



## CONFESSION, SACRIFICE, AND OBEDIENCE IN “NITYA”: THE LANGUAGE WHICH NEVER FORGIVES THE GOD

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### ABSTRACT

There is a concept of iteration which is very much familiar in deconstructive reading. Matching deconstructive reading with RK Naryan would *apparently* be a matchless comparison. But in his short story “Nitya” there is a lot of iteration and repetition of a certain vow. But why was the need for such a repetition of some vow or any vow, for that matter, compulsory? Is repetition compulsory, compulsory without self-accusation? Why only the hair form the symbol of crown (as we have in Buddhist semiotics) and grow its meaning to the sign of puberty, pubic in “Nitya”? Why the question of hair is raised in “Nitya, which is merely senseless and a cluster of dead cells? Why the hair which lives and grows inside but dies outside, in plenty is actually raised in “Nitya”? Hair for which there is no plural as it is itself plural and singular. Hair: A place of self pleasure, self eroticism, self stimulation, self love, narcissism. This paper, “Confession, Sacrifice, and Obedience in “Nitya””: The Language which never Forgives the God” would look into this repetition, of a vow in Nitya, with the lens of deconstructive reading incorporating the concepts of ‘Dead Author’ of Barthes and ‘Forgiveness’ of Derrida.

**Keywords:** Iteration, vow, disobedience.

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There is proliferation of scenes of repentance. (Derrida 42).

But why was the need for such a repetition of some vow or any vow, for that matter, compulsory? Is repetition compulsory, compulsory without self-accusation? Why only the hair form the symbol of crown (as we have in Buddhist semiotics) and grow its meaning to the sign of puberty, pubic in “Nitya”? Why the question of hair is raised in “Nitya, which is merely senseless and a cluster of dead cells? Why the hair which lives and grows inside but dies outside, in plenty is actually raised in “Nitya”? Hair for which there is no plural as it is itself plural and singular. Hair: A place of self pleasure, self eroticism, self stimulation, self love, narcissism.

All these whys can be answered by many whos. Who made a vow in a secret, a blind vow to sacrifice which went unrepeated? Secret and sacrifice. But the sacrifice of hair cannot be called the crime against humanity in general terms. Anything a biotic is not human and has no being in the sense of Heidegger (28).

Why the vow was forgotten and remembered when Nitya was twenty? The remembrance could be a semiotic play of différance. Hair/Heir or Pray/Prey:

The promise and the diary were lost sight of during Nitya's grow in years when the family suddenly found itself drawn into a legal battle over their property... Father was determined to fight it out as the will was unequivocally in his favour and made his sole *heir* [italics by the present writer] to the property. ("Nitya" 16)

The question of law and their busyness with the family law suit let the parents forget the question of vow, of secrecy within home, of vow and of sacrifice. For Nitya the real problem was that this entire episode was against his narcissistic call for the adolescence. Thus Nitya was obediently disobedient and coming of his age. But obedience keeps no space for age, negotiation, mercy.

The sacrifice which was conditional but whose condition has been fulfilled had a language. Otherwise also sacrifice is the language for the mute given by the other. This voice must be given to the mute so that he speaks louder. But to whom the parents assured of the sacrifice, in a mnemonic diary or in a piece of cloth? And when they forgot this promise whom were they forgiving?

But what are the inherent dangers if there is disobedience of god on the part of parents? What then god will and can do is not said in the text, no justification of his punishment, if he/she punishes anyone. ( If there is a danger of punishment then forgiveness and an appeal of mercy must be there).

Derrida in his famed book *Cosmopolitan and Forgiveness* drew forgiving the unforgivable, the impossible within one ambit. Here, in "Nitya," forgiveness takes a different turn. His parents are already forgiven by themselves, for this forgetfulness, conditionally but not secretly. Can one term the repetition of mother (or parents in Nitya) as confession?

Is the secrecy of forgiveness conditional for the self when one says 'I forgive you' (Derrida 58). Then if this question of forgiveness for one's own self is stretched to the limits of generality then one can ask: Who is this unforgivable who forgives secretly (but how can one forgive oneself secretly?)? Is it 'I'? Not who am I? But will that I forgive this I, who is me? Or if the other (Nitya) will not be obedient to me (Father or Mother) then how will this 'I' be forgiven? Condition of obedience of the other is essential for the sake of letting the forgiveness flow like the eternal spring of water. Genuine forgiveness is timeless. Genuine forgiveness as we have the current of unconditionality. But even Divine law is not true as it is unseen and has the content of illusion and paranoia of faith attached to it.

Nitya's forgiving oneself for the parents, for the error of forgetfulness is impossible here. Because forgetfulness is not conditional for forgiveness as only the sacrifice of the other (Nitya) is. For the crowd assembled at the village, sacrifice was a "fresh interest." The sacrifice was a sign of "barter" as Nitya said once (15). For priest it was conditional and monetary as he asked for a penalty in lieu of the same.

But for father it not son as we read in Abrahamic or Biblical texts. It was something of son. Then the question is not only of son but son of whom? To say son and analyze him as I did in the previous pages would be wrong.

To bring all sons in one analyses is unforgivable for many. Only Freudians will support this: This putting of all Fathers in one side and all the Sons in another frame of analysis and would be frame-analysis.

Violence of fathers, of sacrifice of sons leads to violence on every level: Proliferation of violence. Tonsure not for mourning but to escape mourning. But why mother accompanied Father with an equal enthusiasm on the top of the hill? How can one ever say of penis envy of mother? Hair became a symbol of phallus?: "one and only Padmavathi for a whole city, as the saying goes... . Father kept repeating monotonously, firmly suppressing the name 'Padmavati,' which kept bobbing up again and again on his tongue" (Nitya 14).

What if Nitya was double-disobedient: to the parents and to the Parents of parents(the God)? However, Nitya forgave himself for being ill, the curse of illness, but he and his final disobedience does not let his Father and Mother release the spring of forgiveness for themselves, for their Is.

In the same way, the language is punished because it was created to describe punishment. As in the Garden of Eden the god punished Adam/Eve and in return they punished God. This is the guilt we have given to god or even author; we punish *him* with our obedience of disobedience, disobedience of disobedience. The language in "Nitya," though mundane and having the essence of the middle class families of rural India, truly shows as to how 'the language' is the tool of disobedience to the God.

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