

Finding Happiness

Psychologist **Shama Patel** talks to **Violet Vaz** about her recently released book '21 Ways of Being Happy'



City-based Shama Patel is a warm person to meet. A practising psychologist, she enjoys spending her time listening to music, sketching, painting, practising yoga, appreciating nature and meeting people over masala chai. Here's chatting her up:

In brief, what is the book about?
The book is basically aimed at making you fall in love with yourself and the life you live. So basically, shed all the walls and dramatic notions you build around finding true 'happiness'. I firmly believe that it is possible for everyone to practise happiness and live happily every single day.

What made you write the book?
I used to come across many people during my professional practice who would tightly hold on to all possible guilt, grudges, suppressed emo-

tions and then wonder why their life is such a mess. They would regard the feeling of happiness as some alien concept which either they don't deserve or they can't have. While I could cater to a few clients and assist them in releasing this unwanted stress, the reach was limited.

I wanted to increase that reach and assist as many people as possible and it was then that I decided to write about my personal experiences and emotional downfalls and share what I learnt from these experiences. I began maintaining a blog where I wrote about my feelings and what I did to overcome that emotional phase in life. I maintained that blog since 2012 and simultaneously took various assignments to improve my writing skills. Finally in 2014, Grapevine India discovered my professional strength and writing style and offered me a contract of writing series of non-fiction (self-help) books.

What do you love about writing?
Writing allows me to express myself. I love the fact that writing allowed me to easily connect with the 'supreme intelligence' and brought me closer to myself and helped me grow as a person.

According to you, what's the secret to being happy?
The secret to being happy is to fall in love with yourself. We all have that one person whom we love and are willing to do anything for him or her. Imagine now if you did the same for yourself! Giving yourself that unconditional love, care and importance you give to your lover! When you become capable of doing this, you won't abandon yourself and brood over unhappiness when you encounter a failure or a breakup. You'll still be closer to happiness, despite the pain.

21 WAYS OF BEING HAPPY
Author: Shama Patel
Pages: 225
Publishers: Grapevine India Publishers Pvt Ltd
Price: ₹140

Create your happiness!

Blending psychology with creativity, Shama Patel, pens down *21 Ways of Being Happy* with the aim of getting you closer to yourself. The author shares some of her personal failures which she managed to overcome after much struggle.

Through the book, Shama tries to convey the message that each of us is responsible for creating our happiness. After all, happiness is a state of mind and not a condition or situation that only a few are entitled to.

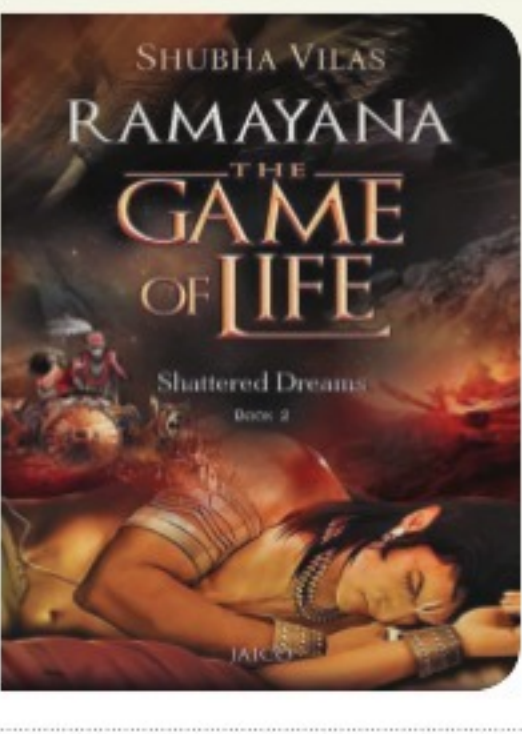
Tackling 21 different topics ranging from failure, guilt, self-pity, regret, anxiety to unrealistic expectations, Shama enlists ways and tricks to stay happy, forever. Using a casual conversational tone, the author focuses more on sharing than preaching, making it easier for the readers to connect with the situation.

The book makes for an interesting read and successfully drives home the message.

COMING UP

Ramayana: The Game of Life - Shattered Dreams

Shattered Dreams is the sequel to the national bestseller, *Rise of the Sun Prince*, in the new spiritual and motivational series *Ramayana: The Game of Life*. Twelve joyful years have passed in Ayodhya since the wedding of Rama and Sita at the end of Book 1. Now, in *Shattered Dreams*, the author narrates the riveting drama of Rama's exile.



