

# What Do You Know?

by **Dilip Mohapatra** (June 2016)

What do you know  
of the price of a piece of cloth  
fluttering on the top of the mast  
that is paid with  
the sweat and blood of the martyrs  
who rotted in the four by six cells  
whose bodies hung at  
the end of the oppressors' noose  
who took the bullets  
and the brunt of the bayonets  
that ripped their entrails  
and riddled their hearts?

What do you know  
of the value of a piece of cloth  
that proclaims your sovereignty  
your liberty and honour  
that is embedded with  
the aspirations and  
emotions of the millions

who leave no stones unturned  
to carve a niche of your nation  
on the global atlas  
and keep it flying high  
come what may?

What do you know  
of the value of a piece of cloth  
that drapes the coffin  
of the valiant hero  
who lays down his life on the borders  
so very willingly  
so that you may continue to  
live in the comforts and security  
of your home  
and his eternal breath replaces  
his ephemeral breath  
to keep it fluttering ever after?

What do you know  
of the value of a piece of cloth  
if you question the timing

if you question the occasion  
if you question the motive  
for it to be hoisted  
in the premises of temples of learning?  
Remember its not just a symbol  
nor is it a poet's metaphor  
it's the glue that unifies and binds  
with a heart of its own that beats  
only for you.

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**Dilip Mohapatra** (b.1950), a decorated Navy Veteran started writing poems since the seventies . His poems have appeared in many literary journals of repute worldwide. Some of his poems are included in the World Poetry Yearbook, 2013 and 2014 Editions. He has four poetry collections to his credit published by Authorspress India, and one non-fiction, a book of wisdom titled Points to Ponder. He holds two masters degrees, in Physics and in Management Studies. He lives with his wife in Pune. His website may be accessed at [dilipmohapatra.com](http://dilipmohapatra.com).

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