

Indian Sensibility and Western Temperament in A.K. Ramanujan's poetry

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ABSTRACT:

A.K. Ramanujan's poetry reflects a touch of humanity, Indian ethos and pertinence of life. Indian myths, history, culture, heritage and above all its topography and environment form the myriad threads in the fabrics of his poetry. Ramanujan, unlike Ezekiel doesn't suffer from feelings of alienation despite his expatriate stay in U.S.A. The present paper is an attempt to focus on Ramanujan's Indian Sensibility, in his poems, sharpened and conditioned by western education.

Key words: Indians Sensibility, Alienation, Scepticism.

INTRODUCTION

A.K. Ramanujan occupies a prominent place as a poet in the cosmos of Indo- Anglian poetry. He has earned the name and fame all over the world after the publication of his two volumes of poetry- *The Striders* 1966 and *Relations* 1971 Ramanujan is a multilingual writer who has published verse in English as well as in his native language Kannad. Says, Paul Varghese:

Ramanujan's poetry grows out of Indian experience with memories of his family, local places, beliefs and history. Ramanujan's poetry has nothing palpably American or British, it communicates most naturally and unaffectedly the Indian sensibility He himself comments:

I must seek and will find my particular hell only in my Hindu Mind. His poetry makes us believe in immense human possibilities. His poetry and polyglot tic genius cannot be tethered down to any age or any flux of time, but in him Indian sensibility gets its most genuine and potent expression. He observes the inalienable link between life and art and tries to touch the life into art. To him as Chirantan Kulshrestha assumes –

Life and art must connect at some point. The significance of Ramanujan's poetry lies in successful fusion of Indian ethos with western temperament. M.K. Naik aptly says, Ramanujan understands the conflict between tradition and modernity..., Ramanujan's poetic idiom has the stamp of modernity.

Ramanujan finds his Indian roots only in his Indian heritage. He is alive to both the strength and meanness of racial past. From his 'The Hindoo poems, the poems like 'The stridess' 'second sight' 'The Difference' and 'A Hindu to his Body, are few examples of his religious part. He makes fun of the duality of body and soul of Hindu Philosophy in his poems' 'A Hindu to His Body' here the poet requests his body not to leave him. He expresses himself in most poetic lines :

Let me go with you and feel the weight of money hives in my branching and the buslap mean of meaver birds in my hair. In this poem the spiritual and physical are taken together intermingled. His outlook is scientific and western. He does not only insist on the immortality of soul but also have stressed on the necessity of the identity which is given by a body. Because a spirit cannot have a physical identity. A shadow cannot have any communication. Thus he thanked his dear body for it

Gave me fingsess to clutch at grace, at malice; and suffle someone else hair; The theme of Body vs spirit is highlighted and exaggerated by Ramanujan in this poem. He has visualized the Indian sensibility with the mix of western outlook or temperament. Poet as a Hindu tries to capture the truth of spirit along with the receding appeal of his body that is to let him stay with it and thus he urges his body: Do not leave me behind, when you leave all else, Ramanujan has juxtaposed the orthodox Hindu point of view that body is just a vehicle for the spirit is body is not spiritual or mere worthless and the spirit is supreme of all. *The Striders* is the little poem of Ramanujan's first collection of poems in 1966. In this poem, poet gives the picture of a water- bug. The water but is 'bubble- eyed' and thin stemmed.' The strider sets on the sipple skin of water without any effort. In the second stanza, there is a twist in the argument. The poet says that water bugs are like prophets capable of

walking on water. The prophets are respected because of their ability to perform miracles. The water-bugs too can perform miracles of this kind. Ramanujans says :

No, not only prophets
Walk on water. This bug sits
On a landslide of lights
And drowns eye deep

Here the poet fringes the real and spiritual together and deflates the spiritual. This is the reference to Lord Vishnu who stands still in water. The water bug is shown sitting on water in a pose of meditation. Here, Ramanujans succeeds in mocking at the traditional Hindu Beliefs. But he does not disown Indian Heritage.

The poem entitled 'The differences' expresses Ramanujans views on Hindu beliefs, myths and folklores. It is a deeply philosophical poem. The poet juxtaposes two attitudes to the activity of making models of gods and toys. One is the traditional attitude of giving respect to Gods by giving them preference over toys. The other is the poet-persona attitude of treating models of Gods as common objects. These lie the difference the speaker describes a scene where potters are making figures of Gods. They first propose a mould of clay and straw. They cover the mould in the second shell of clay. They leave an open hole in the head through which they pour a molten mixture of eight metals into the mould. It is said that human beings too have holes in their skull.

It is out of this hole that the souls of the Hindus escape from their bodies. As poet quotes. The same escape hole, some would say, that opens for the Hindu soul at death. Then there is a twist in the argument of the poet. He says dances, jet fountains and tiny Taj Mahals for tourists would come first for him. He would make clay models for gods :- only if time permits if there is metal left and desire. Ramanujans looks at this whole activity with western temperament.

In the poem, prayers to Lord Murugan we found the paradox in his view on Hindu religion. He says, Lord of the headlines, help us to read, the small print. It is too much ironical in tone. Ramanujans poetic sensibility matters with his on the death of a poem.-

“ Images consult
One
Another,
A conscience
Stricken
Jury,
And come
Slowly
To a sentence”

The poem depicts the stream of emotion which is lacking in life,. So there is a difficulty in creating good poems. The poet depicts that what he wants to write does not suit the images. He also depicts that human beings are so much dependent upon reason. To conclude, Ramanujans writings included a modern stance with its scepticism , moment in ever changing world in which older values and beliefs are considered as unrealistic.

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