



07 Amaen 15 Indian Writing In English

M. A English Literature (Bharathiar University)



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M.A. ENGLISH LITERATURE
PAPER V

INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
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PAPER V

INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

Paper V – Indian Writing in English

Objective: This paper will help the students to appreciate the variety and diversity of Indian writing in English in the twentieth century.

Unit I Poetry

Detailed

Nissim Ezekiel : 1. The Company I Keep
2. Very -Indian Poem in Indian English
3. Poet, Lover, Bird Watcher
4. Night of the Scorpion

A.K.Ramanujam : 1. Shakes
2 . A Poem on Particulars
3. A River

R. Parthasarathy : 1. Under Another sky
2. River Once
3. Lines for a Photograph

Sri. Aurobindo : 1. Rose of God
2. Revelations
3. Transformation

Non-detailed : 1. Our Casuarina Tree
Toru Dutt 2. Lakshman

Sarojini Naidu : 1. Summer woods
2. If you call me
3. The Soul's prayer
4. The Bird Sanctuary

Henry L.V.Derozio College: 1. To the Pupils of the Hindu
2. The Harp of India
3. Chorus of Brahmins
4. Song of he Hindustanee Minstrel

(Poems are from Contemporary Indian Poetry in English ed. by Peeradina, Macmillan)

UNIT- II DRAMA

Detailed Girish Karnad : Tugulaq
Non-detailed
Badal Surcar : Evam Indrajit

UNIT III PROSE

Detailed
Balaram Gupta, 1-6 Essays. Non-detailed ed Links Indian Prose in English (Macmillan)
1-6 Essays.
Non-detailed
Dr.Sudhar Pandey, Dr.Thridar, B.Gokale. Vidya S.Netrakanti, ed. Rose Petal
Selections from Jawaharlal Nehru (OUP)

UNIT IV FICTION

Fiction
R.K.Narayan : The Guide
Anita Desai : Where shall we go for this summer?

UNIT V CRITICISM

Adil Jussawalla : The New Poetry
(From Readings in Commonwealth Literature By William Walsh), David

Mccutchion : Must Indian Poetry in English
 Always follow England?
(From Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English ed M.K.Naik)

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UNIT I

POETRY

LESSON - 1

NISSIM EZEKIEL

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1.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this lesson is to introduce Nissim Ezekiel; one of the most important poets whose works occupy significant place in post independence Indian Literatures.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Indo - Anglian poetry is said to be essentially Indian and everything else afterwards. It expresses the essence of Indian personality and is also very sensitive to the changes of its national climate and it voices the aspirations and the joys and sorrows of Indians.

It has been opined, that the Indo - Anglian poets are of two factions. The neo-modernists and the neo-symbolists. The outlook of the former is coloured by humanism and irony and that of the latter is imbued with mysticism and sublimity, but a perfect blend is achieved by the two groups in the realms of beauty. A perfect example, of an Indo - Anglian poet, who was able to arrive at a synthesis between the two factions of poetry, is none other than Sarojini Naidu, for she took her stance in the neutral, middle ground, between the sacred and profane sphere of poetry⁴ she was at home in both the worlds and found them united in the realms of poetry.

Its possible to gain a proper perspective of the development of Indian feminine poetic tradition, only if it is considered with reference to the changing position of women in India. The very term Women poets implies an attempt to isolate women poets from men poets, and consider them in a group only on the basis of sex, some critics have wondered as to whether there is

anything like feminine sensibility, feminine experiences and feminine ways of expression. The feminine character is made up of certain psychological traits as well as certain socially conditioned ones.

All these features set them apart as a group. They moreover do not accept the duties which are traditionally allotted to women, in the male dominated society, and assert their new identity as independent, individualistic and conscious participants in experience. Thus these women poets do mark the evolution of the Indian feminine Psyche from the tradition to modernity.

Nissim Ezekiel occupies an important place in post-Independence Indian English literature. He has wielded a great influence as a leading poet, editor and an occasional playwright. Besides, he is a well-known critic. Sometimes he also emerges as a politician in the guise of a fighter for cultural freedom in India. Ezekiel held many important positions. He was for many years a Professor of English in Bombay University. He is a noted name in the field of journalism. In this capacity he was editor of many journals *including Poetry India* (1966-67), *Quest* (1955-57) and *Imprint* (1961-70), He was an Associate Editor to the Indian P.E.N., Bombay.

1.2 LIFE AND WORKS OF NISSIM EZEKIEL

As a man of letters Nissim Ezekiel is a 'Protean' figure. His achievements as a poet and playwright are considerable. K. Balachandran writes, "The post-Independence Indian poetry saw its new poetry in the fifties. Among the new poets A.K. Ramanujan, R. Parthasarathy, Shiv K. Kumar, Kamala Das, Monica Verma, O.P. Bhatnagar, Gauri Deshpande, Adil Jussawalla, Ezekiel occupies a prominent place. His versatile genius can be found in his poetry, plays, criticism, journalism and translation."

Nissim Ezekiel has done a good work in Indian writing in English. He has written many volumes of poems—*A Time to Change* (1952), *Sixty Poems* (1953), *The Third* (1959), *The Unfinished Man* (1960), *The Exact Name* (1965) and others. His plays *Nalini*, *Marriage Poem*, *The Sleep-Walkers*, *Songs of Deprivation* and *Who Needs No Introduction* are already staged and published. He has also edited books *Indian Writers in Conference* (1964), *Writing in India* (1965), *An Emerson Reader* (1965), *A Martin Luther King Reader* (1965) and *Arthur Miller's All My Sons* (1972). His literary essays published in magazines and papers are innumerable. The notable among them are 'Ideas and Modern Poetry' (1964), 'The Knowledge of Dead Secrets' (1965), 'Poetry as Knowledge' (1972), 'Sri Aurobindo on Poetry' (1972), 'Should Poetry be Read to Audience?' (1972), 'K.N. Daruwalla' (1972), 'Poetry and Philosophy,' 'Hindu Society' (1966). He has written essays on art criticism 'Modern Art in India' (1970), 'How Good is Sabavala?' (1973), and 'Paintings of the Year 1973' (1973). His essays on social criticism 'Thoreau and Gandhi' (1971), 'Censorship and the Writer' (1963), 'How Normal is Normality' (1972), 'Tradition and All That a Case Against the Hippies' (1973), 'A Question of Sanity' (1972) and 'Our Academic Community' (1968) are varied and auto telic of his wide interest.

Ezekiel is an editor of several journals encouraging writing poetry, plays and criticism. He also asked many writers for translation, affecting the theory and practice of the young poets. The writers like Rilke and W.B. Yeats influenced Ezekiel. Like Yeats, he treated poetry as the 'record of the mind's growth.' His poetic bulk indicates his growth as a poet-critic and shows his personal importance.

Chetan Karnani states, "At the centre was that sincere devoted mind that wanted to discover itself. In the process, he managed to forge a unique achievement of his own."

The poet Ezekiel has already published several volumes of poems. *A Time to Change* (1952) was his first book of poems. For him poetry-writing was a lofty vocation, a way of life. He treated life as a journey where poetry would be the main source of discovering and organising one's own self. In a sense, poetry to Ezekiel became a way for self-realisation. He calls life a texture of poetry. He identifies himself with poetry. So all of his volumes of verse are well-knit and they are in the poet's view, a continuation of each other. Ezekiel's experiments in prose rhythms and his fine sense of structure and metrical ability. The verse rhythms of T.S. Eliot seem to haunt his mind. Ezekiel's *Sixty Poems* (1953), his second volume of poems was published in 1953. But these poems are loose in structure and they are less appealing.

1.3 THE COMPANY I KEEP

Nissim Ezekiel speaks about his contemporaries and the types of poetry appeared during that age. He expects that a poet must keep up the moral, ethics of the age and people. If a poet cannot keep up that moral, then it shows that the poet has a minor talent in writing poetry. This cannot be called a greater curse but having no talent. Just like - ring refers to the groups of poets who write poems. Millions of people find happiness in writing poetry. He is also one among the poets, who enjoys writing poetry. Ezekiel feels that poets are mixing up metaphors and common thoughts. But poetry is not simply mixing up put an expression of deeper thoughts.

Ezekiel, here, tries to condemn out rightly those who just mix metaphors and statements and produce bogus poetry. These unfortunate beings exploit others skill and parade themselves as poets. He curses all those who use other's talents for their own selfish purpose. He also includes the publishers of small magazines and broadcasters of small weather woes. The poet in his indignant mood calls them as seducers of experience. By doing so these men show their lack of imaginative power. He also condemns such practice as saying that they are the victims of their own spontaneous fraud. Ezekiel asks them their last composition of a real poem. He himself answers that they are in hell and they do not know it. But instead they will answer that they have been reviewing as compensation. He asserts that he himself belonged once to an advertising office. Ezekiel finds faults of not knowing the secret of writing and becoming

thoughts which cause a variety of disasters to the mind of people through their poems.

This practice is nothing but making the most out of borrowed intelligence, imagination and skill. They really contribute nothing to the world of literature. The occasional rhyme or two coming from such people cannot be a thing of justification at all. This activity is described by the poet as a trail of smoke, that just irritates the people by its small and continuous suffocation. Thus, the poet gives a warning here of such people.

In a relentless vein of critical self-awareness and with downright candour Ezekiel denounces all such poetasters:

No greater curse
than a minor talent
in the verse ring bull ring, yet
millions revel in it,
and I am counted
one among them, mixing
metaphors and platitudes...
Damn all you sensitive poets,
seducers of experience,
self-worshippers and publishers,
broadcasters of small weather woes.
Victims of your own spontaneous fraud
Your only achievement is monumentality of vanity.

1.4 VERY INDIAN POEM IN INDIAN

Nissim Ezekiel is one of those Indian poets writing in English who create an authentic flavor of India, by their use of Indian English. Pidgin English on Bazar English, as it is often called.

In this poem, the Indian flavor has been created by stressing the various mistakes which Indians commit in their use of English, by bringing in the hopes and aspirations of free India, and also the attitudes of her two hostile neighbors, China and Pakistan. It is a common India mistake to use the present continuous tense in the place of the simple present.

Ezekiel presents that the new generation is going after 'fashion and foreign things.' He presents the typical Indian make - up. The Indian living conditions are sought to be portrayed. This is a lane of Gandhi and other who have given their best for the sake of the country. Such principles as the truth, Non - Violence and Non - Operation are the real virtues one will have to learn from these leaders. The India of yester years is no longer to be seen here, as modernization and industrialization have speeded up the process of change. The regrettable thing in the modern world is the act of violence and anti -social

tendencies proving to be a menace. Still the positive aspects like regeneration, remuneration and contraception could be thought of as a way out of the present muddle. One can certainly hope for the better and propagate the best that is thought as unique.

In the second stanza, the readers get a peep into things - Indians as Gandhi's heir, he would opt for peace and non - violence. He is puzzled why others are not following Gandhi's advice - while in this estimate, the ancient Indian wisdom is correct, contrastively the modern generation takes it to whatever is western and fashionable - like other Indians, he too has to improve his English language. The student interest and petty agitations make him feel sickening line Antony's appeal to the Roman mob, he will call upon the fellow citizens to think of the past masters.

Thus in the third stanza, he pronounces, In order to get away from that which is disgusting, he wants to have a cup of wine which is very good for digestion. It can be taken as equivalent to the western wine if only a little salt is added to make it a lovely drink. The poet confesses that he is the total abstainer from drinks while it is taken by addicts to gunch themselves, he for his part would turn to simple drinks like lassi. Thus, the poet tries to receive the old Gandhi an days.

In the fourth stanza, the poet is able to think aloud and offer his comments on the world situation today. The present conditions all over the world speak of a bad trend that give an edge to the production of dangerous weapons and try to be superior to others. The countries of the world often tie with each other in keeping themselves ahead of others in this mad competitive world. This retrace often leads to conflicts resulting in loss of precious human lives. If only one considers the other as the brother; the trend could be changed.

India is a land where the principle of 'unity in Diversity' is practiced. Here many communities live together even though there are some problems. This ideal situation in which one Co-exists with the other is described as Ram Rajya by the poet. He gives the hand of friendliness to the visitor and expects him to come again. The poet is optimistic when he says that he enjoys every moment of good company. So, he ends the poem by saying that he does not feel the necessity of celebrating ceremonies.

1.5 POET, LOVER, BIRD WATCHER

The best poem of this volume 'Poet, Lover, Bird-watcher' displays Ezekiel's views on poet's problems. He thinks the best poets wait for words, like ornithologists sitting in silence to see birds.

Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher is one of the better known poems of Ezekiel and has received considerable critical attention. It epitomizes the poet's search for a poetics which would help him redeem himself in his eyes and in the eyes of the god. Parallelism is drawn between the poet, the lover and the Bird-watcher. All the three have to wait patiently in their respective pursuits, indeed their 'waiting' is a sort of strategy, a plan of action which bear fruit it persisted in and followed with patience. It is patient waiting which crown the efforts of all the three with success.

Ezekiel attempts to define the poet in terms of a lover and the bird-watcher. There is a close resemblance among them in their search for love, bird and word. All the three become one in spirit, and Ezekiel expresses this in imagery noted for its precision and decorum:

The hunts is not an exercise of will
But patience love relaxing on a hill
To note the movement of a timid wing..

There is no action, no exercise of will in all the three cases, but 'Patient waiting' is itself strategy., a kind of planned action to reach the goal. The patience of the birdwatcher is rewarded when the timid bird is suddenly caught in the net; the patience of the lover is rewarded, when the woman loved, risks surrendering. Similarly, if the poets wait still the moment of inspiration, he achieves some noble utterance. "Bird - beloved - poem syndrome runs throughout the lyric".

The Second-stanza stresses the fact that slow movement is good. One has to go to remote place just as one has to discover love in a remote place like the heart's dark floor. It is there, that women look something more than their body, and that they appear like myths of light. And the poet, in *zigzag* movements, yet with a sense of musical delight, manages to combine movements, yet with a sense of musical delight, manages to combine sense and sound in such a way that 'deaf can hear, the blind recover sight'. Highest poetry is remedial in its action, it cures human apathy and deadness of spirit, activates human sense, and makes man see and hear much more than he would have otherwise done.

At the end of this wait, the poetic word appears in the concrete and sensuous form of a woman, who knows that she is loved and who surrenders to her lover at once. In this process, poetry and love, word and woman become

interwined. But this "slow movement" of love and poetry, which shows no irritable haste to arrive at meaning, does not come by easily. In order to possess the vision of the rarer birds of his psyche, the poet has to go through the "deserted lanes" of his solitary, private life; he has to walk along the primal rivers of his consciousness in silence, or travel to a far off shore which is like the heart's dark floor. The poet, then, gloats on the slow curving movements of the women, both for the sake of their sensuousness and the insights they bring. He creates his poetry out of these "myths of light" whose essential darkness or mystery remains at the entire of creation itself. But the poet finds the greatest sense or meaning in his own creativity which eventually liberates him from "crooked restless flight" of those moments when struggles to find the poetic idiom. The poetry which releases the poet from suffering is the medium through which the deaf can hear and the blind see.

This is a justly celebrated poem, containing a beautiful worked set of images moving as the title suggests, on three interpenetrating levels.

1.6 NIGHT OF THE SCORPION

'Night of the Scorpion', in which Ezekiel recalls the behaviour of 'the peasants', his father, his mother and a holy man when his mother was poisoned by a scorpion's sting. Here the aim is to find poetry in ordinary reality as observed, known, felt, experienced rather than as the intellect thinks it should be. While the peasants pray and speak of incarnations, his father, 'sceptic, rationalist', tries 'every curse and blessing, powder, mixture, herb and hybrid' and a holy man performs a rite. After a day the poison is no longer felt and, in a final irony, his mother, in contrast to the previous feverish activity centred upon her, makes a typical motherly comment:

My mother only said

Thank God the scorpion picked on me

and spared my children.

The 'Thank God' is doubly ironic as it is a commonplace expression of speech in contrast to all the previous religious and superstitious activity. Ezekiel's purpose is not, however, an expression of scepticism but rather the exact notation of what he saw as a child. The aim is not to explain but to make real by naming, by saying 'common things'. The poem is a new direction, a vision of ordinary reality, especially of Indian life, unmediated by cold intellect. The new purpose is seen in the poem's style, unrhymed, with line lengths shaped by natural syntactical units and rhythm created by the cadences of the speaking voice into a long verse paragraph, rather than the stanzaic structure used in earlier poems.

In his poetry there is the truth of acknowledging what is felt and experienced in its complexity, contradictions, pleasures, fears and disillusionments without preconceived ideas of what poetry should say about the poet and life.

Nissim Ezekiel's 'Night of The Scorpion' is much appreciated by the critics and it has found place in many anthologies for as excellence, Critics, commenting on its aesthetic beauty expressed different views. In their critical sweep, they brought everything from superstitious ritualism to modern rationalism. One can find that in the poem superstitious ritualism or sceptic rationalism or even the balance of the both with expression of Indian ethos through maternal love in the Indian way, is nothing but scratching the surface. The poem has something more gigantic than its face value, which as I find is the symbolic juxtaposition of the forces of darkness and light that is intrinsically centripetal in the poem.

It is 'Night' of The Scorpion' with the first word absorbing accent. It seems to have been implicitly contrived here that 'Night should stand as a symbol of darkness with the 'Scorpion' as the symbol of evil. Such ingenuity in craftsmanship takes the poem to the higher level of understanding. Prof. Birje Patil is right in putting that in "Night of The Scorpion", where evil is symbolized by the scorpion, The reader made to participate in the ritual as well as suffering through' a vivid evocation of the poison moving in the mother's blood'. And evil has always been associated with darkness, the seamy side of our life, in human psyche. It has always been the integral part of theology, in whatever form it has manifested that suffering helps in removing that darker patch in human mind, he patch that has been a besetting sin of man's existence.

May the sum of evil
Balanced in this unreal world
against the sum of good
become diminished by your pain, they said

These lines amply testify that the poem aims at achieving something higher than its narrative simplicity. The choric refrain 'they said' in the chain of reactions made by the village peasants is undoubtedly ironic, but the poet hasn't as much to stress the concept of sin, redemption or rebirth as he has to insinuate the indomitable force of darkness gripping the minds of the unenlightened. Going through the poem attentively more than once, it can't fail catching our notice that modern rationalism is also equally shallow and perverse. It is also a road leading to confusion where through emerges scepticism, the other darker patch on our modernized existence. The image of the father in this poem speaks volumes for this capsizing modernism which

sandwiches in its arm- space the primitive and the perverted. The “sceptic rationalist’ father trying ‘powder, mixture, herb and hybrid’ bears upon human primitivism and when he experiments with ‘a little paraffin upon a bitten toe and put a match to it he becomes a symbol of perversion in the modern man’s psyche.

Christopher Wiseman puts it, “...a fascinating tension between personal crisis and mocking social observation” ; neither there is any personal crisis. On the other hand there is spiritual compassion and an intense urge for getting rid of this psychological syndrome that the whole modern world has been caught, the slow-moving poison of this syndromic scorpion into the very veins of creation, the image of the mother in agony nullifying the clear vision of human thought and enveloping the whole of humanity In the darker shades of confusion more chaotic, troubles the poet as much sharply as the sting of the poisonous worm. There is crisis, but it is the crisis of human existence that needs to be overcome. The poet, though a distant observer, doesn’t take a stance of detachment. On the exact opposite, he watches with curiosity “the flame feeding on my mother’, but being uncertain whether the paraffin flame would cleanse her of the agony of the absorbing poison, he loses himself in a thoughtful trance.

The whole poem abounds with these two symbols of darkness and light. In the very beginning the poet has ushered in this symbolic juxtaposition and then as the poem advanced, built upon it the whole structure of his fascinating architecture in the lines. Ten hours of steady rain had driven him to crawl beneath a sack of rice parting with his poison - flash of diabolic tail in the dark room he risked the rain again.

The incessant rain stands for the hope and regeneration where with is juxtaposed the destructive hurdles to fruitful that hope. But the constructive, life giving rain continues and the evil, having fulfilled its parts, departs. Then afterwards other hurdles more preying than the first, come in. More candles, more lanterns, more neighbours more insects, and the endless rain My mother twisted through and through groaning on a mat.

The symbols of light and darkness, candles lanterns, neighbours and insects and rain again are noteworthy. But the force of light gains a width handover the evil force and life is restored once again in its joyous stride and this life long struggle between forces of darkness and light reaches a crescendo when - after twenty hours It lost its sting. Here, In the above lines, lies the beauty of the poem, when the ascending steps of darkness, being chased by the force of following light are ripped down; when at last on the peak the chaser wins and the chased slips down.

The man who has not understood what motherhood is. might be taken in by such expression of motherly love. But I convincingly feel that any woman would have exclaimed the same thing as the mother in this poem did. In my view, it would have been truly Indian had the mother in her tortures

remembered her children and though helplessly, had she desired to protect them lest the scorpion might catch them unawares. Anyway, the beauty of the poem remains- unmarred by such revision. The poem is a thing of beauty par excellence.

The poem "Night of the Scorpion" can be classified as poetry of situation - an art in which Browning and Robert Frost excelled. It presents a critical situation in which a mother is bitten by a scorpion. It involves a typical Indian Situation in which an entire village community identifies itself with a sad domestic happening. It pictures the traditional Indian society steeped in ignorance and superstition.

The poem is set against the backdrop of Indian rural setting. The rural habit of Storing rice in gunny bags is referred to in the phrase, " a sack of rice".

The rural practice of building huts with mud walls is captured in the phrase "mud backed walls". The absence of rural electrification in Indian villages before independence is hinted at in a string of images, "dark room" and " Candles and lanterns". "Darkness" has the extended meaning of Indian villages being steeped in ignorance.

The situation of a scorpion-stung mother is encountered in different ways of prayer, incantation and science.

Not one stays at home when the peasants hear of a mother bitten by a scorpion. They rush buzzing the name of God times without number. With candles and lanterns, they search for him. He is not found. They sit on the floor with the mother in the centre and try to comfort her with words of philosophy. Their prayer brings out their genuine concern for the suffering mother. The father, through a skeptic and a rationalist, does not differ in the least from the ignorant peasants. He tries both medicine and "mantra" drugs and chants as seen in the phrase "trying every way and blessing". A holy man is brought to tame the poison with an incantation.

