



Praanesh



Shitesh



Praneeta

SHADOWS OF CHILDHOOD



**Bhala thha kitna apna bachpan
bhala thha kitna**



**भला था कितना अपना बचपन
भला था कितना**

SHADOWS OF CHILDHOOD

**Early Childhood Is
The Foundation of All
Other
Human Developments**

**By
Dr Ram Lakhan Prasad**

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FOREWORD

Reading this manuscript was not only a pleasure for me but it brought back a lot of my own childhood memories to me. This is a very detailed presentation of Shadows of Childhood of a person I have known from my childhood. We were working on the farm together, I as a helper of the family and he as the eldest treasure of the Prasad Family. We did a lot of those things together that Dr Ram Lakhan Prasad has so aptly narrated in his essay. My son has helped me to write this Foreword for my friend,

When he talks about Radhika as his nanny I was moved with the story that he wrote about her in his book Attachment. Incidentally Radhika was my sister who was an asset of our family but sadly passed away in 2015 at the age of 85.

I am now almost eighty as well and still have my family farm where my children work and I enjoy their company. I too lost my wife some eight years ago and now I spend most of my time reading the scriptures and listening to bhajans and kirtans to keep my soul alive within me to be worthy of living a few more years.

I wish Dr Prasad all the best in life and hope to read more of his publications. He is a great writer but I too have been a good farmer.

I was very happy to respond to his request to write this foreword because he was my lagotiya yaar, childhood friend of great value and interest. I am proud of his success and contributions.

Sat Narayan – Sattu for Barkana.

PREFACE



As my 18th birthday was rapidly approaching on December 27th 1957, I thought reflecting on a few important things that I had learned throughout my childhood life. Of course, I had to call on some of my childhood friends who were with me at Natabua High School and on my farm to help me. I am glad and proud that Sat Narayan my childhood friend agreed to write the Foreword for me.

People may underestimate you because of your age, built and conduct but I learned to shut out the voices of those who doubted my ability so that I could keep my eyes, ears and mind on my goals. During my childhood life I sometimes realized that a lot of things did not move and progress the way I wanted them to. That did not mean that I should just give up but instead I must try to assess what is going on in life and then make an effort to fix them as best as if I can.

I found that trying something new in my early life was somewhat scary and looked cumbersome but when I gave it a second look it all became possible and manageable. Resting and relaxing times should not last forever but while enjoying every single season of our life to the fullest we must wake up before we begin to rust, I felt. When our eyes are opened to all aspects of the current complexities, competitions and injustice around us, we must always speak up and be a voice to reckon with. It is criminal to just comply with injustice and many of the status quo in our life.

It did not matter for me as to what happened to or for me the day, week or month or even year before but I made a definite effort to restart each day with a new, determined and brighter outlook on life. Sooner than later I learnt to let go of people in my life that were not really good, honest and helpful for and to me. I found that often this was somewhat painful to do but it turned out to be a worthy action in the end.

My childhood development and growing up never let me feel guilty about just letting myself loose and having fun every now and then. Very early in life I assessed that worrying unnecessarily would never change and improve the situation because if things were in my control to change the situation then I was able to do so by all means

remembering well that if I could not change it then I should never sweat over it.

It is a fact of life that acquiring the things we want in life may be hard at first but I knew that the best things in life always came to me with a hard fight and perseverance. My parents and grandparents were always right during my growing up. I found out that disagreeing with them only made them more right and me a lot more wrong, sadly. This became the best learning point of my childhood and I progressed.

I soon realized that owning up to my silly actions and apologizing was hard to do, but it was simply a part of good growing up. I knew often that I could not change what had happened to me in the past, but knew that I could always change my present. I was always willing and sure to tell all those that I loved, just how much they meant to me and how much I depended on their support, love and care.

I knew for sure what was in my inside and that it was by far a lot more important than what was on the outside. I often stopped and appreciated the small things in my life because I came to realize that they might not be there forever.

Wise teachers always told me that a little bit of fun and game was always necessary in life and my elders agreed with this as well. It

was a lot better feeling to live the life I loved
and live the life I loved.



INTRODUCTION

My childhood was full of shadows
Bright, blue and brilliant shadows
On the winds of the silent valley
Many memories that sang so gaily
My childhood has gone but not forgotten
I remember all that is good but not rotten
Life was calm, cool and comfortable
Nothing to worry, care with no timetable
Family life full of love and comfort
Grandparents and parents gave all support
Love learn look and listen to grow
Worries and anxieties nothing to show
Farm of fruit vegies and healthy tree
Cows, goats, horses and chicks running free
Time to enjoy all morning and evening
Life full of joy with no grieving
That was my childhood full of fun
Eating drinking no work to be done
Born on the farm full of crops
Lot of water good land no rocks
Lot to learn from every one
No more childhood cos it has gone
I want to fly back but cannot
My heart longs to find that report
So let me write and reveal
The entire good thing that is real.

Our earliest childhood memories start from the age of two - far earlier than previously thought. Scientists have found the area of the brain responsible for memories can be triggered before toddlers even learn to speak.

We experience thousands of events across childhood, and yet as adults we recall only a handful. Some might be “firsts” (our first ice cream, our first day at school), or significant life events (the birth of a sibling, moving house). Others are surprisingly trivial.

So, to narrate what my early childhood memories are I have decided to do the show and tell process. They reflected my early skill for remembering things, many of my interests and my individual experiences.

I have begun to see my childhood memories as if a video camera captured the images and recorded the events of my life accurately and without bias.