Child 44 adapted into a movie

Tom Rob Smith international bestseller *Child 44* trilogy is adapted into a film. The film stars Tom Hardy, Noomi Rapace and Gary Oldman. The novel is inspired by a real-life investigation and is a relentless story of love, hope and bravery in a totalitarian world. It has been translated into 35 languages and sold over 2 million worldwide. It has won several awards. The book is published by Simon and Schuster

BOOK BABBLE

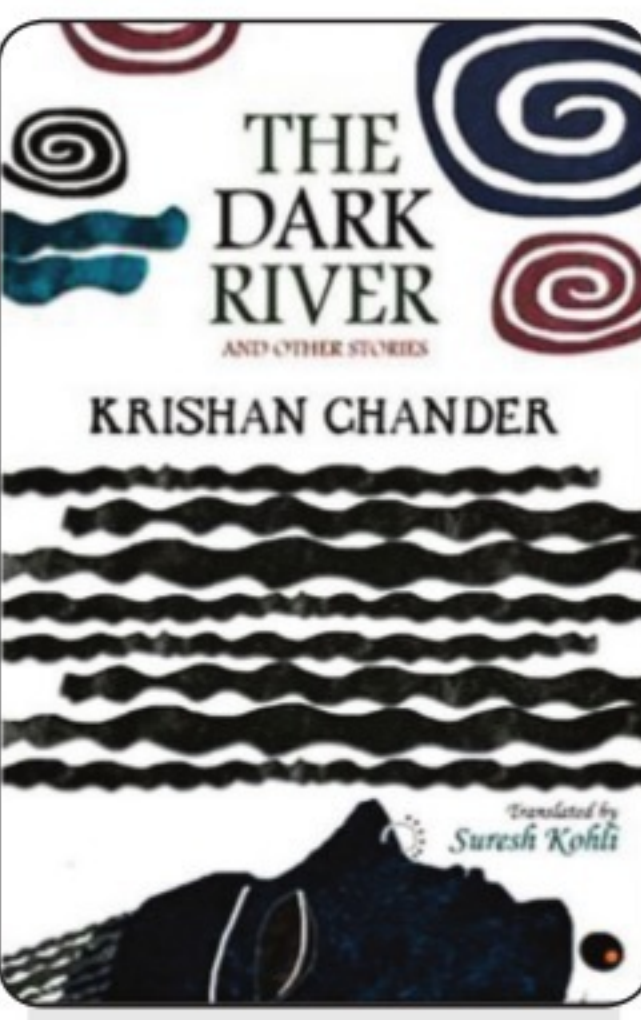
23 books selected for Sahitya Akademi Translation Prize 2014

Translations of popular books like *The Immortals of Meluha*, *The God of Small Things* and *Mujhe Chand Chahiye*, among others, have been selected for the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Translation Prize 2014, the organisers said in New Delhi. "The books were selected on the basis of recommendations made by the selection committees of three members each in the concerned languages," said a statement from the literary institute. Among the prize winners are — Bipul Deori, who has translated Amish Tripathi's English novel *The Immortals of Meluha* into Assamese; Surath Narzary, who translated Rabindranath Tagore's poetry *Geetanjali* into Bodo; Priya AS for translating Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, which also won the Man Booker Prize in 1997, into Malayalam; and Dambarnani Pradhan for translating Surendra Verma's Hindi novel *Mujhe Chand Chahiye* into Nepali. The award in Santali will be declared later. The prize carries a cash amount of Rs 50,000 and a copper plaque which will be presented to the translators of each of these books at a function, to be held later this year. *IANS*

QUICK REVIEW

High on poetry, low on substance

Lyrical writing is something that's commonly associated with Urdu literature. In that sense, the translated version of Krishan Chander's *The Dark River & Other Stories* doesn't disappoint. The translations are equally poetic and effectively bring out the 'slowly-revealed beauty' of the people and the surroundings, as in the original. The first story, *The Dark River*, is a fine example, in which Chander describes the beauty of the Kangra valley in glowing terms. The reader is transported to the untarnished beauty of the valleys and brooks, but it gets little tedious when the author keeps harping on it, page after page. One of the stalwarts of the Progressive Writers' Movement, Chander was also a screenplay writer for Hindi cinema. No wonder then that the four short stories in this collection — *The Dark River*, *Same Old Desire*, *Plums* and *Breaking the Strike*, have the distinct 1950s-60s Hindi cinema quality to them. Chander's short stories have the cinematic characters in place. For instance, the old palace is haunted by a pretty female, who soothingly talks to the hero, when