It is the belief of the village community that buzzing " the name of God a hundred times" will bring about relief to the mother stung by the scorpion. The action of the rural folk brings out their firm faith in God and in the efficiency of prayer. It is the belief of the rural community that the faster the scorpion moves, the faster the poison in the mother's blood will move. In equating the movement of the scorpion and that of the poison in the blood stream, the peasant betrays their superstition.

The peasants sit around the mother groaning in pain and they try to console her offering remedial advice of a strong ritualistic and faith - healing kind. Some peasants say that as she has suffered now, in the next birth she will experience less troubles. She will now be in a balanced state whereby her body

is ridden of device and her spirit of ambition. The incantatory utterances made by the peasants smack of their belief in the Hindu law of "Karina", in the Hindu doctrine of rebirth and in the 13 Hindu concept of the world as one of illusion and the physical suffering bringing about spiritual rejuvenation.

The poem is remembered particularly for its 'memorable close' - the last three lines:

My Mother only said
Thank God the scorpion picked on me
And spared my children.

The use of the restricted adverb 'only' distinguishes the mother from the peasants, the father and the holy man. The other does not blame God but she thanks God because the scorpion stung her and spared her children. Her agony would have been greater if any of her children were bitten. Ultimately, it assumes universal dimensions. The poet throws light on the selfless love of the Indian mother.

1.7 NISSIM EZEKIEL AS A POET

Ezekiel is a dedicated person to the rhyme, the extremes and pitfalls. No other Indian-English poet has today shown the ability to organise his experience into words as competently as Ezekiel. The remarkable aspect of his poetry is his sincerity and individuality. His poems generalise his own felt experience. It is neither repetitive nor shocking, but 'simple, introspective and analytical. He treats poetry as a first-hand record of the growth of his mind. He loves simplicity. His love of the genuine is explicit in the following:

Life in the city, sexuality, the problems of marriage, the need to overcome alienation and to create integration among the various aspects of his character are Ezekiel's early and continuing themes. There is a distinct personality expressed in the voice, themes and style. Life is seen as a quest for wholeness, for intellectual and spiritual satisfaction, for maturity.

Ezekiel showed that it was possible to write about oneself without being self-consciously Indian and that an Indian poetry could express the experiences of the educated and urbanized and need not be obsessed with mythology, peasants and nationalist slogans with him a post-colonial poetry started which reflects the lives and identities that an increasing number of educated Indians knew or would seek.

Ezekiel is a poet of many a theme and one finds wider range of subjects and variety in his poetry. His poetry is not born out of dogma and he does not confine himself to a particular type, theme or technique in his poetry. He has an

open mind and therefore he changes the subject matter of his poetry from time to time. He makes this clear in his poem 'Theological':

Ezekiel's poetry is marked by both a natural sense of Indianness, and an even level of language and craft the real source of creative tension in his poetry is between his pervasive philosophic preoccupation and an insistent awareness of the ties stemming from the surrounding milieu. Ezekiel never postulates a truth but works out, in terms of irony, an answer which is purely tentative. In effect, even in regard to ostensibly philosophic issues, the residue of significance lies not in the validity of the speculation but in the ironic stance of the contemplation.

The new poetry (i.e., Indian English poetry after Independence) demanded a new use of language and called for the use of everyday speech rhythm in poetry. Thus there is a demand as it were, for the creation of an Indian English idiom, to give an identity to modern Indian English Poetry independent of and different from the world literatures written in English including Anglo-American literatures. Ezekiel has succeeded in creating a new Indian English idiom to a great extent.

Nissim Ezekiel accepts the established linguistic framework but his art lies in so changing a unit of expression as to make it expressive of a state of mind. He is capable of turning words into a metaphor, image or symbols as the situation demands. It is only rarely that we come across poetic counters of expression but there is a strong undercurrent of poetry in the seemingly prosaic words. This is his characteristic mode which demonstrates his command over language and saves his poetry from degenerating into bare statement.

Ezekiel is fond of using 'paradoxical language in his poetry for greater poetic effect. Ezekiel is a conscious poet 'looking before and after'. To him poetry is not a gift to be adorned but a craft to be studied seriously. He believes in the revision of a poem and works hard on it, till it achieves a kind of perfection. A poet like a woman 'must labour to be beautiful'. Ezekiel's clarity of thought, clinical precision of words and phrases and employment of imagery make his poetry distinctly Indian.

The poet in Nissim Ezekiel is too self-conscious of artistic excellence while the man in him strives to explore the real meaning of existence through art. The poet, as a result, does not either get prolix or make poetry the text of his aesthetic vision.

Metaphorically speaking, every doctrine, dream or ideal, whether realised or not, is analogous to the invention of a right poem or the writing of a real poem amounts to the discovery of a metaphysical truth. Poetry does not merely extenuate the pains of living in the poet but much more than that, his search for the real idiom as expressed therein. Ezekiel brought a sense of discipline, self-criticism and mastery to Indian English poetry. He was the first Indian poet to have such a professional attitude.

Ezekiel's poetry is centred on a study of his conscious craftsmanship, his mastery of rhythm and diction and his treatment of modern urban life and the existential questions it generates .

These I have dwelt upon, listening to rain,
And turning in, resoled
That I must wait and train myself
To recognise the real thing,
And in the verse or friends I make
To have no trunk with what is fake.

Ezekiel's greatness lies in his effort to avoid the mistakes, which his fellow poets committed. He is a serious poet. His originality lies in his typical poems, which are firmly rooted in Indian soil. Ezekiel's impersonal is another landmark. Indeed David McCutcheon's observation is a tribute to this great Indian poet: "Ezekiel belongs with Thom Gunn, R.S. Thomas, Elizabeth Jennings, Anthony Thwaite, and others like them. He has their cautious, discriminating style, precise and analytical, with its conscious rejection of the heroic and passionate as also of the sentimental and cosy. The technique is immaculate: rhymes, and carefully varied yet regular rhythms, lines that run over with a poised deliberateness. But behind the casual assurance one senses the clenched fist, the wounded tenderness."

Ezekiel's concept is that writing poetry is not just a matter of inspiration but studying the skill of writing carefully. This study demands a lot of patience from the poet. Only when unskilled poets try their hands in poetry, poetry turns out to be self-advertisement.

Many of Ezekiel's poems express his view that poetry can be built in resolving the tension between two opposite forces and trying to maintain an equipoise. About this aspect Linda Hess remarks, Every mature poet finds his art demanding again and again that he synthesises certain powerful and apparently opposite forces within himself.

1.8 LET US SUM UP

C.D.Narasimhaiah compliments him in the following words "But to the extent he has availed himself of the composite culture of India to which he belongs he must be said to be an important poet not merely in the Indian context, but in a consideration of those that are writing poetry anywhere in English". What makes a poet belong to a particular country necessarily involves nationality, and his identity is to be found in being rooted in the soil. Ezekiel is deeply rooted in the Indian soil In him one discerns a certainty of touch that seems to reflect a confidence in the direction and purpose of his writing as well as an integrity of image of India, style and subject-matter.

1.9 LESSON END ACTIVITY

1. Consider Nissim Ezekiel as a poet?
2. Write a critical appreciation of The Night of The Scorpion
3. What are the remarkable features of the poetry of Nissim Ezekiel's poetry?

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LESSON - 2

A.K. RAMANUJAM

Contents

- 2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
- 2.1 INTRODUCTION
- 2.2 LIFE AND WORKS OF A.K. RAMANUJAM
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- 2.7 LET US SUM UP
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2.0 Aims and Objectives

Through this lesson, you will be able to understand all things about A.K. Ramanujam; a towering poet in the cosmos of Indo-Anglian poetry.

2.1 Introduction:

Ramanujan's poetry is essentially Indian in material and sensibility. He explains the paradox in a note to Twentieth Century Indian Poets: "English and my disciplines (linguistics, anthropology) give me my 'outer forms—linguistic, metrical, logical and other such ways of shaping experience, and my first thirty years in India, my frequent visits and field trips, my personal and professional preoccupation with Kannada, Tamil, the classics and folklores give me my substance, my 'Inner' forms, images and symbols. They are continuous with each other, and I no longer can tell what comes from where."

2.2 LIFE AND WORKS OF A.K. RAMANUJAM

A.K. RAMANUJAM 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). After the promulgation of “The Striders” he won a ‘Poetry Book Society Recommendation’ and established his position as “one of the most talented of the ‘new’ poets.”¹ William Walsh rightly evaluated him as “the most gifted poet.”² Ramanujan also achieved recognition in Kannada and Tamil with his anthologies — “Hokkulalli Hoovilla” and

“Kurunthohai.” He has also translated into English poetry in Tamil and Kannada in *The Interior Landscape* (1967) and *Speaking of Siva* (1972) respectively. Each and every piece of his literary output in Kannada and Tamil proclaimed a new epoch in vernacular literature. Ramanujan’s poetry reflects a touch of humanity, Indian ethos and pertinence of life.

Ramanujan is an example of a polished, sophisticated and profound multiculturalism. His English poetry incorporates and assimilates linguistic, literary and cultural features of Kannada and Tamil into the linguistic, literary and cultural form of English literature. Like the house in “Small Scale Reflections on a Great House” he absorbs the Western model to express a supposedly Indian way of being. He blended the India and European models into new forms. He has the ability to tolerate, accommodate and assimilate other cultures without losing consciousness of being an Indian.

2.3 SNAKES:

Ramanujan’s “Snakes” points out the touching truth, the truth of insensibility and indifference of the modern society. The poor do not hesitate to face danger. No doubt, snake-charmers take any risk only to extinguish the starvation of the family by providing entertainment or pastime to the rich. Here it appears that their lives are for the sake of snakes :

“The snakeman wreathes their writhing
round his neck
for father’s smiling money.”

Another reference is made to snakes, flies and frogs. The poet brings out the puzzled association of snakes with the family. The snakes are “like some terrible aunt.” Whenever his sister entwines her hair he conceives it as ophite. The poet as a child does not get rest from the fear of snakes till they are killed.

“Now
frogs can hop upon this sausage rope
flies in the sun will mob the look in his eyes,
and I can walk through the woods.”

The poet is placid and lepid that small creature like frog can now hop on the serpent which is just like a “sausage rope” and flies will mob the look in his eyes. Another reaction of his parents and the poet to the snake can be seen here. His mother gives it milk; the father cheerily pays the snake-charmer, but the poet screams at its sight. The poet adroitly depicts the ophidian splendour.

“The twirls of their hisses
rise like the tiny dust-cones on slow noon roads
Winding through the farmers feet.
Black lorgnettes are etched on their hoods,
ridiculous, alien, like some terrible aunt,
a crest among tiles and scales
that moult with the darkening half
of every moon.”

Bruce King has corroborated this poetic feeling in his own words :

“The poem presents an image, a complex of feelings, distilled memories and events which are not elaborated or commented upon. But as it begins in the present ‘now’ of museums of book stacks which contrast with rural India and family life, the poem celebrates the liberation from the fears of the past, ‘ghosts’ from which Ramanujan now feels safe.”

Ramanujan illustrates the pathetic picture of the poor in his many poems. In “Elements of Composition” he feels deep grief over the pitiable position of the leprous men of Madurai. The deformed postures of lepers and their troublesome movement reduce them to a skeleton, “Pillars” :

“add the lepers of Madurai
male, female, married with children, lion faces, crabs for claws,
clotted on their shadows under the stone-eyed goddesses of dance, mere pillars,
moving as nothing on earth can move.”

The poet is anxious about the miserable condition of the lepers and so he calls gods and goddesses as “stone-eyed.” S.S. Dulai expressively says :

“Ramanujan observes closely and often laments poignantly the human misery resulting from material want and moral corruption in contemporary India.”

"Snakes" is among the best poems of Ramanujam. The poem begins on a note of suspense with an emphatic, "No, it does not happen when I walk through the wood". This happens when he is walking through museums or libraries. The description is of a snake that induces fear in the minds of all. The snakes take shelter in the museums, book shelves, glass-shelves, etc., The Poet says that the book of yellow vein, yellow amber would remind him of snakes, the shelf which is arranged in geometric lines would remind him of snakes. Ramajujam

can be distracted by his own skill for description is seen in the apparently irrelevant but rived detail of "the yellow vein in the yellow amber" or "the book with gold on its spine". The amber yellow and gold and the curves with the imagination think of snakes.

The Poet compares the intermittent hissing of the snakes to the little clouds of dust that arise one walks along a dusty road. They have the nature of winding through one's feet exactly the way the snacks do. The hoods, the snacks have display a kind of design resembling the etched black lorgnettes. It looks ridiculous all the same. It is likened to the terrible aunt who is proud of her titles. The snake's scales mount with the warning of the moon.

Then, he explains a real incident. One day a snake man has brought a basket full of cobras to the poet's home. The snakes are Jet out and the person watches them more on the floor. Their bodies are wheat - brown in colour with rings all over. The way they move on the floor looks like a strange alphabet written here and there. The poet's mother feeds the snakes with saucers of milk. As they suck the milk, the etched design on the brass reappears. The snake man then wears them on his neck in order to impress the poet's father. The latter gives him money.

The Poet has a sister who has long hair touching the ground. He notices her tying her hair in braids. She takes great care in tending them and decorates them with tassels. These braids look very much like the snakes and the wa^/es themselves resemble the scales on the body. Both have the nature of shinning brightly. In other works the poet is often reminded of snakes when he looks at the braids of his sister. He is so afraid that he waits impatiently to see hair trimmed and tried up neatly.

Then, the poet narrates the happening while he walks along the forest path suddenly he feels as if he is walking on a slippery surface. It is a snake and it writhes in pain. Its body is green -white the bluish nodes resemble a lotus stalk that has been plucked lately. He steps on it until it is dead; He is now confident and is not afraid. He expects the frogs to hop over the sausage rope without fear of being eaten up. The flies can come round the eye part of the snake and he himself has grown at all.

2.4 A POEM ON PARTICULARS

A.K. Ramanujam brings out the market scene in this poem. He feels provoked on seeing the oranges in the city market. They are carried in wicker baskets. The oranges fill the gaps inside these baskets worn in intricate designs. The fruits are of various colours. Some are still green, others are over ripe with a pot of fungi-ash in a hollow; some others are of saffron colour; others are puply and velvet - sinned. Some of the fruits resemble the inner first of fingers held rather loosely. It is compared to the loosening skin and

weakening nerves in the part of a grand old man who is termed by the poet as 'Grandpa's grip'.

Noticing the orange tree the poet looks at the small branch which once served as an extension is found to be intact. The same is described as the human umbilical cord. The tree once nourished the young bud, the power coming from the root part of the tree. The fruit has come out at this mature stage and the tree holds it even now. There is now no connection between the fruit and the tree. The fruit itself finds its way into the basket. The fruits in the tree every seed of the tree can produce thousands of oranges in turn. The cycle goes on like this and it is a never ending process. As is characteristic of Ramanujam, there is no real conclusion.

2.5 A RIVER :

“A River” is one of Ramanujam’s finest poems appeared in “The Striders” in 1966. It is a poem on the vaigai which flows through Madurai. A City that has been the seat of Tamil Culture. The poem is an evocation of a river. The poet refers to the river as a helping as well as a destructive force. In the Sangam Period the city had many great pundits who sang the glory of their town, Language and river, They wrote profusely when the river was in spate. At the same time there were times when the river remained dry. On the Sandy bed could be seen the hair and stow dogging the Watergates. The iron bars under the bridge are in need of repair. The wet stones all like the sleeping crocodiles. The dry stones look like the shaven buffaloes. It is a wonder for the poet because not too often such scenes are described by the poets.

The water in the river makes all the poets imaginative and sing verses about it. A poet visits the river and examines the scene quite closely. But the scene witnessed by him is different. As it was raining the level of the water in the river kept rising. The whole city was flooded. Three village houses were swept away. The news came of a pregnant lady and a couple of cows being washed away. Even the new poets do not bother to write about all these things. They look at it still in the old way as seen by the old poets. A careful, imaginative consideration should bring in many things so far unsaid about the river. It is a pity that no one has the heart to feel about the heart with twin children in her womb getting drowned in the river.

In “A River” Ramanujan throws light on the reality of the present and the past. In the past, the poets were the appreciators of the cities, temples, rivers, streams and are indifferent to the miseries of human beings and animals. The river dries to a trickle in every summer the “poets sang only of the floods.” Flood is the symbol of destruction to person and property. The poets of today still quoted the old poets sans the relevancy of life:

“The new poets still quoted
the old poets, but no one spoke

in verse of the pregnant woman –
drowned, with perhaps twins in her,
kicking at the blank walls even before birth.”

The image of “pregnant woman” implies a fine example of two generations, the present and the future. R. Parthasarathy verily remarks “The relative attitudes of the old and new Tamil poets, both of whom are exposed for their callousness to suffering, when it is so obvious as a result of the flood.”⁶ This statement is, no doubt, corroborated by K. Sumana in a lucid manner:

“The poet narrates the poem through the mouth of a visitor to make it objective. The greatness of the poem lies in the fact that the traditional praise for river has been contrasted with what is actually experienced by the people during the floods. Apart from presenting the grim realities of a river in spate, Ramanujan hints at the sterility of new Tamil poets who still quoted the old poets.”

“A River” and “Epitaph on a Street Dog” ironically present the same reality : “She spawned in a hurry a score of pups/all bald, blind, and growing old at her paps.” The cosmic vision of India in “A River” and “Epitaph on a Street Dog” is contrasted to “Love Poem for a Wife.” Ramanujan’s attempt to square the ancient circle/of you and me is fascinating in its varying moods. His lover claims that he cannot recollect the face and the words of his absent beloved, though his memory is not explained. “Love Poem for a Wife” is an imposing comment on how an unshared childhood eliminates a dedicated couple and “Still Life” is an appraisal of love as an abiding presence. These love poems are conspicuous for their insight, splendour and deep emotion.

2.6 STYLE AND TECHNIQUE OF A.K.RAMANUJAM

Ramanujan’s poetry exemplifies how an Indian poet in English could derive strength by forging back to his roots. In poem after poem he goes back to his childhood memories and experiences of life in India. There is no attempt to disown the richness of the past. This insistent preoccupation with the past produces a poetry in which memory plays a significant creative role. It is not 'emotion recollected in tranquillity but recollection emotionalized in untranquil moments that appear to be the driving force behind much of Ramanujan's poetry. Time and again "a hood/ of memory like a coil on a heath" unfolds in the mind.

Ramanujan’s tones and temperaments fascinate the critical privilege of the people because of his poetic height and perception. Bruce King bewrays this idea :

“Ramanujan is widely read in India, along with Western and Western-influenced modern Indian poetry in Indian languages. This unpredictable fusion of varied roots in Ramanujan’s poetry is true of the attitudes it expresses.”

The poet seeks direct meaning to life. He opines that poetry has no value without the meaning of life. He evinces his deep sympathy “for a most disadvantaged section of Indian society, the women.”

Ramanujan garnishes an intimate feeling and an individual turning point to the narrative technique. He indicates the common human situation through his individual experience.

He has a mastery of words and in his poems each word is used adroitly, attentively, accurately and economically. He has effectively demonstrated to his contemporaries the supreme significance of having roots and has also shown glimpses of the vitality the work of a poet acquires when he succeeds even partially in his attempt. He has derived his poetic technique from the ancient Kannada and Tamil verse and the poets of today have synthesised oriental and occidental models into new forms. Ramanujan’s technical accomplishment is incontestable and his thematic strategy is precisely the right one for a poet in his position. He has completely exploited the opportunities his material offers him. Ramanujan’s poetic technique is critically examined by M.K. Naik : “In poetic technique, of all his contemporaries, Ramanujan appears to have the surest touch, for he never lapses into romantic cliché. His unfailing sense of rhythm gives a fitting answer to those who hold that complete inwardness with language is possible only to a poet writing in his mother tongue. Though he writes in open forms, his verse is extremely tightly constructed.”¹² Ramanujan is very often extolled for “his unique tone of voice, a feature that accounts for the characteristic style of his poetry.”

The "outer" forms and "Inner" forms suggest the linguistic situation and cultural determinates respectively, which act upon him simultaneously. His poetry is the outcome of the interaction of these two forces. He has to convey the psyche of one culture in an alien language. Praising Ramanujan as the best of Indo-Anglican poets, R. Parthasarathy wrote, "Both *The Strider* (1966) and *Relations* (1974) are the heir of an interior tradition, a tradition very much of the subcontinent, the deposits of which are in Kannada and Tamil, and which have been assimilated into English. Ramanujan's deepest roots are in the Kannada and Tamil past and he has repossessed that past, in fact made it available, in English language. I consider this a significant achievement, one almost without a parallel in the history of Indian English verse. Ramanujan has, it seems to me, successfully conveyed in English what, at its subtlest and most incantational, is locked up in another linguistic tradition."

Ramanujan has evolved as a very important Indian poet through his collections like *The Striders*, *Relations*, *Selected Poems*, *The Second Sight* and *The Black Hen and Other Poems* written over a period ranging more than

three decades. In spite of his constant exposure to American beliefs and culture he has consistently written about India — not as an obsession, but as a source of inspiration. One observes in his writings a possibility that an artist as an individual is capable of doing of restructuring a personal (Indian) past and nourishing the same as insulated from the ideological oppositions that affect the time and space in which his text is written. While recreating the Indian settings — both rural and urban, he seems to be unaffected by the objects and images of his American surrounding because the life he captures looks so original and just not a memory game. “His exile in Chicago only strengthened his sense of the Indian past : his disturbingly vivid and agile poetic articulations both in English and Kannada are deeply rooted in the myth, folklore, history, culture and ethos of his native soil, says K. Satchidanandan in his editorial comment in a commemorative volume on Ramanujan. While recreating the human situations and details of Indian life the image of family appears as a key image. It helps the reader understand and appropriate the meaning and beauty of such poems. R. Parthasarathy, another important Indian poet writing in English suggests, “the family, for Ramanujan, is in fact one of the central metaphors with which he thinks.”

2.7 LET US SUM UP

To read A.K. Ramanujan’s poetry is to believe in immense human possibilities. His poetry and polyglottic 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.”

2.8 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

1. Critically comment on Ramanijam’s Snake.
2. Write an Essay on the symbolism in A River?
3. What are the comments of Ramanijam on life?