Like any other my childhood memories were intricately shaped by my family and the culture I grew up in.

In the narration it can be seen that the shadows of my childhood have impacted upon and reflected upon my adolescence, youth and middle-age and is now assisting me respond to my old age.

Shadows of Childhood



I am reaching my eightieth birthday soon and after listening to various songs about childhood memories and reading the poem of Thomas Hood I could not resist the temptation to dig into my childhood activities that gave me so much knowledge to develop my life.

One of the best things about being a parent is being able to see life from my childhood perspective again. I have many memories from growing up on rural farm of my grandparents and parents in a small village of Fiji called Botini. I am really amazed at many of my old childhood memories. Of course I remember climbing the mango and coconut and roaming round the farm with my elders and my aunts and uncles. It reawakens that little and chubby farm boy in me. Ait is so

amazing that all of a sudden, I can remember those days with such detail.

After we had four children of our own we were proud to take them to the old farm to show them around. Our children were growing up in urban environment and to witness life on the farm was exciting to them. They saw my mother milking her cows, and my father holding out a handful of green para grass to the beautiful cow that kept chewing the grass so merrily.





The Place I Grew Up in Botini

To watch my parents do the things that I once did was amazing not only to me but more so to my four children. I loved the look of pride on their little faces when they conquered their fear of animals and kept their little hand out long enough for a cow to actually take the green grass and then try milking the cow themselves.

Then there were the chicken, ducks, goats, horses, dogs and the kittens that made my children forget their urban living for a while.. My eldest child in his excitement began chasing the chicks and in doing so he stepped on one of the tiny ones and crushed it to

death. I could see the anger on my mother's face but the love of grandchildren brought total forgiveness for this crime.

. There were always so many new activities for my children and all of it was such a fun and game for them. My own children then began believing all my childhood experiences that I used to tell them. We kept going to the village to keep the memories of childhood alive and make our children see the rural side of life and living we had come from.

While the children and I were visiting my family farm over the holidays, my children kept making their own great discoveries: I remember at night we used to go out and huddled in a bunch and craned our necks up. There was nothing like seeing a sky full of stars on the country farm of my parents. After these stints and visits the poem of Thomas Hood made a lot more sense to my children.



I Remember, I Remember
By Thomas Hood

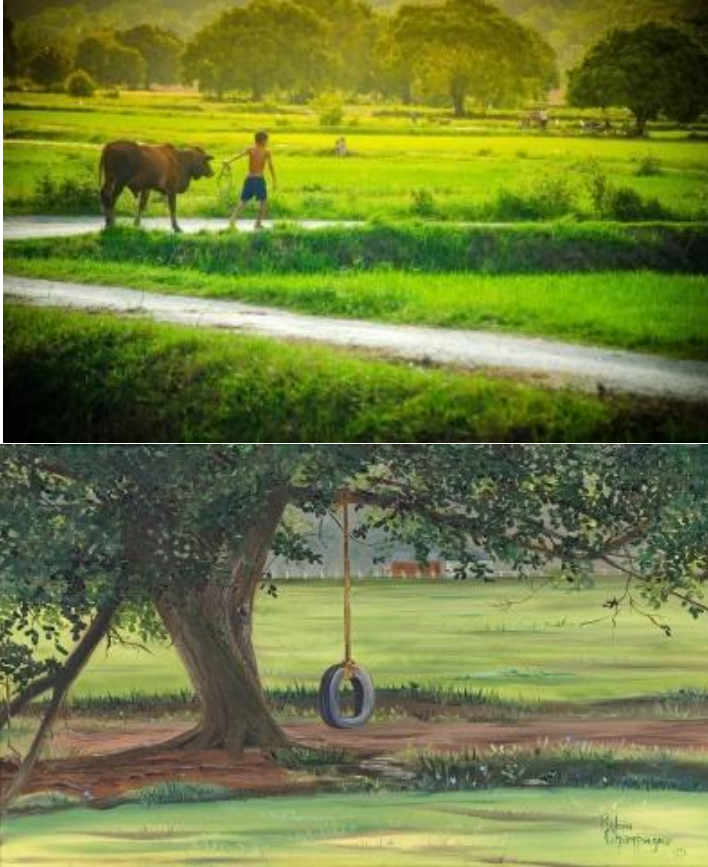
*I remember, I remember,
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn;
He never came a wink too soon,
Nor brought too long a day,
But now, I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away!*
*I remember, I remember,
The roses, red and white,
The violets, and the lily-cups,
Those flowers made of light!
The lilacs where the robin built,
And where my brother set
The laburnum on his birthday,—
The tree is living yet!*
*I remember, I remember,
Where I was used to swing,
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing;
My spirit flew in feathers then,
That is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow!*
*I remember, I remember,
The fir trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky:*

*It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from heaven
Than when I was a boy*



My Birth Place – Sarju Nivas Botini 1939

This is a beautiful garden of my childhood I usually visit when I am an adult because it is an enchanted place where colours are brighter, the air is softer, fruits are sweeter and the mornings as well as the evenings are more fragrant than ever. This is the reason that the older I grow the more earnestly I feel that the few joys of childhood are the best that life has given me. Now whenever I go back to my old village I find that it is not the old place I miss but my childhood that has made me what I am today.



My childhood has its many secrets and its various mysteries that I cannot tell or even try to explain them properly but I keep trying to do this for specific joy in my life because I find that my childhood has been a mirror which keeps reflecting in my life the glorious images that were presented to me in the

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