THE DARK RIVER
Author: Krishan Chander
Translated by: Suresh Kohli
Published by: HarperCollins
Price: ₹250

he is tossing and turning in bed because of high fever. She sings, dances and just before daybreak, disappears into thin air. Then, there's the sex worker with a golden heart and, the henchman who does the job of striking off the union leaders for his *malik* (boss). Just like the commercial Hindi cinema of yore, where the ugly truths (society's ills) were swept under the carpet of the riches of the zamindars, Chander's stories too skim the surface of the issues depicted in the stories. A case in point is *Breaking the Strike* story, which is a letter written by the henchman who does the bidding of a mill owner. The six-page letter-story, tries to encapsulate the graph of the mill workers, who are no longer the weak and oppressed *mazdoor*. The henchman tries to warn the *malik* of the chamak (steely determination) he sees in their eyes. Without elaborating on why this change is in the offing, the story reaches its climax. The languorous pace of the plot, too much focus on beauty and aesthetics, and lack of a very conclusive in-depth climax are the shortcomings of the short stories.

— AMBIKA SHALIGRAM

TIGRRRR...! With the launch of their new book on tigers, writer-journalist Bob Rupani and photographer Dhritiman Mukherjee, share with Meeta Ramnani, their experiences from the wild

One of the most ferocious predators on Earth, the tiger, without doubt, is also a magnificent animal. No wonder then that auto journalist and avid wildlife lover, Bob Rupani, collaborated with Jaguar Land Rover's primary global conservation part-

ner — the Born Free Foundation — to come up with an amazing and informative book called *Tracking the Tiger* recently. Rupani, along with famous wildlife photographer Dhritiman Mukherjee, made road trips to 13 most beautiful tiger reserves in the country and the book is an account of their journey.

THE RESEARCH

Taking a trip on wheels to so many tiger reserves is not a day's work. "It took about a month or so to plan the field trip," says Bob. Dhritiman however, didn't have to make any specific preparations for this trip. "I often work in these tiger reserves; my preparation is as long as 15 years," Dhritiman says with a laugh.

THE TRIP!

"In the wild, you basically look for signs like foot prints, alarm calls of animals, etc, so that you can track the tiger. We went to the reserves, did that and hence the book is also called, *Tracking the Tiger*," says Bob. "Humans are more inclined towards watching predators like lions, eagles or vultures, and tiger being a huge and powerful predator, it is liked very much," says Dhritiman. "It's only the tiger that walks with the attitude of a king. That makes it more appealing," he adds.

UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS

Both Bob and Dhritiman agree on what they think was the best moment during the trip — it was watching a tigress gently carrying her cub in her mouth, in Ranthambore tiger reserve. Dhritiman, who saw such a scene for the first time, says, "It is amazing to watch even the most ferocious animal showing love for her young one."



Bob Rupani



THE WRITING

The book has 15 chapters, the first one being on Indian Wildlife, the subsequent 12 chapters dealing with 13 tiger reserves, one on the Born Free Foundation and the last one talking about Jaguar. "The information includes my research. Some of it is from the local people living near the tiger reserves. But most of it is from my own experiences and observations," says Bob. It took about 18 months for them to finish the book.

THE PHOTOS

According to Dhritiman, this book may not be one of his best works, but it is a practical book for the common man. "Everybody doesn't have the time to spend months in tiger reserves, hence the book tells you what you can expect in four to five days at one particular reserve," he says, adding that the tiger is the most easily spotted big cat as it always leaves markings. As Bob says, "The world is divided into two types of people, those who



Dhritiman Mukherjee

TRACKING THE TIGER
Bob Rupani

A PIECE OF ADVICE
Bob has a small list of dos and don'ts for the people who want to visit the tiger reserves. "Wear dull coloured clothes, keep cell phones on silent, don't litter, don't make noise, follow the rules laid down by the authorities and most importantly, respect nature," he lists. While Dhritiman agrees with Bob, he adds, "When I see people at the reserves, they only want to see the tigers. I would advise them, don't miss the beauty of nature in search of tigers. There is more to the reserves than just tigers."