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LESSON - 3

R. PARTHASARATHY

Contents

- 3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
- 3.1 INTRODUCTION
- 3.2 UNDER ANOTHER SKY
- 3.3 RIVER ONCE
- 3.4 LINES FOR A PHOTOGRAPH
- 3.5 STYLE AND TECHNIQUE OF R. PARTHASARATHY
- 3.6 LET US SUM UP
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- 3.8 REFERENCES

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

By going through this lesson, you can understand R. Parthasarathy's literary talents by having the rewarding experience of reading his poetry.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

R. Parthasarathy widely published in magazines in India and abroad, he has not yet brought out a book. His poetic thrift is deliberate, Parthasarathy's sensibility, though Romantic like Moraes's, is much more fastidious. Like Ezekiel, Parthasarathy has a horror of the bad line and he would sooner sacrifice whole poems than publish them with lines he thought wrong. This gives his work a peculiarly polished quality from which hard-eyed images suddenly strike out like jewels or snakes.

3.2 UNDER ANOTHER SKY

In the poem, 'Under Another Sky', expresses his disenchantment with the language and the country of his dreams – English and England. The poem begins with the poet's return to Chennai from his self-imposed exile. The sea believe fort st. George and Santhome in Chennai appears old and tired. The mood here is reflective of exhaustion of the poet's own feeling of exhaustion after his journey to England. The sea and the land between fort st. George and Santhome perhaps remind him of the British rule in India. The poet gives a vivid picture of the commercial glory of Chennai in the past. In the distant past, long before the advent of the British. The Harbour at Chennai in the past. In the distant past, long before the advent past, long before the advent of the British, the Harbour at Chennai was busy with many trade activities. A number of ships

laden with merchandise from far off countries were anchored at the port and there ships traded in spices and other commodities. Now, it is a tired sea that accosts the visitor. The idea suggested here is that the Indians were in no way inferior to the English in Conducting international trade even before their arrival.

Very close to the seashore, in the inland of Chennai, a great civilization of the Tamils flourished. It is to be remembered that people led a Simple life of leisure. The alleys, lands and wells are symbolic of this life of simplicity. Even today the last remnants of native inclusive are to be found in the wells and alleys of the interior parts of India and Chennai. "The sun has done its worst" is a reference to the British rule and the change it with their serene smiles and seductive poses delight the people. Temple - Visiting culture has been replaced by the artificial make - believe cinema - visiting culture.

No doubt one could find great developments on the material plane. During the British rule a number of bridges were constructed. It has a suggestive meaning too. The river stands for the uncontrollable force of national resurgence but it is contained by the "bridges" of British rule. The hourglass was replaced by the "exact chronometer" of Europe. The idea suggested is that the Tamils were using the indigenous system of measuring time through hourglass but that was replaced by the modern clock. The poet rigidly portrays that under the impact of technological civilization mechanisation of life has been the main change in India after the British colonization.

The modern Indian culture is compared to an old dying beast without teeth. It has lost its strength and naturalness and rigor under the impact of the Western Culture. "Francis Day has seen to that" recalls here that in 1639 Francis Day of the East India Company obtained a grant of a East India Company obtained a grant of a strip of land on the coast of coramandel from the Rajah of chandragiri. He built fort St. George in Chennai and it became the white town. The poet's hope of writing poetry about the greatness of his great culture is shattered. He is unable to see the real Indian culture in Chennai.

The poet goes to Calcutta in search of the real India and the real Indian Culture. He expresses his sense of futility and despair in the question he poses to himself.

" what have I come
here far from a thousand miles ?"

As in Chennai, he finds the impact of the Western Culture in Calcutta. The human nature remains the same everywhere. There are a number of clubs, bass and golf-links for the "wogs" to spend their time idly. The great irony is that these "wogs" talk about the "impact of the west on India". They are in a way worse than the westerners. In Calcutta the dismal scene of porters, rick-

shaw pullers, barbers, beggars, haurcers, fortune – tellers and loungers makes him sad.

The meaning implied is that the aliens who 25 ruled us had plundered our wealth and made us poor. It may also be indicative of man's inhumanity to man. In India the rich people exploit the poor. The rich have become richer and the poor have become poorer after the "wogs" took over the rule from the "real" Westerners. The grey sky in calcutta oppresses the eyes of the poet. It is a reference to the industrial pollution. The Howrah Bridge reminds the poet of the British rule. It now looks like a pale diamond in the water. The poet is sad and is not in a mood to write poems.

With weighty unexpressed words he goes to Jadavpur. It is here that the poet finds his beloved. He thinks that she will be a personification of ideal Indian womanhood. But she represents the degenerate Indian culture, which has yielded to cheap materialism. She is not the loy maiden he expected her to be but very business like in her attitude to life and sex.

The poet is shocked beyond description. His feelings which arise in "the dark alleys of his mind" cannot even be identified by himself. He is in a confused state of mind. He is acutely of his loneliness. This reinforces his sense of frustration and disappointment. To his dismay he finds that the so called new culture cannot be dispensed with. He tries to console himself saying that "the heart needs all". He feels that one has to undergo all kinds of experiences and emotional disturbances to understand life.

The poet feels that he has come back to India only to feel that he has gained little wisdom. But he has gained a little of it on the banks of Hooghly in Calcutta, a city designed and built by Job Charnok and it will help the poet to find his moorings.

He says he would carry this wisdom to another city in "the bone urn of his mind". The mind is compared to an urn. Just as an urn carries the ashes of the dead, the mind of the poet would carry the memories of what he has seen and experienced.

The poet points out that he has reached the age of thirty and his life has come full circle. Now he has decided "to give quality the other half" of his life by writing poetry. He has decided to give up all that is puerile and would show wisdom and quality. "He is alone now, loving only words". Finally he finds anchor in his loneliness. He finds no one to share his emotions; and words are his only faithful companions. He refers to the process of growing up and this forms the kernel of the poem. The poet feels that he has lost the gift of childhood innocence and the brightness of youth in the process of becoming a man but he has gained knowledge and wisdom. Though stripped of innocence and brightness, his life has come full wide. He is going to use the newfound wisdom to write poetry.

3.3 RIVER, ONCE:

The title “River, Once” is highly suggestive. It indicates that it was a river once and it is no longer a river due to man’s indifference to the beauty of nature. The poet expresses his sense of shock at the degradation of the river Vaigai, which flows through the city of Madurai. Using the device of contrast effectively, the poet shows how the river that was once the cradle of a glorious culture has now become a sewer. The river is personified as a mother. The mother river feels for her lost glory and speaks about her present pitiable condition. The Vaigai was a fast flowing perennial river once and a glorious civilisation flourished on its banks. Now it has become a play-field for boys and the mischievous boys “tickle the ribs” with paper boats. The word “ribs” has been used metaphorically for the banks of the rivers. Buffaloes have turned the river into a pond and are wallowing in it. Once there were flower gardens on the banks of the river and now one finds only thorny bushes and shrubs. “There is eaglewood in my hair / and state flowers. Now a lot of eaglewood floats on the water and state flowers that are thrown into it can also be sun.

Once she was the refuge of emperors and poets. The poets of the past came to her for inspiration. She inspired them to write great poetry. Here the poet makes a reference to the three great Tamil Academies that flourished at Madurai in the ancient past and to the great contribution made by the sangam poets to the richness of the ancient Tamil Poetry.

In the past, birds like Kingfishers and egrets were regular visitors and as a mother the river fed them. Now they have flown away as she is unable to feed them. The poet presents an altogether different scene of the river today in a humorous and ironic vein. Every evening “When bells roll in the forehead of temples”, a man comes to the river for defacating in it unmindful of the divine call of the temple bell. The poet presents this ugly scene to highlight man’s indifference to the beauty of nature. Once people congregated on the banks of the river Vaigai for noble purposes but ironically now they do so for different and unholy purposes. Now the river Vaigai has become a receptacle of refuse..

“River, Once” is indeed a powerful poem deeply felt and powerfully expressed. The river is a symbol of the flow of life but in its present contaminated state it is only a symbol what human life has become. Anguished over decay of the river the poet seems to convey the idea that nature has made everything beautiful but man has rendered it ugly because he has lost the sense of wonder and beauty. The poet has succeeded in presenting this idea tellingly through contrastive pen-pictures.

3.4 LINES FOR A PHOTOGRAPH:

It was a poem written for the sake of a photograph. The poet had been turning over the sheets of album. He was reminded of his sister's childhood. He remembered the unruly hair of his sister which was silenced by bobbins and sibbons. Her eyes were half-shut. Her arms were around suniti's neck.

The poet, then, reminded of his school days. He says that the English which his sister learnt in Taj was spoonful of brew. The school was so small that did not quench her thirst for knowledge. He says that his sister had been grown up with the wonderful folklores of the cook.

When his father died, she was so much affected and she rolled herself like a ball. Time made her unfold herself from the cuthes of sorrow. He saw her face which was stamped with stiffness. She had been changed with her colour in the due course of time. The calamity had struck her down but that had made her matured and changed her.

3.5 STYLE AND TECHNIQUE OF R.PARTHASARATHY

The strength of his poetry lies almost entirely in its visual juxtapositions and the startling image. His lines do not sing. He cultivates the deliberately prosaic style, an undertone of rhythm itself. So, at their best, his poems become memorable individual images themselves. But occasionally the prose ignites no metaphor, is almost purely descriptive. Flat passages also weaken his longest and most ambitious poem, 'An Unfinished Biography', a meditation in five parts on the poet approaching thirty, his past, and his travels abroad. Written during his year of linguistic studies in Leeds, 'An Unfinished Biography' is important in that it foreshadows the poet's future preoccupations with language and its roots, and hints, owing to his own cultural deracination, at a future silence. In exile, too, the poet gains new insight into his colonial identity and learns the despair of having been born too late to affect the lives of both the colonizers and the colonized; Both the themes of language, and colonial alienation come together in one of his latest poems 'An Epitaph for Francis Day', where the poet's sense of futility is reinforced on being back in India.

Both these dilemmas, the colonial and the linguistic, the feeling of being born between two worlds, have turned Parthasarathy to the study of Sanskrit and his mother tongue Tamil. Sarojini Naidu gave up writing in English, though probably for other reason, more than fifty years ago. Young poets, bilingually accomplished, also stop writing in English continue writing in both English and the mother tongue. Some of the best work in English has been done by such bilingual writers as Aruu Kolathkar. Dilip Chitre, and Kamala Das. P. Lal, on the other hand, a founder of Calcutta's Writers Workshop which encourages Indian writing in English very successfully to translating from the Sanskrit, Adil Jussawalla is confident that the next ten years of poetry written in English will see it deal of translated and bilingual work.

As the bulk of translations grow, so does work originally in English. The best book of English-language poems published in India in 1966 is Gieve Patel's *Poems*. This is an important work in that it contains the poems by an Indian to be committed to a recognizably human reality. The preoccupations in the poems are neither aesthetic nor philosophical but truly human. A doctor by profession, Patel sees his subjects with a sharp but rather helpless compassion.

Parthasarathy's, Gieve Patel's use of language is spare and unambitious, the poems progressing in a series of verse sentences which make little use of cadence, rhyme, or melody.

3.6 LET US SUM UP

It is a rewarding experience reading the poems of Parthasarathy.

3.7 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

1. Attempt an essay on Parthasarathy's *Under Another Sky*?
2. Consider Parthasarathy as a poet?

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LESSON – 4

SRI AUROBINDO

Contents

- 4.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
- 4.1 INTRODUCTION
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4.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The present lesson is devoted for throwing lights on the works of Sri Aurobindo; an outstanding personality in Indo-Anglian literature.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Sri Aurobindo is the one uncontestably outstanding figure in Indo-Anglian literature. He represents a new poetic consciousness which seeks to create a more refined instrument to express the new version and experience. So his poetry has a distinction of its own in its rhythm and language.

4.2 LIFE AND WORKS:

Sri Aurobindo was born in Calcutta on 15 August 1872. His father, Krishnadhan Ghose, was a popular civil surgeon, while his mother, Swarnalata Devi, was a daughter of Rishi Rajnarain Bose, one of the great men of the Indian renaissance in the nineteenth century who embodied the new composite culture of the country that was at once Vedantic, Islamic and European. On the other hand, Krishnadhan had a pronounced partiality for the Western way of life. Having himself had his medical education at Aberdeen, he desired that his children should, if possible, go one better even and be wholly insulated from the contamination of Indian ways.

If Krishnadhan had sent his son, not to the Loretto Convent School at Darjeeling and thence to Manchester, London (St. Paul's) and Cambridge (King's), but to 'native' schools and colleges at Calcutta, Sri Aurobindo might have early mastered his mother tongue, Bengali, and become in the fulness of time another Bankim Chandra or Rabindranath, wielding with suppleness,

grace and power the most dynamic of modern Indian languages. But his translation to England in 1879 (along with his two elder brothers, Manmohan the future poet and Benoy Bhushan) and his stay there for a period of about fourteen years made English his mother tongue for all practical purposes, and he came to acquire a complete mastery over that difficult language as if verily born to that heritage.

At Manchester, Sri Aurobindo was taught privately by the Rev. William H. Drewert and Mrs. Drewett who grounded him well in English, Latin, French, and history; at St. Paul's, Dr. Walker the High Master himself took a deep interest in Sri Aurobindo's education and pushed him rapidly in his Greek studies. It was a fruitful period, and Sri Aurobindo, besides securing the Butterworth Prize in Literature and the Bedford Prize in History, won a scholarship that enabled him to proceed to King's. At Cambridge he made a notable impression on Oscar Browning, passed the I.C.S. open competitive examination (although he couldn't finally join the Service), and secured a First in classical tripos at the end of his second year.

To his proficiency in the classics and English was now added a growing acquaintance with German and Italian, and also some knowledge of Sanskrit and Bengali. He read widely, spoke often at the Majlis, and wrote poetry. He left England at last in February 1893, having received an appointment in the service of the Maharaja of Baroda.

Sri Aurobindo passed the next thirteen years at Baroda. He was employed in various departments, but he finally gravitated towards the Baroda College. He taught French for a time, and ultimately became Professor of English and Vice-Principal. During these years Sri Aurobindo fast achieved the feat of re-nationalizing himself. His mind had returned from "Sicilian olive-groves" and "Athenian lanes" to the shores of the Ganges, to Saraswati's domains. He gained a deeper insight into Sanskrit and Bengali, and cultivated besides Marathi and Gujarati. He read with avidity, and he wrote copiously.

The political scene in India depressed him, and he contributed a series of trenchant articles to the columns of *Indu Prakash* under the telling caption 'New Lamps for Old'. But the time was inopportune yet for political action, and after this first burst of self-expression he withdrew into silence. Yet his pen was not idle; politics may be taboo for the time being, but not literature. And so 'New Lamps for Old' was followed by a series of articles on the art of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. Already in these early prose writings we can mark the sinuosity and balance, the imagery and colour, the trenchancy and sarcasm that were to distinguish the maturer prose writings of the 'Bandema-taram' period.

The Baroda period was the significant seed-time of Sri Aurobindo's life, for he seems to have pursued his varied interests—teaching, poetry, even politics—simultaneously. *Songs to Myrtilla* appeared in 1895, and was followed next year by the narrative poem, *Urvashi*. He completed also *Love and Death*, another long poem, besides the first draft of *Savitri*. Some of his

blank verse plays too—notably *Perseus the Deliverer*—belong to this period. Drawn slowly to the centre of revolutionary politics in Bengal, in 1905 Sri Aurobindo wrote *Bhavani Mandir*, ‘A Handbook for Revolutionaries dedicated to the service of Bhavani’, which caused deep concern to the bureaucracy.

In April 1906 he attended the Barisal Political Conference and took the plunge into politics at last. This meant his leaving the Baroda College, but other arduous duties awaited him in Calcutta. In August 1906, he assumed charge as Editor of the *Bandemataram*, a new English daily started by Bepin Chandra Pal. A year later he was arrested in connection with the publication of certain articles in his paper, but was later honourably acquitted. Romain Holland saw in Sri Aurobindo the foremost of Indian thinkers, the greatest synthesis that has yet been realized of the genius of Asia and the genius of Europe, the last of the great Rishis who held in his hand, “in firm unrelaxed grip, the bow of creative energy”. The poet, J. A. Chadwick (Arjava), wrote in 1936 of Sri Aurobindo’s Consciousness: “Considered merely as a poet and critic of poetry, Sri Aurobindo would still rank among the supreme masters of our time. His poetical output represents the creative effort of about sixty years and, on a modest estimate, may run to some three thousand pages

Sri Aurobindo’s poetry stands a class apart in Indo-English poetry and offers scope for critical reassessment. George Sampson has referred to Sri Aurobindo as “more famous as an exponent of Indian nationalism than as a poet. K.R.S. Iyengar has made a substantial and balanced contribution to Aurobindonian criticism. He realises that a new kind of poetry like Sri Aurobindo’s “demands a new mentality in the recipient as well as in the writer.

Throughout his long career, amid all the many-faceted achievements he never abandoned his first love, poetry. He has given us poetry—lyrical, narrative, dramatic, epic, which, in volume and in variety, in quantity and in quality can be compared with the work of the greatest poets who have enriched the poetical literature of the world. But he is not a widely-known poet, partly because his aim was not success and personal fame, but to express spiritual truth and experience of all kinds in poetry. He tried to use the English tongue for the highest spiritual expression

The *Life Divine* and *The Synthesis of Yoga* related only to an individual self-development, in *The Human Cycle* originally published under the title of *Psychology of Social Development*, he has indicated how these truths affect the evolution of human society. In *The Ideal of Human Unity* he has taken the present trend of mankind towards a closer unification and tried to appreciate its tendencies and show what is wanting in them in order that real human unity may be achieved.

He extended the application of this very approach to the sphere of international politics in his *The Ideal of Human Unity*.

His poetic career spreads over a period of sixty years from 1890 to 1950 during which he has enriched the realm of letters by a 'royal quantity of quality'. In the words of V. K. Gokak, he is undoubtedly "the most outstanding Indo-Anglian writer for volume as well as for variety."⁴ The two volumes of 'Collected Poems and Plays', the multi-aspected epic *Savitri* with its 24,000 lines, narrative poems, a large body of philosophical poems besides the clusters of lyrics represent the creative effort of about sixty years and give the impression of the enormous poetic stature of Sri Aurobindo – the poet.

The poem beautifully expresses Sri Aurobindo's belief that the transformation of man into superman is possible only if two requisites are there—the aspiring call from below and the Divine Grace from above.

In a number of poems like *Thought the Paraclete*, *Rose of* and *The Bird of Fire*, Sri Aurobindo has transcribed his mystical experiences and achieved in English verse something equivalent to the Mantra He makes us see what he himself has seen—visions of close spiritual communion. While *Thought the Paraclete* is a vision or revelation of an ascent through spiritual plane & *Rose of God* with the most famous of mystical symbols presents the Divine Glory and Reality. It is significant to note that Sri Aurobindo has dealt with mystical experiences in a way different from other mystic poets. He has not clothed them in human symbols and allegories, in images and figures of earthly and secular life. He presents them in their nakedness, just as they are seen and realised, and therefore appear obscure to the common human understanding. But there are poems like *God's Labour* which, with, lucidity and ease of expression outline and explain the central beliefs. The poem reveals the poet's beliefs of God, of the problem of evil and suffering in the world and of man's evolution to greater and more glorious heights:

4.3 THE ROSE OF GOD:

Rose of God unfolds before us in the succession of vibrant images the whole mystical metaphysics and psychology—many-sided system exploring the secrets of the Divine Rose.

In the poem, *Rose of God*, There are two main concepts rounds which the words are woven the descending super mind and the ascending sun.

The *Rose of God* which is equated with the rising sun and the descending super mind is characterized in the opening stanza by two attributes, bliss and passion. The vermillion sun on the blue sky appears like a Kumkumam mark on the forehead of a beautiful woman. The redness is the symbol of passion and the sapphire of blue heaven stands for the limitless infinity. Therefore the Sun is called the Passion Flower of the Nameless. God, the Absolute, cannot be comprehended through qualities. So, man attributes qualities to Him for the purpose of realization or it can be said that the absolute itself manifests to man through assumed qualities. This is the passion of God, who is really beyond all naming. Man has to use symbols to express the

indefinable. So the poet calls the Sun 'bud of the mystical name', that is, the Priyakshara OM, which stands for all the Mantras. 'OM' or pravana is taken to be the truest symbol of God head. The poet invokes this passion flower to rise up in the human heart, like an upward streaming flame. This is an allusion to the Kundalini which rises from the Muladhara and passing through four more plexes goes up to the Sahasrara. The consequence of the up going flame is bliss. The poet calls it fire-sweet, that is, as flaming as the fire and as sweet as nectar. He says the rising of the sun in the sky at the dawn produces the seven – coloured spectrum which is the symbol for the seven levels of ecstasy defined in Yoga texts like 'Yoga – Vasishta'. Thus in the first stanza, the eagerness of God to come to man is powerfully underlined by the symbol of the sun eagerly rising in the Eastern sky.

In the second stanza, the attributes dealt with are those of Light and time. In the first stanza, the miracle was said to happen in the heart of man. In this stanza the transformation is in the mind of man. Light stands for unclouded knowledge. The Sun is obviously the symbol of the grandest light. In the Gita we find that the splendor of the Lord's Visvarupa or cosmic form has been hesitatingly described as a splendor of a thousand suns rising simultaneously. The sun drives away all darkness and takes us to the summit of wisdom. In terms of the kumkumam the summit stands for the thousand – petal lotus, reeling which the Yogi has nothing more to achieve. It is the ultimate seeing, and it is immaculate in the sense that the Sahasra is represented as pure white. So, he calls the sun a golden flower of mystery. The sun is the maker of time and as such represents the God head which is beyond all time, but comes down to man in time as an incarnation. And this incarnation, the poet calls the guest of the marvelous hour. A guest is called an atithi, that is, one who comes without previous appointment. The descent of the super mind depends on the Grace of God and cannot be scheduled according to any time – table. But once the super mind arrives time itself becomes a marvel, because hence forth the shackling effect of time is lost. Living in time the aspirant becomes timeless. This is the result of the divine quest arriving unexpectedly. So, he is called the guest of marvelous hour.

