religious, political and social ethics. The approaches of both the poets to the holy sources are similar. The unprecedented and perhaps the greatest contribution of these poets was that they inter-related the old concepts of holiness with the human values. They neither rejected nor totally accepted whether it was Bible or Vedas,

but brought them both in human contact and adding their own interpretations gave them a meaning and human relevance. The whole human civilisation seems to have been echoed in their songs with a prophetic forecast.

In Chapter three I have dealt with almost the same topic as in Chapter II dwelling upon the process of transformation of ancient literary wealth of aesthetic and historical character. The main purpose of John Milton was to write an epic of unsurpassable length and significance and for this he needed guidance both in style and in content. This was also the case with Tulasi Das. Both of them have described at length, wherever necessary, their indebtedness to poets and philosophers whose works have lent them both style and contents. To narrate a long story in verse with a high theme on a grand scale was not a new thing either in Europe or in India. Milton as well as Tulasi had a strong conviction that the God in Heaven liked songs. In the Ram-caritmanas Tulasi Das has written about the value of good poems and asserted that they are the most befitting and effective means for delighting and persuading God. I have therefore shown how the predecessors of John Milton and Tulasi Das could provide materials. Tulasi Das built the

theme of 'Ramcaritmanas' primarily on two great political works, 'Ramayana' and 'Adhyatma Ramayana' the former written by Valmiki and the latter by Vyasa. There is one story running in both of them but with a great difference of style and purpose. Tulasi Das creates a new epic out of these two works and names it as "Ramcaritmanas". The literal meaning of Ramcaritmanas as translated by W.D.P. Hill is 'The Holy Lake of Acts of Rama'. The meaning of 'Ramayana' in English translation is the abode of Rama and of 'Adhyatma Ramayana' the transcendental abode of Rama. It is clear therefore, that Tulasi Das emphasizes on the acts of Rama which are performed in a world inhabited by human beings involving himself into the various roles of playing and performing social duties while retaining his divine entity intact. The Ramayana of Valmiki shows that everything happens in the life of Rama as a matter of course. A great prince and warrior he is, and his deeds are remarkable, but his birth does not seem to have been predetermined as is found in case of Rama of Tulasi Das. Adhyatma Ramayana is a philosophical work which elevates Rama to a transcendental stage. Tulasi Das had many other historical and poetical sources also and he made use of them to add aesthetic and moral texture to his work.

John Milton selected a theme for his *Paradise Lost* which was also of transcendental character, but he made it so complex that the Earth, the Heaven, the Hell and all those who inhabited there became the personages; and most of them to personify only the ideologies of the poet on various issues of life. The fall of Man, for that was his subject, is apparently not dealt with in isolation. It is an issue which all the forces of God and angels are seriously concerned with. John Milton had greater advantage than Tulasi Das. He benefited from the works of the poets both of his own country and of the continent. He knew and understood his own country and people well. Beowulf, Spenser, Chaucer and Shakespeare had passed on to him an enriched literary tradition, and to it Milton added his knowledge of a wide range of subjects which he had acquired from study and contacts both in England and outside. England which was getting too hot, at least politically, provoked Milton to formulate his views. His study of the work of Homer and Virgil gave him style, a technique to describe a long narrative story. The third chapter of my thesis discusses and examines how John Milton could transform his acquisitions in *Paradise Lost*.

In the fourth chapter I have deliberated a topic

which has been controversial for ages and is yet in the modern world unsolved topic. Women have played in literature roles, both mighty and meek. John Milton and Tulasi Das have their own views on women. I have examined how Tulasi Das makes the women play various roles according to their ranks on varying occasions. There are many female characters in 'Ramcaritmanas'. There are female characters not only in human society but in the assembly of gods also. The purpose is not to treat women in isolation or merely as objects of amorous play. They play significant role. Tulasi Das makes them behave as they are expected to behave in a natural position. I have tried to show that the poet is not biased towards female character as has been alleged by some scholars. What I have found is that the scholars themselves seem to have been biased, and with their suspicious reasoning have tried to malign the great poet by placing the female characters in notionally mistaken contexts. Milton's female characters are few in number and though they are the results of his own self-nurtured opinion and experiences he has dealt with them variously. His notion of women is certainly different from that of Tulasi Das, but the difference is conditioned by ethical circumspection of the contemporary society.

As regards the style and approach to characterisation I have touched upon the two main characters, Satan and Ravan. In stead of writing a separate chapter on the followers of these two eminent characters, which could have possibly been done, I have presented them in association with their leaders. Ravan and Satan have identical inclinations and their followers both agree and disagree with them. They are in categories and can not be grouped all in one class; they are good as well as bad. Some of them are wiser, if physically not mightier, than their leaders. This has been elaborately discussed in the last chapter of this thesis.

It is hoped that my work will open new avenues for further research on comparative literature. I shall consider my effort amply awarded if it provokes scholars to take up such critical projects.