In the third stanza, the attribute dealt with is power and Immortality. The poet calls the sun the source of all power. This is scientifically true because all the sources of energy with which we run our industries can be traced ultimately to the sun. Science tells us that the four fuels, firewood, coal, water power and petroleum, all originate from solar light and heat. Hence it is extremely appropriate that the sun is worshiped as the grantor of power. So, the poet calls the sun the granter of right. Icon means image. He calls it also the damask force of infinity. Damask is defined as blush red. So, it brings to our mind the scene of an infinite power that is also infinitely tender. The sun not only gives us power but tenderly. Nourishes the smallest life. The power of sun shatters the darkness of ignorance. This is composed to a diamond drill breaking up rocks and releasing the life – giving waters. The power resides in the will and therefore the poet entreats the sun to set ablaze the will of man,

and make him relies the pattern of the lord's creation. When we know the design our own lines into great elegance and fulfillment, drawing power from the source of all power. There fore, for poet calls the sun the Image of Immortality. An image is finite, but what it represents is Infinite. Man lives only for a brief period. But within the period if the life is divinized, it can have eternal significance. He calls it an outbreak because the power of the Divine Shatters all limitations.

It is the desire of God that is the source of creation. We cannot know why God choose of creation. We cannot know why God choose to have a desire. But we cannot, with out human understanding, explain creation as anything but the sport of God undertaken in cutler freedom. Man are driven by desire to do things but God uses desire as the instrument for his creation. So the poet says that the blooming of life on creation is simulations with the rising of the sun,. and in the redness of the sun, he sees God's purple desire. Life is multifaceted and comparable to a flower with multi – layered petals. The colours run the whole gamut even as a lyre spans all the octaves of music. The poet has in mind the sahasrara or the thou – sand petal lotus which overtops the sin charkas of the koundolini and where siva and parvathi, the parents of the universe are said to sport. From that sport does the divinity of tile issue. According to Tantric lore, the Kundalini that has risen up to the sahasrara returns down words by the Grace of God. The result is the physical body of man is transformed into finest expression of divinity. The poet calls it a sweet rhyme. When the super mind descends, earth heaven get inter – mingled and mortal man becomes immortal. Life becomes eternal. So he calls it 'The Rose of Life'.

In the concluding stanza, the poet invokes "God's grace as the Rose of Love" In shakthi worship, the composition of the Divine Mother is called Aruna or Pink. The poet calls it the blush of rapture on the face to the Eternal. It is ruby – red in colour signifying the blood relationship between the victory and the deity. He points out that nature by itself is Tamasic. It is like a deep abyss or pit completely dark. Man who finds himself cast into that bottomless pit cries out in despair. The poet asks the Grace of God to descend to this pit and raise up the suffering mortal. So, that earth itself turns into heaven and life is thrilled as it kissed by the eternal bliss.

It should be noted that the suprarrenal is expected to device every accepted to to divinize every aspect of human life. That is why he refers to its symbol, the sun, as the Rose of Life, Rose of Power, Rose of life, Rose of Love and of Bliss. The change takes place in man's body, wil, mind and heard. The Rose Stands for Bright hope and so the poem is a testament of the poet's faith that sooner or later the super mind will descend and divinize life on earth at all levels.

Considered merely as a poet and critic of poetry, Sri Aurobindo would still rank among the supreme masters of our time. His poetical output

represents the creative effort of about sixty years and, on a modest estimate, may run to some three thousand pages.

K. D. Sethna remarks about the poem, “The most famous of mystical symbols he has steeped in the intensest inner light and lifted it on a material base of pure stress into an atmosphere of rhythmic ecstasy.”³ The ‘Rose’ is here the supreme symbol of the essence and efflorescence of God. Bliss, Light, Power, Life and Love are the five essences that fuse as the integral perfection of God. In every stanza, the first half names a power above and the second half invokes that Power to inhabit, inform and recreate the corresponding instrument below—Bliss for the human heart. Light for the human mind, Power for the human will, Life for the body terrestrial, and Love to ‘make earth the home of the wonderful and life Beatitude’s Kiss’. Everywhere in ‘Rose of God’ we have a profound and life-packed language as a natural vehicle attempting the revelation of spiritual reality.

Rose of God, like a blush of rapture on Eternity’s face, Rose of Love, ruby depth of all being, fire-passion of Grace! Arise from the heart of the yearning that sobs in Nature’s abyss: Make earth the home of the Wonderful and life beatitude’s kiss.

4.4 REVELATIONS

As ‘a lovely, mystical lyric of great transparency’, the poem has visionary power. The poet passes through a spiritual illumination as it were. For Aurobindo, Nature becomes very often the abode of heavenly spirit. Here also the poet gleams amidst Nature the flash of a spiritual creature. A check of frightened rose is a transferred image that connotes a spiritual existence.

Heavenly rout indexes Aurobindo’s realization of the spiritual world.

Revelation is a mystic experience of the poet (some understanding with universal vision). He feels as if the presence of God, Vision of God leaps behind the rocks and passes him like a blow of wind. By the time he tries to guess what it would be, it vanishes. He feels it like a bright light which is visible to his mortal eyes. It is like a frightened rose glows with a sudden beauty. He feels as if someone is passing him with a footstep like the wind. When he harkens to take a glance at it, but there remains nothing. He feels it is just a veil of maya (illusion). He that it is to make the man understand the heavenly vision.

4.5 TRANSFORMATIONS

A mystical poem where Aurobindo speaks as an illumined soul. The speaker is no longer a man of flesh and bone; he is transformed into God’s happy tool. His cells are lighted with the rapture and joy of the unknown and the supreme. The poem captures the process of transformation from the human to the divine. Time is my drama suggests eternity. Senses’ narrow mesh stands for the physical reality. Sun of deathless night connotes the infinite, immortal divine spirit.

4.6 STYLE AND TECHNIQUE OF SRI AUROBINDO

Poetry” he says in one of the letters, “is after all an art and a poet ought to be an artist of word and rhythm, even though necessarily, like other artists, he must also be something more than that, even much more.

Sri Aurobindo distinguishes five kinds of poetic style in keeping with the different grades of perfection in poetry: the adequate, the effective, the illuminative, the inspired and the inevitable. Sri Aurobindo has tried to explain and illustrate these different styles but he warns us at the same time that “these are things which one has to learn to feel, one can’t analyse.

For Sri Aurobindo language is a living throbbing reality having its body and its soul. The poet has to establish contact with its soul and has to obey its rules. He says, “A language is like an absolute queen; you have to obey her laws, reasonable or unreasonable, and not only her laws, but her caprices so long as they last—unless you are one of her acknowledged favourites and then you can make hay of her laws and (sometimes) defy even her caprices provided you are quite sure of the favour.

Sri Aurobindo as a poet is deeply conscious of the power of words and therefore is naturally meticulous in the choice of proper words carrying the burden of his themes. In keeping with his spiritual vision and mystical experiences he has created a new poetic diction which is commensurate with the grandeur of his themes in poetry. In the evolution of his poetry his diction and language changed from the sensuous and earthly to spiritual and ethereal. He has given a new flexibility to poetic expression, by including words derived from various fields of art, science and technology which impart a sense of modernity to his diction.

Sri Aurobindo has employed poetic devices to embellish his poetic creations — in the earlier poetry deliberately and in the later naturally and intuitively. His language and style are the expressions of his soul. He uses language not simply like a great and conscious craftsman but as a seer prophet who touches the very source from where words have their birth.

Sri Aurobindo did not consider the study of prosody indispensable for the poet. His poetry reveals him as a master craftsman, an experimenter, and innovator who has with a facility and dexterity utilized for his poetic purposes, nearly all the traditional English metres iambic, trochaic, dactylic, anapaestic, and different verse forms, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter and hexameter and both the English and Italian Sonnet forms as well as both rhymed and blank verse.

4.7 LET US SUM UP

Sri Aurobindo as the exponent of Indian culture has offered an illuminating interpretation of Indian culture down the centuries in his the foundation of Indian Culture. As a literary critic Sri Aurobindo has given to us The Future Poetry which began as a critical review of James H. Cousins book, new ways in English Literature. The future Poetry is the richest and most courageous possible synthesis of the critical genius of the East and that of the West.

To quote N. K. Gupta, "His poetry is philosophic, abstract, no doubt but every philosophy has its practice, and every abstract thing its concrete application, even as the soul has its body; and the fusion, not mere union, of the two is very characteristic in him.

4.8 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

Attempt a Symbolic Interpretation on the Rose of God?

Comment on the Style and Technique of Sri Aurobindo?

Write an essay on the Theme and Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo's Poems?

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LESSON - 5

TORU DUTT

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5.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This lesson presents an illuminating picture on Toru Dutt and her works.

5.1 INTRODUCTION:

Toru Dutt is one of the distinguished authors in Indo-Anglian literature. Her work may be meagre, but it is of lasting worth. She is one of the poignant examples of those who before their proper time pass through the door of darkness. Her life is a mixed story of sunshine and sorrow, laughter and pathos, beauty and tragedy, success and regret. If her literary work fills us with joy and awe, her premature death leaves us sad and repenting.

5.2 LIFE AND WORKS OF TORU DUTT

Born on March 4, 1856, in a Hindu family in Ram-bagan, 12 Manicktollah Street, Calcutta, Toru was brought up by her parents in a fine cultural atmosphere. Her father, Govin Chunder Dutt, was a good poet and linguist. Besides contributing to The Dutt Family Album (1870), which also contained poems by Hur Chunder, Omesh Chunder and Greece Chunder, Govin Chunder published The Loyal Hours (1876) and Cherry Stones (1881), both having good English verses. Her mother, Kshetramoni, was well-versed in Bengali and English, and translated The Blood of Jesus from English into Bengali. She as well as her husband wielded a profound influence on the daughters, Aru and

Toru! Writing to Harihar Das about the Dutts, Bishop Clifford observed: “I learned to realize that if Toru inherited her rich intellectual gifts from her father’s side of the family, she must have received the moral beauty and sweet-ness of her character largely from her mother.”

Toru dutt had a rich and respectable ancestry. The Dutts were important people in Calcutta. Her father, Govin Chunder Dutt, was well-to-do, a good linguist, and a cultured man with literary leanings and generous impulses. Her mother was steeped in the Hindu myths, and was a woman of loving and sweet disposition. Like other young men of the tune, the Dutts too were attracted by the glamour of the West and the Gospel of Christ, and hi a body some members of the family embraced Christianity in 1862. Toru was then 6 years old (she was born on 4 March 1856), her elder sister Aru was 8, and their brother Abju was 11. It is clear that the change of faith caused a temporary estrangement between the parents, as may be inferred from Govin's poem addressed to his wife Mrs. Govin, however, seems later to have reconciled herself to the new situation, and indeed to have become an ardent Christian. Hers was on the whole a life of trial and tribulation, but she bore all with angelic patience and died in peace, exemplifying, in Bishop Clifford's words, "the great Christian saying, 'Death is swallowed up in Victory

The children had a private tutor, but of course Govin himself !ok a hand in their education and carefully supervised their studies. Now came the first calamity: Abju died, aged only 14, in 1865, and so the sisters clung closer together than ever. They read *Paradise Lost* repeatedly, and generally lost themselves in literary studies.

In 1869, the family left for Europe, and the girls went to a French School at Nice for a time. Presently they reached London and took a furnished house. By and by the girls began to turn their knowledge of both French and English into good account by translating French lyrics into English verse. They had company, too, English as well as Indian, and talk was free. But the younger sister seems to have been more forward in conversation or action than the elder.

Among their Indian friends was Romesh Chunder Dutt, their cousin, who was then in London preparing for the Civil Service Examination. Soon after their arrival In London came out *The Dutt Family Album* (1870), containing about 200 pieces, Govin Dutt's contributions being mainly of a didactic character. His brothers and a nephew of his, Omesh Chunder, were the other contributors to the volume. Although of no particular merit, the volume at least throws light on the atmosphere of Govin Dutt's house, which was evidently favourable to literary exertion and creation. In fact, an ideal atmosphere for Aru and Toru.

In 1871 the family moved to Cambridge where Aru and Toru attended the so-called 'Higher Lectures for Women' and made friends with Mary Martin, who was to be Toru's lifelong friend and the recipient of most of her letters. In September 1873, the family returned to Calcutta, where they divided their time

between the city house 'Rambhagan', 12, Manicktolla Street, and the garden house at Baugmaree. Hardly a few months after their return, tragedy darkened their life a second time, for Aru succumbed to consumption on 23 July 1874. "The Lord has taken Aru from us", wrote Toru to her Cambridge friend, Mary; "It is a sore trial for us, but His will be done. We know He doeth all things for our good..." She added further that her father was planning to return to England and settle down in Westmoreland because of its Wordsworthian associations—Wordsworth being Govin's favourite poet.

Toru's sunniness, however, remained, although darkened now and then by the memory of a lost brother and a lost sister. She got ready for the press her renderings from the French into English, and these appeared in 1875 with the title *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields*. Of the 165 pieces, 8 were by Aru, and Toru had also added notes on the French poets represented in the volume.

In her physical constitution, Toru was frail and fragile. Was ill, very ill, and had recurrent attacks of fever, cough spasm and blood spitting. She was obliged to keep within doors, and became so weak that she could not write even her letters. It is, indeed, a harrowing tale, but steeped in heroism. At last, on August 30, 1877, Toru paid her debt to nature, leaving her parents totally deserted and depressed. Govin reported the peaceful death of his dear daughter to Mary Martin in the following manner: "Her end was very peaceful and happy, and her mother and myself will never, never forget the expression that was on her face when all was over. Such a glory there was on it."s She was buried at the C.M.S. Cemetery in Calcutta near her loved brother and sister.

After her death, Govin Chunder searched her papers and discovered the manuscripts of an unfinished romance in English entitled *Bianca, or The Young Spanish Maiden*, and a complete French novel called *Le Journal de Mademoiselle Drivers* and *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan*. He made arrangements for their publication, supplying the missing links wherever necessary. U Earlier than these works, she had written two essays, *A Scene from Contemporary History*, and many letters to her friend Mary and to the French authoress, Mile. Clarisse Bader, whose love and admiration she had won through correspondence. Further, Govin informs us in his "Prefatory Memoir" attached to *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields* that both the sisters kept diaries of their travels in Europe. It is a matter of pity that no portion of these diaries has ever been published. No doubt, the diaries would have revealed some valuable information about that period of their lives, of which so little is known. Added to this is yet another unfortunate fact that all the letters Toru wrote home from France and England were destroyed.

Toru Dutt also learned English, and learned it marvellously, but she, as contrasted with ordinary Indians, was quick to realise that her own Oriental background of literature was so precious that she would have to commingle it with her abundant European knowledge. This 'commingling' or cross-fertilisation of Eastern and Western ideas is at the root of the Indian

renaissance which took place in the 19th century. In this 'renaissance' the Dutts— Michael Madhusudan, Govin Chunder and his brothers, and Toru Dutt—played a prominent role. As for Toru Dutt, she rendered several French poems into English and also several Sanskrit anecdotes and legends into delightful English verse. Thus, she interplayed the culture of her land with that of England and France. The noted French critic and writer, James Darmesteter; makes a correct evaluation of Toru Dutt when he observes thus: "This daughter of Bengal, so admirably and so strangely gifted, Hindu by race and tradition, an Englishwoman by education, a Frenchwoman at heart, poet in English, prose-writer in French; who at the age of eighteen made India acquainted with the poets of France in the rhyme of England, who blended in herself three souls and three traditions, and died at the age of twenty, in the full bloom of her talent and on the eve of the awakening of her genius, presents in the history of literature a phenomenon without parallel."

5.3 TORU'S LITERARY DEVELOPMENT

Toru's literary development is interesting enough. She began with French and English and later drifted towards Sanskrit, the storehouse of her own rich cultural past. There is every reason to believe that she would have become more and more 'autochthonous' in her creative writings, had not the race of her life been so quickly run. Her Ancient Ballads is essentially Indian in themes and Treatment; Fisher is not far from the truth when he remarks about her that "this child of the green valley of the Ganges has by sheer force of native genius earned for herself the right to be enrolled in the great fellowship of English poets.

Toru was a 'linguistic prodigy', and performed the tricks of a magician in the handling of at least three languages, often translating into one from another.

As a translator, she did not slavishly follow the original. She had actually a personality too individualistic to be suppressed. On the contrary, she was out to prove that "the translation is not an isolated phenomenon but an index of personality meaningful in its relatedness with a greater heritage, cultural and literary. She gave a status to translation."

As a writer, Toru took her job seriously. She had a high sense of her vocation, and did not trifle with it. After returning from her European tour, she feverishly plunged into literary activities and never took any rest. This certainly told heavily on her health, but she did not like to swerve from the chosen path.

Finally, Toru Dutt is usually recalled today as one of 'the inheritors of unfulfilled renown'. In this respect, she is the Keats of India. It is really remorseful that time cut short prematurely a career of such promise and early fulfilment. The saddest memory of Toru Dutt is in what 'might have been',

a thought she so prophetically expressed at the end of the Sheaf while commenting on Aru's un-timely death:

Of all sad words of tongue and pen

The saddest are these—it might have been

5.4 OUR CASUARINA TREE:

“Our Casuarina Tree” has been considered as “beautiful poetic pieces, the out-bursts of poetic genius”. Our Casuarina Tree in more than the poetic evocation of a tree; it is recapturing the past, and immortalizing the moments of time so recaptured. The tree is both tree and symbol, and in it are implicated both time and eternity

The first stanza is an objective description of the tree; the second relates the tree to Toru's own impressions of it at different times; the third links up the tree with Toru's memories of her lost brother and sister; the fourth humanizes the tree, for its lament is a human recordation of pain and regret; and the last stanza wills as it were the immortality of the tree. The eleven-line stanza form with the rhyme scheme abba, cddc, eee is worthy of Keats himself. In the organization of the poem as a whole and in the finish of the individual stanzas, in its mastery of phrase and rhythm, in its music of sound and ideas, 'Our Casuarina Tree' is a superb piece of writing, and gives us a taste of what Toru might have done had not the race of her life been so quickly run. "There were few poetic glories", says Amaranatha Jha, "which, given maturity, she could not have achieved". But speculation and promise apart, Toru's actual record as a poet does compel recognition, and Mr. H. A. L. Fisher is no more than just when he writes: "... this child of the green valley of the Ganges has by sheer force of native genius earned for herself the right to be enrolled in the great fellowship of English poets."

The poet gives a picturesque description of the tree with the creepers climbing up like a huge python, twisting around the rough trunk which is marked with deep scars. The scars indicate its age and ruggedness of its state. She personifies the tree like gallant gaint, python and witch, which wants to suck life out of the tree. But this giant tree boldly wears the python like a scarf and is filled with full of budding flowers. She describes the crimson coloured flowers that are hanging among the branches, which serves as the nest for birds and also attracts the bees to suck money. The atmosphere is filled with the fragrance of the flowers.

The poet further says that her eyes happily delight on seeing the Casuarina tree through the side opened window. She watches the monkey occupying the lower branches of the tree, watching the sunrise and the tiny, small and young one of the baboon leaps out of the thick branches. In the water-tank of this great tree springs the water-lilies and the place looks like a snow covered island.

Dutt shares her nostalgic feelings. According to her the tree not because it is magnificent but because of its glorious evergreen moments. She remembers the time she played under the tree with her brothers. She feels that the tree has a sentimental attachment to her, so this tree remains dear and near her. This is because the tree was there, when she played with her brothers and it to still there even when her brothers are no more.

She wonders about the dirge that she hears. It is just like the sound of the waves beating on the pebble covered shores. She thinks that the sea might be mourning, but she concludes that it is not so. It's sound might be heard in an unknown land. In the same way the lament of the tree may be heard by a land far off.

She discusses the loss of faith in God in the Victorian era. These water-wraith seems to kiss gently the classic shores of France and Italy. She compares her present life with that of her past, which is full of evergreen memories.

Thus this poem is a song in honour of the tree. The tree is dear to her since her brothers are asleep forever.

“Our Casuarina Tree” is a memorable poem. It is an admirable blend of local touches and literary reminiscences, of objective description of the actual tree and the charm of association with Toru's childhood. It opens with an account of the giant tree, festooned with the crimson flowers of a great creeper which wraps it wholly ‘like a huge python’. By day and by night it is a centre of busy life and sweet bird-song. It is the finest object on which Toru's eyes rest as she flings wide her window at dawn, and some-times in the early light ‘a grey-baboon sits statue-like alone/ Watching the sunrise’. The shadow of the tree falls across the tank and makes the white water-lilies look ‘like snow enmassed’. Grand and charming as the tree is, it is dear chiefly for the memories that cluster round it—memories of a time when happy children played under its shade. The thought brings out an intense yearning towards the play-mates now no more:

O sweet companions, loved with love intense,

‘For your sakes shall the tree be ever dear!

Blent with your images, it shall arise

In memory, till the hot tears blind mine eyes! (p. 174)

To the poetess's fancy, the tree in sympathy sounds a dirge-like murmur like ‘the sea breaking on a shingle-beach’. It is the ‘eerie.speech’ or ‘lament’ of the tree that, she hopes, may perhaps reach ‘the unknown land’. Such a wail always strikes a chord of memory in her. Even when she was travelling in France or Italy, it had always sent thought winging its way homeward bringing recollections of the tree so dearly loved in childhood. The last stanza of the

poem, with its rich romantic fervour, unfolds a desire of the poetess for the immortality of verse, and ends with the delightful line:

May Love defend thee from Oblivion's curse. This beautiful poem is written in the eleven-line stanza form, rhyming a b b a, c d d c, e e e. It is certainly a new and very successful experiment, and is worthy of Keats. In the words of Dr. Iyengar, "In the organisation of the poem as a whole and in the finish of the individual stanzas, in its mastery of phrase and rhythm, in its music of sound and ideas, 'Our Casuarina Tree' is a superb piece of writing,, and gives us a taste of what Toru might have done had not the race of her life been so quickly run". The poem is more than the poetic evocation of a tree; it is recapturing the past, and immortalizing the moments of time so recaptured. The tree is both a tree and a symbol, and in it are implicated both time and eternity.

This is a remarkable poem where memory and nostalgia interplay in the lore of loss and longing. The experience is traumatic in remembrance and existential in perception of human mortality. The tree is both a tree and a symbol; it cuts across time and eternity. The poem shows Toru Dutt's minute observation and varied impressions of the tree. What glows in it is the memory of her lost brother and sister. The poem moves from observation to Eloquent eyes and their hearts whisper when they are locked in a passionate embrace. Nature is lighted with the burning flame of their love and the earth turns into a green empire where they reign as the happy king and queen.

The poem reminds us of Marvell's 'Thoughts in a Garden' and Tennyson's 'Come into the Garden, Maud'. Julian was the Roman emperor (361-3 a.d.). He was called Julian the Apostate because, though brought up as a Christian, he reverted to the worship of old gods which he tried to revive. Heaven of Freedom.

Critics have invariably praised this poem. Harihar Das says: "For its rich imagery, the music of its verses, and the tenderness and pathos with which it is instinct, we would place this poem second to none in the volume". E. J. Thompson regards it as "the most remarkable poem ever written in English by a foreigner, shows her already possessed of mastery over the more elaborate and architectural forms of verse". "He further comments on this poem as follows: "One of the stanzas drops into conventionality, and uses adjectives and thought that are second hand and otiose. But the poem's strength is independent of this; and its blending of pathos and dignity of spirit, its stretching out of ghostly arms to those other haunted trees of Wordsworth in 'Borrowdale', the conclusion—so recalling the last work of another poet, far inferior in genius but dying equally young, Kirke White, in the touching close of his *Christiad* this forms a whole of remarkable strength and beauty, and should achieve her hope of placing the tree of her childhood's memories, among those immortalized by Mighty poets in their misery dead."

Mukerjee is of the view that this poem, as well as the sonnet “Baugmaree”, will live in literature for the superb construction of its stanza and the succession of rich and vivid images with which it is filled. It is, he observes, “one of the great architectural pieces in English poetry.” Lotika Basu also is all praise for the “riper perfection”⁵³ attained in this wonderful poem. The poem will, no doubt, be always remembered for its mellow sweetness and structural perfection. The diction is shorn of all crudities that can be thought of in verse, and the rhythm has a flow and sure movement in it.

5.5 LAKSHMAN

This poem is based on the mythology of ‘The Ramayana’. This is a conversation between Sita and Lakshman, during their life in seclusion in the forest. Sita on seeing a beautiful stag desires to have it. Rama being a dutiful husband runs to catch the stag in order to fulfil his wife’s desire. It is during his absence, this conversation takes place between Sita and Lakshman.

Sita asks Lakshman to go and help her husband, whom she thinks is crying out for help. She in turn asks his brother Lakshman to help him. But Lakshman remains silent without any reaction. On seeing Lakshman’s hard-heartedness she scold him and informs him that she will save her husband without his help.

Lakshman on the other hand tries to console her, and make her believe that all her fears are unnecessary regarding Rama, because he was a man of valour and might. He gives out a list, praising his qualities, thus concluding that he is not a normal human being to cry for help. He also reminds her of his purpose of staying back. He says that it is the command of Rama’s to protect and safeguard Sita from the enemies lurking and waiting for a chance to work out their will.

Sita is not convinced with his reasons. She adds that one brother has already occupied the kingdom and falsely accuses him of taking Rama’s wife. This ignominy strikes Lakshman very badly.

Lakshman on hearing these words decides to depart from her and heed her advice of helping his brother by disobeying his brother’s command. Sita’s words pierce him through his heart. When he sets out to leave her alone he draws a magic circle with his sword, out of which Sita is not expected to cross. Thus he starts moving into the forest leaving her alone in the hut. He prays to all heavenly host to keep her safe in his absence. Thus he dauntlessly sets out.

5.6 TORU DUTT’S LITERARY ACHIEVEMENT:

Broadly speaking, the literary personality of Tom Dutt appears before us at least in three distinct forms as a poet, as a prose writer, and as a writer of letters. As a poetess, she gave us two poetical collections and a few short poems; as a prose writer, two novels, two essays, translations of two speeches delivered in the French Legislative Assembly; and as a writer, of letters, fifty

three letters addressed to Mary Martin and quite a few to Mile. Clarisse Bader. And what is bewildering is the fact* that she gave this much to us within a very short time “towards the close of her life. Without going into what she ‘might have been’ had God blessed her with longevity, as that is a vain and painful speculation, we shall dwell here only on what she has really done and see how far she has succeeded in that.

Toru Dutt is one of the ‘major’ Indo-Anglian poets. Tnts ‘fleeting visitant’ to our sphere attained that perfec-tion in poetic art which can hardly be attained even in a full lifetime. Previous to her were the explorers in the field. Derozio started the idea, Kasiprasad and all the Dutts dug the trenches and sent out feelers here and there. It is not till we come to her that we find “the first solid achievement” in Indo-Anglian poetry, and when we have finished with her we find that this branch of poetry has taken a long leap forward.

Toru produced a small body of poetry. Her well-known volumes are: A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields and Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan. Her poetic output is meagre indeed, but it is of permanent value. The literary world was somewhat reluctant in the beginning to acknowledge her. as in case of many others, as a genius, but by and by h had to yield to her genuine claim. L As a poetess, Toru “compels attention.” The most striking feature of her poetry is its lyricism. Some of her renderings in the Sheaf and most of the poems in Ancient Ballads are marked by lyrical fire!

The occasion of description is such as renders the poetess lyrical and effusive in the expression of her soft, secret feelings. The simplicity of her verse reminds one of Keats and Shelley.

In describing natural scenes and sights, Toru was an expert. The champak and the lotus and the kokila ever inspired her to sing melodious songs. In the face of a natu-ral beauty, she was deeply moved. It made her heart leap up with an unspeakable delight, and her lips, like Keats’s, quiver in a state of ecstasy. Here is a wonderful descrip-tion of the sunset on an Indian lake:

Toru was keenly sensitive to Nature, especially to sound and colour. Her poems like “Baugmaree”, “The Lotus,” and “Our Casuarina Tree” can be cited as examples. She had a remarkable faculty of observation. It is this that led her to comment on men, women and their manners. She sometimes presented sketches of Indian on social problems! The social life and reflections on social following passage highlights the sorrows of a Hindu widow:

5.7 LET US SUM UP

Toru Dutt’s poetry is essentially of her race and she was fully soaked in Hindu myths and legends; her mother was greatly instrumental in it. She aptly interpre- ted the culture of her country to foreign lands. Many Hindu ideals find room in her poetry, as a young girl of open heart and broad mind, Toru definitely gave utterance to her soft feelings about France and England; she

was a connoisseur of the rich languages of these countries. But she remained an Indian at heart, and her poetry.

5.8 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

Write an essay on Toru Dutt's consider our casuarina tree as one of the beautiful poetic pieces of Toru Dutt.

Comment on the literary achievement of Toru Dutt.

Write an essay on Toru Dutt's contribution to Indian Writing in English?

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LESSON - 6

SAROJINI NAIDU

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6.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This lesson throws light on one of the Indian women poets in English; Sarojini Naidu; A first woman poet in English

6.1 INTRODUCTION:

The first Indian women poets in English were the products of this school of Independent women/. Sarojini Naidu and Toru Dutt, first Indian women poets in English were the products of this new awareness. They belonged to families which cherished the ideal of Free womanhood. They came under the direct influence of the west, because of their stay abroad. They were the first romantics to introduce the phenomenon of Indian poetry in English in the second half of the Nineteenth Century.

Sarojini Naidu belonged to the Heroic Age of modern India which witnessed the struggle and achievement of great men and women in bringing about a Renaissance of the human spirit in many ways. Sarojini Naidu, Tilak, and many others, represent the historical transformation of India into an energetic modern culture deriving inspiration from the past, and imparting a new dynamism and vision to the present as shaped the contexts of a creative future. Among all the heroic individuals, in Sarojini was indeed a genuine confluence of diverse traditions, cultures and values.

Sarojini Naidu clarified her function as a poet in "The Faery Isle of Janjira." Life, gliding to a delicate measure, basking in the sunshine of the favour of the queen of a flowering clime, was not the life for her. She was

interested not so much in her own good as in that of others. Her sympathy embraced one and all; her altruism made her reject the glamour and grace of an aristocrat's life. Her place in life was with the tumult and strife of the people. This strife was carried on by Love against folly and evil. Her part in this battle was to bear the banner of song—to give solace of faith to faltering lips, to instil hope into the heart of the vanquished, to sing of joy when, in this strife, truth will conquer, love prevail, and peace restored.

6.1 LIFE AND WORKS OF SAROJINI NAIDU:

Sarojini was criticised time and again that her poetry was sentimental her diction too sweet and her imagery fanciful but others argued that her lyricism was noteworthy. Her handling of the lyric form is perfect, her language poetic, her themes delicate, her inspiration genuine and her poetry on the whole melodious and appealing. She is a great lyrical poet from the view point of themes and technique. She was a lyricist of delicate fancy and haunting melody.

Sarojini wrote very little poetry during the second half of her life, but she cannot be said to have abandoned her poetic interests. It was during this time when she pursued two careers with almost equal zeal, that of a poet and that of a politician. Her political career commenced with her meeting with Mahatma in 1914 and lasted till her death. The departure from her poetical career to that of a political career may be considered by some that she attached greater significance to the latter. But the whole tenor of her life - her behaviour and utterances-shows that in spirit she was mostly a poetess and rarely a politician.

Though her poetical career did virtually come to a halt in 1917, when she published The Broken Wing (1917) she did revert to poetry during 1926-27 snatching some precious moments from her tight political schedule. Some of her poems were written in the last decade of her life and were published posthumously under the title The Feather of the Dawn (1927). Moreover in a certain sense one continues to be a poet even if the expression of one's feelings and response no longer follows the recognised modes of poetic communication; Sarojini seems to have found three such outlets: letters, conversations and oratory, some of her letters can be quoted as works of art. Indeed, it has been said that Sarojini base a rare gift of infusing poetry even in the speeches dealing with poetical and social themes.

Sarojini demonstrated by her sophistication and refinement that politics, can be a clean game, that political opponents can be civilized and courteous towards each other and that one can remain gracious and creative in the midst of turmoil and change. Her love for her motherland is expressed through her practical work, her own personal style of life, her speeches, essays and above all her poems.

Sarojini, was the daughter of Dr. Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya and Varadasundari of Bengal. Sarojini was a Bengali by race, but was born and bred in Hyderabad Deccan. Her father was a scientist, with a strong dash of philosopher in him.- Sarojini in her poem 'Salutation to my Father's spirit' (1917) recalls her father as splendid dreamer with an alchemic vision, and one who had a profound knowledge of the vedas, and whose life was love and law was liberty. It was said, that Sarojini's father intended her to be a mathematician or a scientist, but under her mother's unobtrusive but stronger influence she chose to be a poet// fter hinto the realms of poetry was both? as a gesture of revolt and mode of self-' dramatization. The early flutterings of the Nightingale were prompted by her vast reading in English literature, Hindu mythology and urdu and persian folklore. In her poems, there was a perfect synthesis of mind and heart, intellect and intuition. Sarojini's early poems did reveal a strain of melancholy born out of loneliness, a combination of fantasy and delight and an unbelievable command over words, phrases, rhythm and rhyme, traits which would be developed to perfection in later poems.

Sarojini, was sent to London and Cambridge in 1895, for studies, after she had finished her matriculation in India. As a college girl at Cambridge, she wrote her first published poem. 'The Song of a Dream' (1905). When Sarojini went to England, she let "the lyric child" in her go forth: she allowed the English landscape to influence her thoughts. She eagerly absorbed the western scene and was in position to respond richly to the stimulus offered by her intimate observations of men and things around her. Two English critics, Arthur Symmons and Edmund Gosse. were enthralled by her poems, and made note of Sarojini's delight in the beauty of sounds and words. But, Edmund Gosse did have some disturbed feelings after reading Sarojini Naidu's poems, for he felt it was anglicized and lacked any kind of individuality.

He felt her poetry sounded like "the note of the mocking bird with a vengeance" . Gosse wanted her to vernacularize both her themes and motifs, and wanted her to be a genuine Indian poet of the Deccan, and not a clever machine - made Imitator of the English classics.

It is said that Sarojini Naidu and Toru Dutt were able to blossom as poets only with the benevolent encouragement of Edmund Gosse. Sarojini writes in a letter to Symmons "I am not a poet really I have the vision and the desire but not the voice. If I could write just one poem full of beauty and the spirit of greatness I should be esculently silent 'for ever; but I sing just as the birds do and my songs are as ephemeral". If Sarojini's poems are ephemeral it is because she did not work her gifts into full fruition or because she stopped writing well before she was thirty. Sarojini was advised by Edmund Gosse and Arthur Symmons to stir "the soul of the East" and to reveal the heart of India to the westerners. She heeded to their advice and in her poems there is a kaleidoscope of Indian scenes, sights sounds and experiences which are made vivid and colourful by the poet's imagination.

But in time her view of poetry grew from the mere romantic to the humanistic. From her adolescent attachment to poetry as a celebration of the beautiful she moved on towards a poetry committed to human good. The disparity between her early poetic promise and the actual achievement was at least partly due to the humanistic extension of her vision and her unfailing sense of mission in life. But poetry for Sarojini, appears neither an obsession nor a profession with her, but simply a possession.

Sarojini's poems are about India, Her poems are meant for a literary audience professors, graduates and amateur versifiers her attitude towards her poems are that of intense love for their ephemeral beauty and for their meaning to her as landmarks of her life. Her verse was written to conform to the English norms; yet it is overtly Indian in spirit.

When Sarojini was nineteen, she got married to Dr.Govindarajalu Naidu. In her love poems, which are mostly biographical in nature she speaks of "youth's first glorious dreams", of love's purity, of the future misery and of passionate love words. Dr.Srinivasa Iyengar had not only drawn attention to the soul-ful attachments Sarojini had for her husband, but, more precious, interpreted some of her milkmaid Krishna lyrics as addressed to him. That is Indian sublimation at its zenith.

Though Sarojini Naidu rose in her life to be one of the most eminent poets of India, her development as a poet came to an end, at the same time she entered the National movement. She entered the field of politics after the publication of her last collection of poems 'The Broken wing'(1917). Sarojini was an inspiration to her own countrymen and she infused into their lives form, colour and song. It was during this period, she came in contact with great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru and Gokhale. In 'The Lotus' (1917) which is addressed to Mahatma, the poet achieves a symbolic identification of Gandhiji with the lotus, the flower that represents India's spirit of sanctity and nobility. It was Mahatma who called Sarojini, The Nightingale of India/ and the Indian public continued calling her by that name, for they were smitten by her jewel - tinted words and her melodious speeches. Though her poetic output was not more than a trickle in the last thirty two years, the legend however did continue to live in the hearts of the people, as it is one which the people had created. The patriot in her seems to have totally obscured the poet in her, but she occupied one of the highest unofficial and official position in the public life of India.

In Sarojini Naidu's four published volumes, there are about two hundred lyrics and songs. The very title of her books betray her fragile romanticism. 'The Golden Threshold' (1905), 'The Bird of Time' (1912) 'The Broken Wing' (1915) and 'The, Feather of. the Dawn contained her remaining unpublished poems, which was collected and published by her daughter, in 1927 after her death. These poems when taken together show a careful maturing poetic sensibility. The last volume of her poetry, contains poems for children who

seem to enjoy it much more than adults. The first three volumes of poetry were published by William Heinemann. Her poems are said to be modeled after the "Decadent" poets until the last days, and her poems are full of jeweled phrases. The typically recurrent images are that of dream song, silence and shrine. Spring according to Sarojini stood for rejuvenation. But her passion for sensuous imagery did weaken her ability to explore experience. Sarojini Naidu bypasses the tension of her personal life and social milieu in her poetic work. But her achievement is vital in view of the fact that she was one of the first authentic Indian poets in English.

6.2 THEMES OF SAROJINI NAIDU

Sarojini's poetry is fused with the rich pattern of the life around her: it does not fail to depict the life of the Indian people in its various aspects—economic, social, and religious. Of particular interest are those songs which deal, either in a direct or in a symbolic form, with the occupations of non-urbanised agricultural people ploughing, seeding, harvesting, grinding. Some of them are concerned with love, death, rejoicing, mourning, health, and illness; others deal with activities connected with the seasons. The themes of some of these songs are agrarian work processes like sowing, reaping, and harvesting, or other work processes like the fetching of water from the river, or the sentiments of gratitude to the gods for successful operations, or plaintive appeals to them for their fruition.

The poetry of Sarojini Naidu also draws its themes and imagery from new sources, such as the travail of the individual struggling against the pressures of a rigid social system. Some aspects of the Indian society of her times are laid bare when viewed through the prism of her poetry. Her poems portray the Indian people, their struggle, their dreams, their aspirations. In the aesthetic attitude, a culture can be captured and held, not as a set of bare facts to be statistically tabulated, but as a function of the travail of human lives.

The themes of Sarojini's folk-songs are the product of the free play of a vital energy that creates intuitively. In some of them we feel the loneliness of a village girl; in others the spaciousness of open places; in still others joy and sadness, wild vitality and emotions, love and veneration, or the longing and despair of the Indian rural people. All these emotions and images are expressed in beautiful tunes, quite different from the urban expressions of the same emotions in Sarojini's other poems. In their decoration these folk-songs are marked by great richness, which may be symbolized by a meadow covered with red, blue, white, green, and purple flowers. We rarely see the monotony of grey, brown, and dark colours, so characteristic of a modern industrial metropolis.

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Sarojini's poetry present Indian scene, sights and sounds which are enthralling to the readers who see it through the eyes of the poet. In her poetry there are Indian dancers and wandering singers, weavers and fishermen palanquin bearers and bangle sellers, snake charmers and flower girls, street vendors, and merchants, milk maids and boatmen, to mention only a few. There are poems addressed to eminent personalities ranging from Mahatma Gandhiji to Jinnah. Gods and prophets of Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism. Indian festivals and traditions and customs are mentioned repeatedly in her poetry. Though tinged with fantasy and a dream like quality, Sarojini's poetry is a highly imaginative and colourful commentary on the multitudinous in Indian life.

Sarojini's poems on India and Indian heroes are very inspiring and full of patriotic fervour. She wrote these poems not in the spirit of propaganda but as a genuine urge. Her love for India continues as a strain in her poetry which is truly native in ethos and setting. Her Indianness is revealed in her poems which present the varied panorama of Indian life in all its beauty and colour. This feature of poetry is also a manifestation of her love for India. Sarojini Naidu is a true patriot for she worked for Hindu-Muslim unity.

6.3 SUMMER WOODS:

Sarojini Naidu has expressed her heart felt longing to escape from this routine monotonous world into the forest along with nature in order to experience the bliss of solitude.

The poem begins with her feeling of hatred towards this monotonous life. She is tired of looking at the painted roofs and treading on the soft silken floor. Instead she wants to escape from this mechanical life and longs to go to the wind-blown canopies of brimston gulmohurs.

She is tired of experiencing and celebrating festivals, fame, songs and strife. She wants to fly deep into a place where man's shadow is not felt. She asks 'Love' to accompany her into the bliss of solitude where weariness and toil are totally absent. She wants to lie beneath the tangled boughs of tamarind, molsari and neem trees and play the flutes that might wake the slumbering serpents among the banyan roots.

She longs to roam along the river banks at the fall of even-tide and bathe in the pool that is filled with water-lily where the golden panthers drink water. She wants to enjoy the gleaming solitude of the blossoming woods both during the lustrous dawn and at night like that of Krishna and Radhika.

Sarojini Naidu has brought out her longing desires to enjoy the bliss of solitude in this poem. In this poem she describes her mystic Brindavan and invites her beloved to share with her the delight and joy of a lambent nature. The poet wants to retire to the deep blossoming woods to lie alone and dream:

6.4 IF YOU CALL ME:

Sarojini Naidu has beautifully discussed the intensity of her love in this poem 'If you call me'. She has compared the nature's activity with her response to the call of her lover. She has dealt with the importance of love. She states that if her lover calls her she would respond swifter as a trembling forest deer or a panting dove. Her speed will be swifter than a snake when it is induced by the charmer's thrill. She will respond fearlessly and quickly, no matter what may befall.

If her lover calls her, she might come quicker than the desires that arises in the mind and swifter than the lightnings or like a shod with plumes of fire. Even if the deep charm of death deprives her of all fortunes, she will respond to her lover's call.

Thus the intensity of love is beautifully portrayed in this poem.

In this poem Sarojini dwells upon the idea that the loved and lover can never remain apart; neither the vicissitudes of life nor the inexorable hand of death can permanently separate them from each other: they are like the two halves irresistibly attracted towards each other by an unseen force in order to become one whole. Says Sarojini

If you call me, I will come

Swifter, O my Love, Than a trembling forest deer

Or a panting dove, Swifter than a snake that flies

To the charmer's thrall.... If you call me, I will come

Fearless what befall. If you call me, I will come

Swifter than desire, Swifter than the lightning's feet

Shod with plumes of fire.

"The Temple : A Pilgrimage of Love"

Life's dark tides may roll between, Or Death's deep chasms divide

If you call me, I will come Fearless what betide.

It is interesting to observe similar sentiments of an anonymous English poet of the seventeenth century who appropriately calls love "the great adventurer"

6.5 THE SOUL'S PRAYER:

The title of this poem reiterates the theme of the poem. This poem is addressed to God. The poet brings out her intense passion for life.

In her childhood, the poet questions God, to reveal the mysterious secret laws of life and death. She wishes to taste each joy and pain which the eternal hand can measure out and give her the share. She wants to enjoy every joy and endure every suffering. Her insatiated soul wanted to drink the utmost bitter and utmost good and thus quench her unquenchable soul that it might draw with God's gift of both joy and sorrow in her life.

She requests God not to spare any bliss or any grief, since she longs to enjoy her share of pain and blessing. She wants to undergo the deepest suffering and enjoy the utmost blessing. She gains an order to understand the art of life and mystic knowledge of death. The petition of the poet is answered by the Almighty in a low voice.

God himself assures her, the fulfilment of all her desires. She hopes that her understanding of these mysterious of both life and death will purify her soul. Thus her spirit will be cleansed, which will be fit for the understanding of divine peace and salvation.

Thus she believes that God will bend down forward from his seventh heaven, to teach her his quickening grace. He will teach her the lesson that life is a prism of God's light that shines out with various colours and death is a shadow of his face. Thus she explains about her inquenchable longing which she believes would be fulfilled.

This poem reveals the indomitable spirit of the poet. In the pride of children she said to her Master, Give me to drink each joy and pain Which Thine eternal hand can mete, For my insatiate soul would drain Earth's utmost bitter, utmost sweet. Sternly and in low tones, the Lord answered her,

...thy unconquered; soul shall know

All passionate rapture and despair.

Thou shalt drink deep of joy and fame,

And love shall burn thee like a fire,

And pain shall cleanse thee like a flame,

To purge the dross from thy desire.

So shall thy chastened spirit yearn

To seek from its blind prayer release,

And spent and pardoned, sue to learn

The simple secrets of My peace.

She wanted a soul that could remain unconquered. She was as dauntless as the poet who, in spite of being a permanent cripple, could still declare :

Out of the night that covers me,

Black as the pit from pole to pole,

I thank whatever gods may be For my unconquerable soul.

The poem also throws light on Sarojini's ideas on life and death. God tells her,

Life is a prism of My light,

And Death the shadow of My face.

The imagery is like that of the great idealist:

Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass, Stains the white radiance of Eternity.

Those who consider Sarojini an escapist entertain a mistaken idea. She does not shrink from the realities of life. She does not seek sanctuary in the golden glory of any lotus-land. The forces of life do not oppress her spirit. The thought of toil and trial is never repulsive to her. Her soul was the symbol of restless activity.

6.6 THE BIRD SANCTUARY:

The poem "The Bird Sanctuary" deals with a quiet garden where the "winged choristers" sing at dawn. The poet tells us about nine birds. The Bulbul, the oriole, the honey-bird, the shama, the gull, the hoopoe, the kingfisher, the pigeon, and the parrot. She tells us of the colour of some of these birds. The white colour of the gull looks like sea-washed silver. The hoopoe and the king-fisher's colours are bronze and sapphire blue. The pigeons are gray and the parrots jade-green. The poet also tells us what each bird does. The bulbul, the oriole, the honey-bird and the shama flit among high boughs. The gull, the hoopoe and the kingfisher parade their colours. The pigeons dream of a home in the tree-tops. The parrots plunder ripe figs.

The garden provides a sanctuary to all these birds. But there is one bird more, and its broken wing hinders its homeward flight. That bird is the poet herself. In the concluding lines of the poem, therefore, she prays to God :

O Master of the Birds, grant sanctuary and

shelter Also to a homing bird that bears a broken wing

The poet brings out her pathos and seeks refuge from God. She feels like a bird whose wings are broken. She prays to God to provide her a sanctuary like that of the other birds whom God has created with their own nests.

In a beautiful quiet garden, she sees a magical turmoil of the winged choristers of nature who are celebrating the festival of dawn. They happily raise their voice and sing rhythmical songs. These birds have throats of amber and sing rich songs. She specifically gives, by giving their names like Bulbul, Orioli, honey-bird and shama. They fly among high branches which is full of flowers dripping with honey and nectar dew. She gives a vivid description of the sea-gull wandering above the surface of the water trying to catch fish and the kingfisher with their bronze and sapphire blue wings seem to be parching upon the surface of the sea.

The grey coloured pigeons dream to build their house on tree-tops filling their beak with soft feathers and tender banyan twigs to build their nest. The parrots rob the red ripe figs and stop their sunward flight.

The poet exclaims that God's gracious garden is filled with joy and fosters freedom, while she suffers without a resting place. She asks God to give her a dwelling place to stay and sing because she is a bird whose wings are broken and wander about without a dwelling place.

Thus Sarojini Naidu in this poem prays to God, to help her in giving shelter to her, the broken bird, who is in search of comfort.

The Bird Sanctuary is at once realistic and exoteric. The sanctuary is the symbol of nature's bounty. The variegated colours and sounds of a thousand birds bestow a mystic permanence and beauty on the ingenious scheme of nature to provide for its creation. The arrival of the bird with broken wing imparts a meditative significance to the sanctuary motif. The bird with the broken wing is man in search of Shanti; pleading with the Supreme for admittance into His imponderable mystic sanctuary of life, joy/ energy and bliss. Sarojini would have loved to lose herself in nature's bounty and be born once again as a moonbeam/ a delicate bloom or a gurgling stream.

6.7 SAROJINI NAIDU AS A POETIC ARTIST

The dream-like atmosphere, the rich imagery and the varied music that are found in some of their English poems are found in Sarojini Naidu's poetry to she is a very sensuous poet dwelling with keen pleasure on all the fonnrs and colours, sounds and scents, lights and movements around her. The luxuriance of sensory experience given by her poetry is seldom felt as morbid and cloying. Maybe it is because much of her imagery comes from the great outdoors unlike in some Pre-Raphaelite poetry where the images are from airless interiors intricately carved and laden with things rich and strange.

An outcome of the sensuousness of her nature is that we can feel the living India in her poems—the India of spicy scents and rich colours and

musical sounds and the varied beauty of seasons From the gleaming tints of glass bangles and the musical cries of street vendors to the sound of the winds and the waves there is rich fare for the reader. He can discover India as it touches his senses and lives through his veins. The vividness, richness and variety of the world of the senses in Sarojini Naidu's poetry is proof of her robust as well as sensitive enjoyment of life, an enjoyment that is part of the heritage of Indian poetry.

Her sensuousness is joined to intense emotion—rapturous love or poignant sorrow or ecstatic devotion. Occasionally her poetry is playful or fanciful or meditative. But such moods are not many. A lyrical intensity is the hallmark of her poetry and no doubt it is at times wearying to the reader. An incapacity to vary the pitch is characteristic of many romantic poets centering on one's own experiences, lack of dramatic power, lack of humour, and the subjectivity that makes it both difficult and unnecessary to effect a proper aesthetic distancing between the poet and his work are factors that contribute to monotonous lyrical intensity. But on the positive side this intensity is the truth of the poetry, the expression of oneself as the self that experiences. Almost all of her poems, especially her poems on love and devotion, express moods of piercing joy or poignant sorrow.

To understand Sarojini Naidu as a poet of love one has to read a group of her poems titled *The Temple*. The twenty four poems in this group trace many moods and many stages of romantic love and each poem is like a flame of passion and some attain in spite of their conventional imagery an astonishing directness of expression.

Her technique is that of the romantic lyricist - a pouring forth of song, something as spontaneous as bird song or the music of winds and waves. Within this inspired spontaneity there is art, both good art and bad. The weakness of her art lies in the very spontaneity - there is not enough of pruning and toning down. There is verbosity and too many romantic words like 'gloom and gleam and fragile, flickering, dim and deep'¹ and too many poetic clichés like fruitful bough, lilting joy, breaking-tide, new-born spring and magic flute and passionate koels. It is obvious that she is drunk not only with the beauty around but with the dreamy, elegant, exquisiteness of Pre-Raphaelite and Georgian poetry. She is carried away by words and music and does not come to grips with an experience. But in her better poems her art conscious or unconscious shows itself in clarity and adequacy of phrase or image.

Sarojini's poetry is fused with the rich pattern of the life around her : it does not fail to depict the life of the Indian people in its various aspects-economic, social, and religious. Of particular interest are those songs which deal, either in a direct or in a symbolic form, with the occupations of non-urbanised agricultural people ploughing, seeding, harvesting, grinding. Some of them are concerned with love, death, rejoicing, mourning, health, and illness; others deal with activities connected with the seasons. The themes of some of

these songs are agrarian work processes like sowing, reaping, and harvesting, or other work processes like the fetching of water from the river, or the sentiments of gratitude to the gods for successful operations, or plaintive appeals to them for their fruition.

Sarojini's poetry has given us greatest power to see, to feel, to appreciate. Her poetry, at its greatest, has the power of revealing beauty in a supreme way. Her similes are drawn from her whole observation and her whole experience. She regards life as truly worth living.

A strong passion for music dominated Sarojini. She has the ear and passion for harmony." Her style is everywhere dominated by her mastery of the effects of music. Her passion for music influences her choice of words, her selection of a particular form of a word, and even its pronunciation. It accounts for her use of alliterative and assonantal phrases, and for the form of many of the compound epithets which she coined so freely.

Sarojini's similes are short, romantic and highly suggestive. Suggestiveness necessarily implies brevity. This is one of the qualities which goes to make her style vigorous and beautiful. In a few well-chosen words she suggests so much which, when interpreted, occupies abundant space, and yet her meaning remains clear.

Suggestiveness is not employed for any idle amusement: it has immense importance for her. Limited as the human language is, much that the poetess wants to say cannot adequately be clothed in words. Sarojini's love for beauty in life as well as in nature thrilled her to emotional exuberance and impassioned expression. At times her emotion breaks forth in a fine excess. This seems to enhance the quality of her lyric fervour. Her attitude towards spring is the attitude indicated by Milton : "In those vernal seasons of the year, when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against Nature not to go out and see her riches, and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth.

6.8 CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF SAROJINI NAIDU'S POETRY

As a poet feels more deeply, her power of expression is beautiful. She sees beauty and hears a music that we do not hear. Sarojini's poetry has given us great power to see, to feel, to appreciate. Her poetry, at its greatest, has the power of revealing beauty in a supreme way.

She was a lover of life. Much of our ancient literature preaches the ideology of renunciation. But to be a runaway from life is an effete, medieval ideal. It runs counter to modern thought. Sarojini regards life as truly worth living.

Life, in spite of its bitterness, is yet sweet to her. There are many passages scattered throughout her poetical works wherein she speaks of universal joy to

her pieces from the pageant of life offer enough incentive to and justification of the leading of a full life.

In Sarojini, as in the Pre-Raphaelites, we observe a love of detail and a love of colour. Morris's *Earthly Paradise* has been described as a tapestry woven of over 42,000 lines of rhymed verse. The *House of Life* and other later pieces have been compared to "some gorgeous confection to which a hundred strange exotic products have contributed their scents and savours." Sarojini's style is full, wordy, and copious; her lines do not have the thinness and brevity noticeable in Morris. Her pictorial quality has gossamer-like quality minute details and variegated hues are well brought out by her with great clearness.

The gossamer-like quality of Sarojini's style is easily apparent. All the five senses—seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting—have been brought together to exercise their function. Sarojini displays the qualities of a craftsman who is highly conscious of what the production ought to be. This is not inspiration but perspiration. The magical use of her choice words in conveying the impression of, not mere movement, but movement that is rhythmic, graceful, artistic, sometimes slow and sometimes swift—this, indeed, is art in love with art.

In Sarojini's poetry, if there is one characteristic feature about which there can be no controversy, it is the genuineness of her delight in Nature and her ability to communicate that delight to her readers and hearers. Natural phenomena, animate or inanimate, seemed to have evoked from her a response that was direct and intense. The vocabulary of her nature poetry is rich in words denoting colours, sounds, fragrances and "skin feelings" such as glassiness, softness, pliability and suppleness. As Sarojini is a lyric poet she revels in the immediate experience of life around her and the various sights and sounds of Nature call forth poetic raptures from her heart. Nature's beauty has special charm for Sarojini and Nature executes her poetic imagination. Though nature is a timeworn poetical subject, Sarojini's treatment of Nature gives them a new colour and beauty.

Sarojini responded to the beauty of Nature passionately and sensitively. Her Nature poems are remarkable not only for the loveliness of the Indian Nature but also for the beauty of imagery and descriptive details. Though her Nature poems are not poems of fiery lyricism, but in these poems imagination, sensuousness and romanticism are all evident. Her attitude towards nature is aesthetic, sensuous and concrete. She was always inspired by the loveliness and beauty of Nature. With the fresh wonder and excitement of a child, her heart responded to the sights and sounds and colours and tones of Nature.

Sarojini's Nature poetry has an inspired sincerity which is at once simple and authentic. She employs the natural scene not so much to trace the growth of the poetic mind as to reveal a growth which is already in evidence. She is concerned with the psychology of being, not the sensation of becoming. The discoveries that nature brings to her are meditative rather than dramatic.

Sarojini describes the scenes of the natural world with a sense of primal wonder and joy, combined with pensive reverie and melancholy. Sarojini Naidu handles the natural scene with a loving delicacy producing a variety of effects-pictorial, elegiac, meditative and symbolic.

Sarojini's response to Nature quite often is, as though one of moods, seeing Nature in the colour of the mood that may happen to possess her at the moment of composition; one time sadness, another ecstasy; one time hope; another despair. Mostly it is love, whether it is the delight of love or its pain., May be it is Nature herself throwing the poet into different moods. But it is never Sarojini capturing the moods of Nature.

She feels that Nature and human are coexistent. The continuity between the natural and the human is expressed in many ways. Her response to nature is radical, elemental and total. For she feels that with one touch of Nature as when are stirred by a beautiful scene, or a melodious strain, brings us a vision of the cosmic harmony.

Sarojini is primarily a lyric poet and her poems are "short swallow flights of song". She is not a true mystic but mystic favour or mystical approach is not altogether rare in her poetry. There are some poems in which mysticism is very evident. Three of her poems were included in the Oxford Book of English Mystic Verse i.e., 'The Soul's Prayer' (1912); 'In Salutation to the Eternal Peace' (1912) and 'To a Buddha seated on a Lotus' (1905). Though Sarojini realises the transcendence of Nature, she feels it is a sinless Eden. She feels nature is a paradise for primal lovers whose life is untouched by tragedy and surfeit. Nature is a world made safe for love, an arcade rid of care, anxiety and frustration.

Sarojini describes the cosmic world, in her poetry. She seemed to love the diverse things of our planet. She presented the natural element as calm and soothing and she seemed to be essentially a poetess of the day rather than of the night. Some fine poems about the night as well, but on the whole she is partial to sunshine. She is enchanted by the beauty of the sun at dawn and dusk and by the power of the sun at other times of the day. The sun is the giver of plenty, the sustenance of life through light and warmth. Her description of the sun proves that she took great time in the contemplation of natural phenomena.

In her Nature poems the sea does not occupy any place of importance. But 'Coromandel Fishers' (1905) captures the atmosphere of the sea and the intense feeling which fisherfolk have for the sea. They address the sea as their mother, the cloud as their brother and the waves as their comrade. In one of her poems 'Village Song' (1905), the music of forest streams is praised as being sweeter than bridal songs and cradle songs.

Sarojini's poetry does not contain any philosophical depth in them. She views the life of nature and man entirely from the perspective of time, not from the perspective of eternity, she is undoubtedly aware of this deficiency and that

is why she described her own poems as ephemeral. But Sarojini could have been excessively modest in calling all her poems as ephemeral for some of them have an enduring quality and will continue to bring delight to the future generation of English educated Indians.

It has been considered that the strongest feature of her poetry is her vivid imagery. Her most memorable lines are those in which she has presented beautiful and graphic pictures by fusing together several visual impressions. But music has been considered to be the soul of her poetry.

Sarojini's poetic lyrical accomplishments have been matchless. After her first poem "A lady of the lake" she abandoned writing narrative poems. The rest of her poems are short and lyrical. Her poetic form is not varied. She mainly wrote in the lyric form with the exception of some sonnets/ which are not more than ten in number. Her collection of poems have a unity born of her supreme lyrical talent. This is a major factor for the immense reputation which she enjoyed during the lifetime, V.N.Bhushan remarks. "Mrs.Naidu is almost the first Indo-English singer to have wide reputation both here and abroad. And that is because of two prominent characteristics of her poetry, she is first and foremost a melodist of high order-using nothing but winged words and making even ordinary words sound musical by placing them in peculiar contexts, combined with this is the pure Indian complexion of her poetry.

6.9 LET US SUM UP

In 1935, Sri Aurobindo observed that Sarojini's poetry was among the lasting things in English literature and that she would take place among the immortals. The prophecy has come true. Today Sarojini is among the immortals not only because of her great services to the country as a soldier of freedom and builder of modern India but also because of her enchanting poetry that has thrilled several generations.

6.10 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

Write an essay on the Themes of the poems of Sarojini Naidu?

What are the chief characteristics of the poems of Sarojini Naidu?

Consider Sarojini Naidu as a poetic artist?

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LESSON - 7

HENRY L.V.DEROZIO

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7.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this lesson is to introduce all things about Henry L.V. Derazio; a romantic poet.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Indo - Anglian poetry is now nearly hundred and fifty years old. Indo - Anglian poetry commenced in the first half of the nineteenth century, and none other than Derozio was the moving spirit behind it. Indo - Anglian poetry came under the influence of the Romantic poets, and it was said, poets like Derozio and M.M.Dutt and others learnt to write in a romantic vein in the manner of Byron and Scott.

7.2 TO THE PUPILS OF INDIA

In this poem the poet talks about the students of the Hindu College. He compares them to a flower. He says that he watches the gentle opening of the student's mind which resemble like the petal of young flowers expanding, and releasing the intellectual energies of the youth. Then he compares them with birds. Their intellectual power helps them to stretch out their energies and fly a great height. Their early knowledge is shed when they accumulate many new perceptions. They worship truth's omnipotence. He also visualized his fame in the mirror of his future. On seeing the matured minds of today's generation he feels that he has not lived in vain. Thus throughout this poem he praises the quality of the students in the Hindu College.

7.3 THE HARP OF INDIA:

The sonnet is Petrarchan in form and it illustrates Derozio's concept of poetic creation. Like the nineteenth century romantic poets, he finds in poetry a process of recollection, a wild tour of imagination, an enchanting look at the past, a passionate love for Nature, and a powerful invocation of the Muse.

Sweet madness; delicious frenzy and strains of fire stand for spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. References to Himaloy and Arabian sea are topographically native. Immortal harpings: this expression stands for the tradition of poetry.

7.4 SONGS OF THE HINDUSTANEE MINISTEREL

This is a passionate love song in the romantic tradition. It endeavours to recapture the lost raptures and makes rosy pro-mises of the green fields.

The words like 'sea', 'ocean', 'treasure', 'coral' and 'green chambers' bear the influence of Robert Burns and other romantic poets and they also indicate the unfathomable depth of feeling in the lover's heart.

7.5 LET US SUM UP

A few critics felt Indo - Anglian poetry was like a wagon which was hitched to the engine of English poetry. These critics felt that even a small change in the realms of English poetry was detected immediately in the Indo - Anglian poetry.

7.6 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

1. What are the Salient features of the poems of Henry Derozio?

7.7 REFERENCES

Prashad, Harimohan and Chakradhar Prasad singh, Indian Poetry in English, New Delhi : Sterling Publishers, 1985.

UNIT II

DRAMA

LESSON -8

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8.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

By learning this lesson on Indian Drama the student can acquire a comprehensive knowledge of Indian historical and social changes brought by the leading Dramatists Girish Karnad and Badal Sircar.

8.1 TUGHLAQ by Girish Karnad.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PLAY

The House of Tughlaq was the fifth Sultanate of Delhi. The founder was Ghazi Malik Tughlaq (1320-25) who was a Karauna Turk by a Hindu mother. By dint of merit he rose to be the Governor of the Punjab under Ala-ud-din Khilji. The last of the Khiljis was succeeded by the slave, Khusru Khan, who proved to be personally immoral and faithless as a Muslim. With the war cry "Islam in danger" Ghazi Malik Tughlaq and his talented son, Malik Jauna, rallied a party of Turkish chiefs, defeated Khusru and executed him. The line of Ala-ud-din having become extinct, the victor accepted the crown offered to him by the nobles and began his reign in 1320 with the title of Ghiyas-ud-din. Ghiyas-ud-din combined the rare qualities of a General and far-sighted statesman and re-established peace and order in the kingdom. He sent his son, Jauna, now called Ulugh Khan, against Warangal, which was annexed and renamed Sultanpur. Ulugh Khan conquered Devagiri which was later renamed Daulatabad. The Sultan himself marched East and asserted his authority over West Bengal by defeating Bughra Khan, the son of Balban. To welcome his victorious father, Ulugh Khan had created a splendid pavilion at Afghanpur, a village six miles southeast of Delhi. After the mid-day meal, elephants were being paraded before the pavilion in honour of this victory. It is

said that Ulugh Khan had engaged engineers who had secretly and successfully designed the pavilion to collapse at the first tread of the elephants. Anyway, the entire pavilion fell, crushing to death the Sultan and his second son. Ulugh Khan, after a slate mourning, proclaimed himself Sultan with the simple style of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq.

The Sultan was misunderstood throughout his reign. His intellectual capacity and love of philosophy were interpreted as hostility to Islam. His friendship with Yogis and Jains and his participation in the Holi festival were considered evidence of his being Hinduized. His efforts to break the clique of the Delhi priesthood of Ulemas and Sufis failed. His ambition to establish political contact -with the world outside India was regarded as madness. The old political leadership dubbed him a tyrant. The Ulemas proclaimed that war against him was lawful.

Two innovations of his-precipitated matters. In 1326-28 he decided upon a plan to make Devagiri the second administrative capital of his empire. He was convinced that the Deccan kingdoms could be conquered and ruled only from a capital in their proximity. To make it an effective seat of government, he wanted a section of the elite of Delhi to be permanently settled there. The Ulemas and the Sufis refused to co-operate. The Sultan was adamant. He forced all those whom he had selected to emigrate, under threat of dire penalty. Contemporary and later historians have called this a mass exodus. Barani, the court historian, records that Delhi was completely evaluated not a cat or a dog was left. But this seems exaggeration because the Turkish historian, Ihsan al-Batuta, declares that when he visited Delhi in 1334, it was full of Sufis and Ulemas. Anyway the march to Devagiri, now known as Daulatabad, 800 miles away, was carried out in forty days with unspeakable sufferings to the unfortunate migrant. The experiment proved a dismal failure and after seven years, Delhi was restored as the capital. The return exodus also was a painful affair. All told, the Daulatabad experiment turned out to be a tragic dissipation of human energy.

The second disastrous undertaking of the Sultan was the introduction of the token currency of copper in 1329. A growing shortage of silver led to the brainwave that in the place of the silver *tanka*, a copper coinage could be economically substituted. Muhammad had in mind the paper currency that was in vogue in China. His object was good and partly original and he had no intention to perpetrate any fraud. But the copper coins were immediately and successfully forged. Following Gresham's Law of bad money driving out the good, the old silver coins disappeared from circulation and the practically valueless copper tokens flooded the economy. Trade almost came to be a standstill. The Sultan had the courage to acknowledge his failure and the honesty to give good silver coins in exchange for the depreciated token. The result was the prestige of the treasury was maintained, but with immense personal loss to Muhammad. Barani comments. That the

promulgation of the edict replacing the currency turned the house of every Hindu into a mint. Apart from the technical difficulties of the age in the matter of distinguishing between coins minted by the State and those turned out by private agencies, monetary credit depended on the people's confidence in the Sultan's government. By now he had antagonized every section of his subjects by the severity of the punishment he decreed for little faults on a par with great ones. His rigorous justice spared neither the learned nor the religious nor the noble. Ibn Batuta calls him 'a man fond of making presents and shedding blood.' He describes the Sultan as 'a saint with the heart of a devil or a fiend with the soul of a saint.'

Muhammad's empire consisted of 23 provinces-extending from the Punjab and Sind in the west to Bengal in the east and the Deccan in the far south. But the conquests proved costly and he had to resort to exorbitant land taxes which were resented, especially in the Lower Doab which had then been in the grip of a famine. He had advanced ideas regarding land improvement, education, medical relief and other welfare measures. But his aims were not realised in practice. Rebellions broke out periodically and twenty-two have been listed. The first six revolts were those of individuals which he could crush. But in 1353, Sayad Ahsan, the trusted Governor of Ma'bar or Madura, rebelled and this started a series of provincial revolts which dismembered Tughlaq's empire. In 1336 Harihara and Bukka founded the kingdom of Vijayanagar. In 1338 Bengal became independent. In 1340 Ain-ul-Mulk, the Governor of Oudh, rebelled. He was subdued but treated leniently in the light of his past services to the Sultan. In 1342, Sind revolted and in 1343, Vijayanagar broke away. The Amirs of Daulatabad revolted against the Sultan's policy of blundering and murdering and in 1348, the whole of the Deccan including Daulatabad got detached from the Delhi empire and Hasan Gangu Bahmani proclaimed himself Sultan as Bhaman Shah. The rebellion of Taghi in Sind in 1351 distracted the attention of the Sultan from the South. Pursuing the rebel, Muhammad died at Thatta. A later historian quips : "The king was freed from his people and his people from the king."

The nobles, the Sufis and Ulema in the Imperial Camp praised Muhammad's cousin, Feroz, to the throne, it must be remembered that Muhammad himself had nominated him as his successor and, so there was no question of usurpation. Feroz Tughlaq learned many a lesson from his cousin's failure and was able to give the country a fairly stable and orderly administration.

8.1 .1.KARNAD'S TAGHLAQ

Girish Karnad is a playwright with a purpose. He makes use of famous stories, mythological, legendary, and historical, in order to convey morals appropriate to, and much needed in, contemporary India. Following the success of *Yayati* (1961), he wrote *Tughlaq* (1964), the year of

Jawaharlal Nehru's passing away, to bring out the contrariness and avoidable misery prevalent in today's India. While *Yayati* is purely mythological, *Tughlaq* is based on historical facts. To a large extent Karnad, has been faithful to recorded history. Only for purposes of dramatic convenience and effect has he telescoped certain events in order to fit the two time-sequences in the play—1328 in Delhi and 1332 at Daulatabad. This modification in chronology enables the play to fall into two natural parts—the ambitious, Olympian planning at Delhi, the seat of the Empire in Indian history, and the fiasco that greets the attempt to rule the country from the South. We get a vivid portrayal of the agony of the people squirming under the impulsive idealism of the Sultan untempered with mercy. We are also witnesses to the clownish, venture of substituting easily forgeable copper coins in the place of the silver *tanka* whose value is at par. But Karnad has another purpose in delineating the tangle of historical Tughlaq. In his view Tughlaq's history has a contemporaneous relevance. Tughlaq has been admitted on all hands to be an intellectual and an idealist—perhaps the most intelligent king who sat on the *gadi* in Delhi. But he happens also to be the greatest failure among India's rulers who have been lording it over; a huge area for a cumber of decades. What impresses Karad most is that the royal youth so full of promise goes to pieces in the span of a score of years. Curiously enough this is paralleled by the two decades that follow India's attaining independence. In 1948, India, that is Bharat, stepped on the world stage with tremendous idealism and good-will for all the oppressed peoples of the world, and the voice of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, came to be looked upon by the Afro-Asian nations as their conscience-keeper. Within the country plans galore were instituted and it looked as if India would become materially and ethically the leader of the Comity of Nations. But the five-year plans were found to require continuous revision as the targets set could not be attained because of inherent weaknesses in economy and organization. The reader and the spectator cannot help noticing the striking parallel between the Tughlaq era and the Nehru era. No doubt, in the 20th century, the despotism possible in the fourteenth, cannot be established so readily. Therefore the suffering of the people because of faulty planning and policies at the centre is not so intense or unmitigated as under Tughlaq's reign. But it is evident that history repeats itself though with qualifications. The value of history is that it teaches us what to avoid and what to pursue. Hence, even if it be an exaggeration to say that the seventeen years of Nehru idealism are on a par with the corresponding visionary period of Tughlaq's rule, we shall stand to gain as a nation if we eschew Tughlaq's errors and follow ideals and ideas more in consonance with our age-old traditions. Tughlaq tried to set aside traditions and follow trails blazed by his own impetuous intelligence. The result was dire disaster both for the king and the people alike. Gaining wisdom from this traumatic experience we should not be led away by the inebriation of new – won independence, but rock base

our economic, social and political progress on the well – tested value of our ancient culture and civilization.

No doubt, beyond this political slant, Karnad has successfully carved out outstanding characters, especially, Tughlaq and Aziz. Here also there is a parallelism because Aziz claims to operate on the same principles by which Tughlaq swears. The only difference is that while the Sultan pays heavily personally for the failure of his principles, Aziz makes hay while the sun shines and jacks himself up to a great eminence thoroughly undeserved. The other characters, like the step-mother, Barani, Shihab-ud-din and Najib, have been sketched at some psychological depth. But the audience feel that throughout the drama, Tughlaq dominates the stage and the play is almost solely concerned with the rise and fall of a saint with a devil's heart.

The play was originally written in Kannada and proved a great success. It was quickly translated into other languages like Bengali, Marathi and Hindi. In 1989, the Theatre group of Bombay put on boards an English version of the play and for that occasion Karnad himself did the translation into English. This text forms that translation.

8.2 ANALYTICAL OUTLINE

SCENE I

The time is 1328 A.D., two years after Muhammad- Bin-Tughlaq ascended the throne.

The locale is the front-yard of the Chief Court of Justice in Delhi.

An old Muslim is complaining that the country is going to the dogs ; the Sultan is insulting Islam.

A young Muslim challenges this view and points out that (he country has progressed under the new Sultan.

A third Mus'irri wonders why *the* Sultan has to confess his mistakes before the whole world.

The young man points out that it is only now that , all Muslims are compelled to say their prayers five times a day and read the Koran.

The third man objects that the Hindus are not paying the Jiziya. A Hindu bystander intervenes to say- that he does not mind being discriminated against by a Muslim ruler, but gets nervous when the ruler speaks of common humanity.

The gossio is interrupted by the public announcer, who beating his drum, announces that in a dispute about the confiscation of a piece of land, the Chief Justice has decided in favour of a Brahmin, Vishnu Prasad, against the Government and His Majesty has accepted the judgment,

This is a shock to the old Muslim, while the Hindu suspects a trap behind this move.

Just then the Sultan himself arrives, properly heralded by the announcer. Addressing the crowd he draws their attention to the impartiality of his justice.

He then throws a bombshell announcing the proposed shift of the capital to Daulatabad for administrative convenience.

He claims that Daulatabad being mainly populated by Hindus, will pave the way for strengthening Hindu-Muslim unity.

He points out that he is inviting them to help him build an empire, and not compelling them.

When the Sultan goes away, the old man calls this tyranny, while the third man hints that the Sultan is troubled by a guilty conscience because he killed his father.

The young man tries to argue that the collapse of the pandal at the entry of the elephant was just an accident and the Sultan himself was at prayer at that time. The Hindu raises a laugh by pointing out that somehow the elephant knew the time of prayer.

The third man quotes Sheikh Tamam-ud-din, who publicly said in Kanpur that it was a murder. As a result the audience burnt down half of Kanpur.

There is also a reference made by the group to the physical resemblance between the Sultan and the Imam.

A guard now clears the courtyard, but Aazam lingers on. He says he wants to see the Brahmin of whom the announcer spoke.

The Brahmin now comes out and Aazam is stunned. He recognizes in him his friend, Aziz, the Muslim dhoti.

The two friends exchange notes. Aazam is continuing his profession of pickpocketing. Aziz discloses that he has made capital out of the Sultan's policy statements that henceforth the Sultan can be sued for the

lapses of his officers. So he got a back-dated agreement from the Brahmin, Vishnu Prasad, whose land had been confiscated. And posing as Vishnu Prasad he had filed a suit. He has now been given five hundred silver dinars and a job in the civil service.

To the shocked Aazam, Aziz explains that only by posing as a Hindu he has been able to exploit the Sultan's idealism. He promises to appoint Aazam as his assistant in the Government. They will make a fortune before they reach Daulatabad.

COMMENT :

The opening scene introduces to us Muhammad with his vision of impartial justice and the plan to shift the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad to facilitate the enlargement of the empire. Most of the subjects are irritated by what they consider his insult to Islam, but there are also young men who appreciate the Sultan's ideas. Reference is also made to the widespread rumour that Sultan engineered the death of his father and brother Sheikh Imam's condemnation of the Sultan at Kanpur is a forecast of what is to happen at Delhi. The trick by which the Muslim dhoti, Aziz, lines his pockets is symptomatic of the abuses to which the Sultan's well-meant policies will be subjected.

SCENE II

The Sultan and his step-mother are talking in a room in the palace.

Muhammad is engrossed in chess and is proud that he has been able to solve a difficult chess problem.

The step-mother suggests that he may inform his bosom friend, Ain-ul-Mulk. But Muhammad smiles and says, the latter is now marching on Delhi, because he had transferred him from Avadh to the Deccan.

Muhammad assures his step-mother that he is not worried on that account. But he wishes he never slept. He wants to spend the night looking at the starry heavens and drinking in their majesty. He wants to be able to take his people along with him to great heights. He is worried not about his enemies but about his people.

When the step-mother says, other kings also took care of their people, Muhammad denies it and says, all the past Sultans of Delhi got murdered.

The step-mother frowns on the word 'murder'.

Muhammad asks her if she also believes the gossip.

Just then Minister Najib and Historian Barani are announced and permitted to enter.

Najib reports that he has been able to muster only six thousand people, and what is worse, Sheik Imam-ud-din Incompetent Sultan.

Questioned by Muhammad, Barani admits that he has heard the Sheik calling the Sultan a disgrace to Islam and a parricide.

Muhammad wonders why people have crooked minds. Even his mother, and now his step-mother, think of him as a murderer.'

Najib enquires how the Sheik is to be tackled. Muhammad says the Saint is privileged to babble, Barani appreciates his Majesty's tolerance of public criticism.

Najib brushes him away as unpolitical. He does not want the Sheik to be killed, because that will be strengthening Ain-ul-Mulk.

Barani is surprised to hear that the good Ain-ul-Mulk has revolted.

Najib explains that Ain-ul-Mulk who had done a good job at Avadh resents being shifted to the Deccan.

When Muhammad enquires what is to be done next, Najib cryptically remarks that the Sheik resembles His Majesty.

In a flash Muhammad understands the stratagem proposed by his minister.

He declares that they will start for Kanauj two days later and in his absence Shihab-ud-din will look after Delhi.

Barani is at a complete loss to follow the Sultan's ideas.

When Muhammad and Najib go out to make preparations, the step-mother bewails for Barani, how Muhammad is working hard spending sleepless nights. She requests Barani to stand by her son whatever happens.

Barani makes the promise but points out that Najib's influence on the Sultan is not good. The stepmother, with venom in her voice, says, she will take care of Najib.

COMMENT:

This scene shows Muhammad's academic leanings, like engrossment in chess. It heralds the danger posed by the religious leader, Sheik, and the political leader, Ain-u!-Mulk. But Najib has a devilish plan to tackle both the hostiles by a single stroke, and the intelligent Muhammad takes the cue readily. We see the straightforward thinking of the professional historian, Barani, and the hatred of the step-mother against Najib whom she considers a rival in her influence over her son.

SCENE III

The scene now shifts to the big mosque of Delhi. The public announcer tomtoms that she Sultan will attend Jhe prayer led by Sheik Imam-ud-din and all the citizens are expected to attend.

But actually in the courtyard of the mosque, there are only the Sultan, the Sheik and a few servants. The citizens have carefully refrained from attending.

Muhammad pretends to be irritated *by* this failure of his people. He orders a servant to summon all the nobles.

The Sheik protests that be wants to speak to the people and not to courtiers. Muhammad points out that despite the proclamation people are not coming to the meeting.

The Sheik offers to meet she people in the market place the next day.

Muhammad gets the place free of the servants and earnestly implores the Sheik to believe him that he has never gone against Islam. But he has to attend to his subjects of different religions.

The Shiek points out that he has arrested the religious leaders. Instead; with his intelligence and power The can spread Islam all the world over, now that the Arabs are no good.

Muhammad says he cannot progress on his knees.

The Sheik warns him about arrogance and refers indirectly to his slave heritage and tendency to murder. Muhammad asks the Sheik not to mix up his religion with politics. Then he bursts into a eulogy of the Greeks, the Persians and the Bastern prophets who have disclosed perspectives beyond the Koran. The Sheik warns him that such catholicity cannot be maintained in a royal line.

Muhammad says, he is trying to find good successors. Now the people are only like cattle. In Kanpur, after hearing the Sheik, they

burnt up the town. Here in Delhi they refused to attend the Sheik's meeting.

Muhammad then hints that the people suspect the Sheik to be the Sultan's spy. At the next day's meeting at the market-place also they will boycott him.

The Sheik understands the trap into which he has fallen and starts to go. Muhammad begs him to stay on and help him.

Ain-ul-Mulk has suddenly turned hostile and is marching on Delhi. The Sheik must go to him as Muhammad's envoy and prevent a bloody war in which only Muslims would suffer.

The Sheik falls into the second trap and agrees to be the Ambassador of Peace.

Muhammad gets the servants to bring robes of honour. When the Sheik is dressed in them, he looks almost like the Sultan.

COMMENT:

This scene brings out both the idealism and the astuteness of the Sultan. He pretends to give freedom for the Sheik to preach against him in the big mosque, but sees to it that not a single soul turns up. He plants the suspicion in the Sheik's mind that people consider him a royal spy. Even as the Sheik is feeling powerless, the Sultan offers him the honour of acting as the Sultan's special envoy to conclude peace with Ain-ul-Mulk. The devilish trick behind this arrangement springs from the hint given by Najib in the previous scene. Since the Sultan and the Sheik have much resemblance, the Sheik is liable to be mistaken for the Sultan and killed. Thus he can get rid of a formidable enemy and also deal with Ain-ul-Mulk more successfully. The scene also reveals how at heart Muhammad is inspired by visions of golden Greece and the shining Orient.

SCENE IV

The locale is the Delhi palace. The Sultan has marched to Kanauj to confront Ain-ul-Mulk, and the Sheik has preceded him as peace-maker. Shihab-ud-din is looking after the affairs of State very well and the stepmother has come to like him.

Sardar Ratansingh, the adopted brother of Shihab-ud-din, comes in and informs them that the Sultan has returned and is conferring with Najib.

The step-mother who does not like Najib wonders why her son does not come to her first. Raflansingh discloses that the Sultan is sad because of the death of the Sheik in the battle.

Before the two can recover from the shock, Muhammad enters and greets his step-mother and Shihab-ud-din,

When the step mother asks, what happened to the Sheik, Muhammad dramatically declaims how he felt he was dead in the Sheik's body.

When the step-mother hopes that Ain-ul-Mulk is also dead, Muhammad discloses to the consternation of Najib and applause of Barani that he let Ain-ul-Mulk to go back as Governor of Avadh with the assurance would not be transferred to the Deccan.

Muhammad explains that Ain-ul-Mulk was able in a minute to point out a defect in the Sultan's proud solution of the chess problem. After that he had to forgive his friend. Anyway, Muhammad orders a day of mourning for the Sheik. There will be no celebration of the victory.

All withdraw except Shihab-ud-din and Ratansingh hints that the Sultan is a devil calmly planning murders and starving Hindus as well as Muslims to death in the Doab by levying exorbitant tax when there is a famine on.

When Shihab-ud-din asks him to speak plainly, Ratansingh discloses how at Kanauj, the Sultan sent the Sheik dressed to look like himself on a royal elephant as a chief emissary to the other side. Before the Sheik could start his parleys with Ain-ul-Mulk, the trumpets sounded from the Sultan's army and the battle was on. The Sheik, mistaken for the Sultan, fell a victim to the enemy arrows. He dropped dead from the elephant. The enemy pursued the troops behind the Sheik, and thus walked into the trap set by Muhammad who was waiting for them secretly with a big army. Ain-ul-Mulk's forces were decimated and *he* had to surrender.

Shihab-ud-din is shocked to learn that the Sheik was practically murdered. Ratansingh hints that the nobles of the court are shortly meeting in secret to decide what they are to do to the Sultan. He invites Shihab-ud-din to attend the meeting.

COMMENT:

In this scene we learn how Muhammad exploited the Sheik's likeness to himself to get the Sheik practically murdered. By pretending to send the Sheik as an envoy of peace, Muhammad also led the enemy into a bloody trap. He has made good use of Najib's devilish proposal, but he has also, against Najib's advice, reinstated Ain-ul-Mulk as the Governor of Avadh. The cruelty and the visionary make-up of Muhammad's mind are both highlighted in this scene. We also witness a trap being prepared for the removal of Shihab-ud-din.

SCENE V

The conspirators are meeting secretly in a house in Delhi. Besides Shihab-ud-din and Ratansingh there are a number of Amirs, Sayyids and a Sheikh present.

The Amirs complain about the proposal to shift the capital to Hindu Daulatabad, the levying of taxes on every activity and the exemption of Hindus from Jiziya. They want Shihab-ud-din to lead the revolt.

When Shihab-ud-din refuses to be a party to the conspiracy, the old Sheikh Shams-ud-din gets up and lists the leaders of Islam who have been imprisoned or exiled. He accuses the Sultan of getting rid of Sheikh Imam-ud-din.

When Shihab-ud-din points out that the people of Delhi, including Sheikh Shams-ud-din, failed to attend the meeting at the mosque, Shams-ud-din reveals that the Sultan's soldiers were posted in every by-lane to see that no citizen went towards the mosque. The Sheikh unbuttons his shirt and exposes a wound on his shoulder received, when he tried to go to the mosque that day.

Shihab-ud-din is still reluctant but the Sheikh, appeals to him to set things right before many other Imam-ud-din die.

Ratansingh puts up a show of anger and declares that though a Hindu, he feels the insult to Islam.

Shihab-ud-din suggests that they approach his father for leadership. Ratansingh points out that they are not thinking of a military confrontation with the Sultan. He has a simpler plan.

He suggests that next Tuesday when the Amirs meet the Sultan at the Durbar, let them hang on till prayer time, During prayer Muhammad will be unarmed. That is the time to finish him off.

All the Amirs gloat over the simple brilliance of the Hindu's plan. But the Sheikh objects that the attack should not be at prayer time.

Shihab-ud-din, however, is now so much incensed against Muhammad that he considers God will not mind the interruption of this prayer. They disperse promising to work out the details.

COMMENT:

The noble Shihab-ud-din is drawn into the conspiracy against his friend, the Sultan, even as Brutus was tricked into leading the conspiracy against his friend, Julius Caesar. But it is the Hindu, Ratansingh, who plans the murder at the prayer time when every Muslim is debarred from carrying weapons. The feeble protests of Sheik Shaens-ud-din not to defile the prayer time, is brushed aside by the others including Shihab-ud-din. This shows how the spirit of vengeance destroys all the decent values of life. At this stage the reader is kept in the dark about the double game that Ratansingh is playing.

SCENE VI

The Amirs assemble in the palace room where Najib and Barani are also present along with the Sultan.

Muhammad informs them that Abbasid Qhivaq ad-din Muhammad has been invited to the Capital.

Shihab-ud-din congratulates the Sultan on his wisdom in inviting a defendant of the Khalif, but Mohammad points out that it is not for placating the priests.

He says after the death of Shiek Imam he has been asking himself what gives him the right to be a king. He asks them what they would advise him to do to become a real king.

Brushing aside Najib's disapproval, he states that he is seeking the blessings of the Abbasid to honour tradition and history.

When an Amir flatters him saying that Delhi will be sanctified by the visit, Muhammad points out that by the time of his arrival they will be in Daulatabad.

Shihab-ud-din implores him not to shift the Capital, out of respect to the possible sufferings of the people.

Muhammad tells them that he cannot waste any more time explaining his decision. He throws another bombshell by announcing the proposed introduction of copper currency.

Shihab-ud-din protests that copper cannot be a substitute for silver. But Muhammad points out that in China they favour paper currency. It is all a matter of confidence in the ruler.

The Amirs whisper among themselves that the Sultan is mad. When they repeat that people will not accept copper currency, Muhammad pleads

with them to give his experiment a fair chance. He wants to rule with their co-operation.

Dramatically he kneels before them.

All the nobles feel embarrassed and say, his is to command and theirs to obey.

Muhammad asks them to swear on the Koran that they will support his policy. But they shy away.

Just then the door-keeper announces the time for prayer.

Mohammad orders that all of them shall pray there itself.

Off stage the Muezzin's call is heard. Attenders bring mats and water for those in the room. They all wash and start praying.

Muhammad places his sword on the throne and kneels beside it. The others pull out their daggers.

Barani is frightened while the Amirs move towards the throne. Suddenly a score of Hindu soldiers rush in and surround the Amirs. The soldiers drag away all of them except Shihab-ud-din. Only after finishing his prayer does Muhammad turn to Shihab-ud-din.

Shihab-ud-din wonders how Muhammad knew. Muhammad hands him a letter from Ratansingh disclosing the details of the conspiracy.

Shihab-ud-din is taken aback, but tells Muhammad that he cannot be bought away like Ain-ul-Mulk. He has already written to his father and now the revolt cannot be crushed.

Najib discloses that Ratansingh has sent them those letters also.

Muhammad then stabs Shihab-ud-din dead in a frenzy, and flings away the dagger. Trembling all over he asks Barani why he has to commit such cruelty.

He orders all involved in the conspiracy to be beheaded and their corpses, stuffed with straw, exhibited publicly.

Barani protests, while Najib points out that Shihab-ud-din's father has to be hanged.

Muhammad orders a state funeral to be given to Shihab-ud-din who must be

reported to have died a martyr defending the Sultan. His father should be given all honour.

Najib suggests that the Hindu guards who saw the incident should also be done away with.

Muhammad orders that everyone in Delhi should start for Daulatabad in a fortnight. Delhi must be empty like a graveyard.

When Barani invokes heaven, Muhammad declares that henceforth there will be no prayer in the kingdom.

Najib cleverly suggests an amendment that there may be no prayers in the kingdom till the arrival of the Abbasid.

Barani spreads a piece of silk over the dead body but Muhammad violently removes it saying that the people must see the wounds.

COMMENT:

In this scene also we see the incongruent mixture of idealism and cruel cunning that characterizes Tughlaq. He pleads with his nobles to understand him and co-operate with him and kneels before them. But when he finds them refractory he does not hesitate to send them to death. His use of Hindu guards to overpower the Muslim nobles who try to exploit the solemn time of prayer to assassinate the unarmed Sultan, is as artistic as it is cruel. The scene also forecasts the three episodes that dominate the play—the trek to Daulatabad, the introduction of the copper coin and the visit of the Abbasid.

SCENE VII

The locale is a camp office *en route* to Daulatabad. Aziz is dressed as a Brahmin officer and Aazam as his Muslim assistant.

A woman kneels before Aziz and implores him to permit her to be away for a day to take her sick child to a doctor.

Aziz refuses saying that she can, consult the local Hakim. Otherwise, the officers will have to be heavily bribed.

When the woman goes away weeping, Aazam pleads for her. But Aziz is adamant.

A man and woman with six children now enter.

When Aziz frowns on them for being late, the man pleads that he had to bury two corpses on the way.

Aziz warns him that he might have committed a crime in burying what might have been Hindu bodies.

The man explains that his job is to guard the bodies executed by the Sultan and publicly hung. Very often relations try to steal them away.

Aziz relents and permits the man to retire to his camp.

Aazim is shocked to learn that the man and the woman are not married. But Aziz declares that such people are those the Sultan requires.

When Aazam speaks again on behalf of the poor woman and promises to get some money for her by a little pickpocketing, Aziz asks him not to be petty. He advises Aazam- to become a politician. In the political field the spoils are much greater.

Aziz also discloses that he is thinking of trying his hand at counterfeiting the copper coins to be issued presently. He and Aazam working together can amass quite a fortune in that line.

COMMENT:

Here we see the sufferings of the people forced to march to Daulatabad. Though it has been announced that the State will look after all the needs of the population on the move, real assistance does not reach the poor. Men like Aziz line their pockets. Also we have a forecast of the counterfeiting of the new token coins. This scene comes as a comic interlude after the tragedy of the death of Shihab-ud-din in the last scene,

SCENE VIII

The locale is the Daulatabad fort, five years after the last scene.

It is night and two watchmen, one old and the other young, are chatting.

The young man is all admiration for the magnificent fort built by the Sultan, while the old man, who is from Delhi, narrates how he lost all his relations in the trek from Delhi,

The old man compares the long underground passage in the fort to an all-consuming serpent.

Muhammad now appears and is challenged by the young watchman. But the old man recognizes him.

While the old man goes to fetch Barani, the young man apologizes for his mistake. Muhammad forgives him and enquires about him.

The young man reveals that he has been in the army and has taken up duty here only the previous day.

When the young man tells him that he is nineteen. Muhammad goes back in imagination to his own adolescence. He came here at the age of twenty-one and built this fort brick by brick. He had the ambition to build likewise an empire and his own history. But that vision has fallen apart in the last four years.

When the young man pleads that he does not understand His Majesty, Muhammad gives him up as hopeless like the rest.

Barani then enters and the talk turns to Mohammad's sleeplessness. There was a time when he prayed to God not to send him to sleep. Now it is the adverse. There have been a number of revolts. Bengal and Ma'bar have rebelled. Doab is caught in drought. Counterfeiting copper coins has become a cottage industry. He can trust only Ain-ul-Mulk and Shihab-ud 'din's father. He seeks Barani's advice.

Barani suggests that the Sultan had better concentrate on his scholarship instead of indulging in violence.

Muhammad laughs cynically and says he wishes he could retire to Mecca and pray. But he is in the midst of a raging fever and the patient cannot be deserted half way. He wonders why there is so much of vengeance against him. He knows people call him mad, but how is he to become wise?

Barani asks him to give up his cruel punishments and rely on love, peace and faith in God.

Muhammad says this would be admitting that he was wrong all these years, which is certainly not the case. He has a duty to write his name in the pages of history.

Suddenly the old watchman runs in to announce that Najib has been murdered in bed.

COMMENT :

This scene tells us how the shifting of capital to Daulatabad has been a complete fiasco and Muhammad himself realizes he has opened a Pandora's

box. His move south has encouraged the northern provinces to revolt. Yet he refuses to accept Barani's advice to return to the ways of peace and love of God. A turning point arises with the murder of Najib, his right-hand man.

SCENE IX

The scene is a hide-out in the hills where Aziz and Aazam are working as highway robbers.

Aazam is tired of this life of stealing and hiding. But Aziz counsels patience which will bring them real power.

Aziz does not want this petty robbery. He is for organized plunder on a large scale by becoming a politician. Aazam offers to become his court thief.

One of the gang brings in a man, bound and gagged

When Aazam unties the man, Aziz discovers that his assistant has brought the wrong man.

The man discloses that he is the Abbasid.

Aziz and Aazam prostrate before him.

They ask for his forgiveness and offer, as amends, to accompany him as his personal guards to Daulatabad

The Abbasid reveals that he is unfamiliar with this country and does not know the Sultan.

Aziz gives a chilling description of the Sultan's cruelty and the chances of getting robbed or killed on the way. The Abbasid points out that he carries little money and only the letter of the Sultan and a ring for recognition.

Aziz laughs loud and jumps up. The frightened Abbasid implores him not to kill him. He will give them plenty of money when they reach Daulatabad.

Aziz says he will be going to Daulatabad in the place of the visitor. After all, this man is only a rat from the gutter that the Sultan has picked up for his own purposes. No one will notice his disappearance. He asks Aazam, who is pleading for the visitor, to get out.

The Abbasid now clings to Aziz's legs for mercy and moans his ill-luck.

He manages to pull down Aziz and run away. But Aziz shouts to Aazam who intercepts the running stranger and kills him.

Aazam regrets his deed but Aziz dresses himself in the robes of the Abbasid and executes a merry dance;

COMMENT

A further twist to the plot is given by the Abbasid falling by chance into the hands of Aziz, who has him removed and takes his disguise as the Abbasid. Aziz is introduced in the play to parody the action of Muhammad at a lower level and to provide comic relief.

SCENE X

In the Daulatabad palace, the step-mother points out to Muhammad the debacle of his copper coins. Five hundred carts are waiting outside fully loaded with counterfeit coins for exchange.

Muhammad says he must pay for his whim and will give silver coins in exchange, come what may.

The step-mother asks him what he is going to do with the counterfeit coins. Muhammad replies that he will pile them in the rose garden. He designed the garden as a symbol. Every rose in the garden was to be a poem. Every thorn in the rose was to quicken the senses. But now the symbol has lost its charm.

The step-mother asks him to stop his carnage. She refers to the rumour that five of the Amirs have fled.

Muhammad points out that he only wants to know who killed Najib. One of the Amirs was overheard telling his wife that he knew the identity of the murderer. That Amir committed suicide. The murderer must have been someone very eminent for the Amir to take his own life.

The step-mother admits she is glad that Najib is dead. He was misleading the Sultan and making him hated by the priesthood, the nobles and the people.

Muhammad observes that Najib's loyalty was not to him, but to the throne. He must know who killed Najib and why. If the Amirs do not return, their families will suffer.

The step-mother pleads with him in vain to stop this cruelty.

Then she throws a bombshell. She confesses that she had him murdered. Mohammad asks her not to joke about it.

The step-mother says she is not joking. Killing Najib was better than killing a father, a brother or a Sheik.

Muhammad retorts that he killed people for an ideal. He had only three friends in the world the step-mother, Najib and Barani.

The step-mother asks him to compare the splendour of his first years on the throne with the gloom of today.

Muhammad admits that Najib has been advising him recently against violence, but ever since he killed Shihab-ud-din, he has understood that his mission can be carried out not by words but by the sword. He then turns against her and asks her what happiness she could get by getting rid of Najib.

The step-mother says she wants nothing for herself. Muhammad is everything to her.

Muhammad asks her not to think that he would not punish her. Treachery must be punished with death. He claps for guards.

The step-mother points out that her death will only add one more haunting ghost to his dream.

But Muhammad orders the pair of soldiers who enter to take her away and stone her to death publicly the next morning as there is no other punishment for an adulteress.

She is dragged away screaming.

Muhammad falls on his knees and pleaded with God to have pity on him,

Barani enters and announce* that within a month the Abbasid will arrive in the city.

Muhammad tells him that he was trying to pray but found no joy in it. He is on the brink of madness but he is not attaining divine madness. He has condemned his step-mother to death though not sure of her guilt.

COMMENT:

In this scene the step-mother confesses that it was she who had Najib removed from her path so that her son could be restored to sanity. But Muhammad condemns her to be stoned to death and confesses that all his values-are in a mess now. He tries to pray but cannot. He would like to have the madness of God, but it is only wretched human madness that is haunting him. We are also told of the impending visit of the Abbasid when official prayers will recommence.

SCENE XI

The public announcer announces that all are to join the public prayer led by the Abbasid and joined by the Sultan. Henceforth all should pray five times a *day* as before.

But the crowd that collects outside the court does not want the prayers.

They speak of the miserable deaths of thousands due to starvation and men crowding a butcher's shop to get a little blood from the slaughtered animals. People are subsisting on fried *Bkias*, as a handful of wheat costs twenty grains of silver.

Aziz, dressed as the Abbasid, enters. Aazam accompanies him. Muhammad welcomes the Abbasid declaring that he can save the people.

When the Sultan kneels before the Abbasid, the people are taken aback. After embracing each other, Muhammad and Aziz depart.

The Hindu woman screams that it was this man (Abbasid) who killed her child.

This is the cue for the others to get out of bounds. . A riot follows, and the soldiers are attacked by the mob.

Comment:

This is a short scene depicting the misery of the people which provokes them to riot.

SCENE XII

In the palace Aziz and Aazam are conversing.

Aazam describes how the whole city is full of corpses and the streets are not safe. He has discovered an underground passage and he has arranged with two servants for a couple of horses on which they can escape.

Aziz asks him not to be a fool trusting servants, are safest inside the palace.

Aazjm relates how he saw the Sultan wandering In the moonlight in the rose garden going round the heaps of counterfeit coins.

Aziz asks him not to worry his head about the Sultan's insomnia. If Aazam gets out he will be a traitor.

Aazam pleads with Aziz to go with him. When the latter keeps silence, he bids him good-bye and goes away.

COMMENT:

In this scene we find even the thief Aazam finding life at Daulatabad unsafe and miserable. So we can guess how the honest folk must have suffered.

SCENE XIII

In the palace Barani tells Muhammad that his mother is dead at Barani and he must go to attend her funeral at least.

Muhammad questions him how she died, but Barani says he does not know. Muhammad tells him that he knows. His soldiers who are butchering everyone must have killed her also.

Just then a soldier brings information that the Abbasid's assistant, Aazam Jehan, has been murdered at the mouth of the secret tunnel. Two horsemen with a big bundle disappeared.

While Barani is shocked, Muhammad asks what Aazam said before he died. The soldier guesses that he was giggling unnaturally.

Muhammad asks the guard not to reveal anything about the murder to anyone. He asks him to fetch the Abbasid.

When Barani says that he is puzzled, Muhammad points out that he is in the midst of the history that is being written. If he waits a little he can see more of the Jangled tale.

Barani thanks the Sultan for giving him these seven years a splendid opportunity to see history at work. But he has to go now.

The Sultan says there is no need for a farewell speech.

Barani points out that when the palace is in mourning it would not be

proper to start the prayers,

Muhammad laughs and says Najib should have been present to witness the drama that will shortly take place.

Aziz enters. Muhammad apologises for his inability to attend to him personally, then he reveals the murder of Aazam. Aziz bewails in shocked surprise at the death of his assistant.

But Muhammad springs on him the question who lie is. How long did he hope to deceive people.

While Barani is nonplussed, Aziz confesses that he is a dhobi. Muhammad asks him if he knows the punishment for killing a saint and deceiving the Sultan.

Aziz points out that the Sultan knows that Ohiyas-ud-din was not a saint like the Sheik and hints that. His Majesty cannot set much store by pedigree. The Sultan warns him

Aziz claims that he has been the Sultan's true disciple. When Barani says the fellow must be punished, Aziz points out that. It is not possible. The Sultan has got him specially for starting the prayers after five years and has publicly fallen at his feet. But Aziz is not a black mailer. He discloses how he was the Brahmin in whose favour His Majesty decreed. He also honoured the idea of copper currency by making it himself. But when counterfeiting became a competitive industry, he got his silver dinars in exchange and went to Doab as a farmer.

When Barani interjects that Doab has been under famine for the last five years, Muhammad explains that she fellow bought land dirt-cheap, took the subsidy from the Slate and escaped into the hills to become a robber.

Aziz meekly submits that His Majesty has left out one stage in his career. In order to escape detection he became an official executioner and helped in stuffing many bodies with straw and suspending them on poles. If he killed the Abbasid also, it was only in tune with His Majesty's policy. Muhammad bursts out that he will not have this clowning by a dhobi disguised as a saint.

Aziz quips that a dhobi can wash better than a saint.

The Sultan laughs at the joke and asks him what punishment he would

choose. Aziz wants to be appointed as an officer to demonstrate his loyalty.

The Sultan asks him to pretend to return to Arabia after Aazam's funeral and then secretly go to the Deccan to serve as an officer under Khusrau.

Aziz agrees. Muhammad asks him to go and lead the prayer.

Barani cannot understand the Sultan's action. He points out that it will be folly to give a murdering thief power in the Deccan.

Muhammad points out that Barani approved of his forgiving Ain-ul-Mulk. Now the latter has invited him to his capital. The ulterior motive must be that the people no longer trust Ain-ul-Mulk after the death of the Sheik.

The Sultan declares that now his only plan is to return to Delhi with his people.

Barani protests that h.¹ is persecuting his people and honouring the thief.

Muhammad observes that justice is not so simple an affair. In a way he is full of his madness and is glad that God too is mad. He asks Barani to note this when writing his history.

Barani excuses himself and says he will take leave now.

But the Sultan is tired and sleepy for the first time after five years. He asks Barani to pray for him before he goes.

Just then a servant enters to take the Sultan to the prayer, but finding him asleep, puts a shawl on him and retires.

Outside, the Muezzin is chanting the prayer.

Muhammad opens his eyes and looks around bewildered.

On this scene of utter incomprehension, the Curtain falls.

COMMENT:

In the concluding scene, we find even the faithful Barani wanting to leave the Sultan. The imposture of Aziz is exposed, but the clever rogue explains to the Sultan that he has only been faithfully following the

Sultan's policies and actions. Muhammad appreciates the fellow's cheek and sends him to the Deccan as an officer. Barani, the historian, is unable to make head or tail of the Sultan's logic, but we find that the Sultan himself is at a loss to know what he is doing. It is symbolic that when at last the public prayers are resumed, the Sultan gets back the sleep that eluded him all these years. It is like the blessed sleep that comes to the Ancient Mariner when his guilty lips were finally able to frame a prayer!

8.3 LET US SUM UP

Now you are fully aware of the historical and social changes made by the Dramas of Girish Karnad and Badal Sircar

8.4 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

1. How does the Brahmin get justice from the Sultan and what is its sequel?

In the very opening scene we are presented as aspect of the contrariness in the personality of Sultan Tughlaq. He has an idealistic view of justice and tries to be impartial in deciding issues without any of the religious fanaticism so common in those times. But he is unable to carry conviction with the people. A Brahmin, Vishnu Prasad, has a small piece of land which has been confiscated by the Government on some pretext. The man is not only too poor to fight out the case in the Court of Justice, but is convinced that all legal means of recovering his property stand blocked because he is a Brahmin under a Muslim Government. But there are always individuals who can exploit desperate situations of others to their own advantage. A Muslim dhobi, Aziz, has a brainwave. The Sultan has recently had it proclaimed that the people may file a suit against the Sultan himself for the misbehaviour of his officers: Justice would be done. Aziz goes to Vishnu Prasad and gets him to sign a back-dated contract assigning the confiscated land to Aziz. Then Aziz files a suit against the Sultan under the name of Vishnu Prasad. The Chief Court of Justice hears the plaint and decrees in the Brahmin's favour. The Sultan accepts the decision of the judge and as compensation grants Vishnu Prasad five hundred silver dinars with a bonus of a post in the civil service to ensure him a regular and sufficient income.

The Sultan has both the decision of the Court of Justice and the Sultan's acceptance of the decision tom-tommed in the courtyard of the Court itself. This provokes diverse reactions in the populace. While some young men applaud the progressive views of the new ruler, most of the others, both Muslim and Hindu, consider the Sultan's action eccentric. They have been accustomed to hold the Sultan as beyond the purview of all courts. Muhammad subjects himself to the jurisdiction of a legal institution that derives its authority from him. This looks scandalous to the ordinary citizen. It is clear that the people have not been educated sufficiently before

such novel procedures of justice are set in motion. What happens is that only the crooks profit by this idealistic move. The real sufferer, Vishnu Prasad, does not gain his dues. But the unscrupulous Aziz is able to make hay.

This incident snowballs. As Muhammad steps from one visionary scheme to another, we find the rogue Aziz following a parallel path, profiting all the way. After announcing his magnanimous judicial sacrifice, Muhammad declares to the assembled people: his intention to shift the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. The listeners feel this is jumping from the frying pan into the fire. But Aziz exploits this eccentric move also and lines his pockets further. The justice meted out to the false Brahmin is the precursor of numerous tragicomic situations that fill the drama, exposing Muhammad's foolish wisdom and Aziz's clever roguery.

2. Why does Ain-ul-Mulk revolt and with what consequence?

Ain-ul-Mulk Multani is a particular friend of Muhammad. They have been companions from childhood and love of chess is a strong bond between the two. Ain-ul-Mulk is also a capable General and administrator and Muhammad has entrusted him with many great responsibilities, both in Government and in military campaigns. He has been made the Governor of Avadh and has been discharging his duties creditably. But Muhammad thinks his service can be better employed in the Deccan where a strong and trusted deputy is needed. So he transfers Ain-ul-Mulk to the Deccan. Ain-ul-Mulk resents this jerk. The Deccan is a problem province and Ain-ul-Mulk has settled himself well at Avadh. The fact is that the Sultan's revenue policy is far from pragmatic. Avadh has been passing through a series of famines and yet the land tax instead of being reduced or waived, has actually been enhanced. Seizing the opportunity, Ain-ul-Mulk marches an army 30,000 strong against Delhi. The Sultan's ministers are able to recruit only six thousand soldiers despite using strong coercion.

Muhammad is aware of the bottle-neck that has been created by his impulsive decisions but, perversely enough, he is thinking in terms of chess. He is proud as peacock that he has been able to solve a chess problem that has defied the wits of grand chess-masters of old. His immediate instinct is to communicate his triumph to Ain-ul-Mulk who alone can appreciate the magnitude of his achievement. Then he, remembers that Ain-ul-Mulk is busy with moves other than those of chess. And Muhammad is thrown into gloom.

The Vizier Najib comes to the rescue. He has already hinted to the Sultan, as diplomatically as he can, that Ain-ul-Mulk is considered a god by the people of Avadh and there is no wonder that the Governor thinks Muhammad's order is a stab in the back. But Muhammad is not amenable to straight advice. He asks Najib to tell him what the next step is. Najib unrolls a devilish plan. Another thorn in the side of Muhammad

is Sheik Imam-ud-din who is preaching against him, charging him with disloyalty to Islam. The Sheik is also in Delhi now torouse up the populace against Muhammad. Najib suggests that the accidental likeness in the personal appearances of the Sultan and the Sheik can be exploited. Muhammad is quick to take the hint. He persuades the Sheik to act as his personal envoy in seeking a peace settlement with Ain-ul-Mulk. When the Sheik is dressed in ambassadorial robes he looks strikingly like Muhammad.

The Sheik heads a cavalcade and meets the army of Ain-ul-Mulk at Kanauj. Seated on an elephant he is flourishing the white flag of truce. But when he nears the opposite forces, according to the Sultan's instructions, the soldiers accompanying him start shooting arrows at the enemy. Naturally Ain-ul-Mulk's soldiers reply with interest. In the melee that follows the Sheik gets struck by an arrow as he forms a splendid target mounted on an elephant. – He falls off the elephant and is killed. Ain-ul-Mulk's men, thinking they are in for a landslide victory, pursue in hoi chase the fleeing entourage of the Sheik. They do not realize, they are walking into a trap. The Sultan is near by with his army well hidden: Suddenly Ain-ul-Mulk's men find themselves in a tight corner surrounded by the Sultan's soldiers. A bloody massacre follows and Ain-ul-Mulk has no go but to surrender.

Now comes the eccentric aspect of Muhammad. Instead of taking Ain-ul-Mulk prisoner, Muhammad greets his childhood companion and explains to him how he solved a master problem in chess. Ain-ul-Mulk ponders over the solution for a few minutes and then* points out an important flaw in the solution. Muhammad has to acknowledge the sharper brain of Ain-ul-Mulk. In a feeling of over-compensating warmth, he not only pardons the insurrection of his friend but restores him to the governorship of Avadh. So, literally, things are back at square one.

This apparently magnanimous gesture to the rebelling Ain-ul-Mulk is considered a grave mistake by Najib as well as the Step-mother, though applauded by the historian Barani. It does pay dividends in a way because, despite the distressing economic conditions in Avadh, Ain-ul-Mulk continues to be loyal to Muhammad and manages the -administration of his suffering province somehow. He even later on invites Muhammad from Daulatabad to Avadh, at a time when other provinces are revolting. The play does not deal with the sequel, though in history we read that a few years later, in 1340, Ain-ul-Mulk also rebelled and almost detached Avadh from the Tughlaq empire.

3. Explain the ruse by which Tughlaq gets rid of Sheik Imam-ud din

Sheik Imam-ud-din is a Suii preceptor held in great reverence all over North India. He is as simple-minded as he is fervent in his faith. He admires Muhammad for his talents, but then is irritated by what he considers the Sultan's un-Islamic ways. He is angry that though Muhammad swears by the Koran, he does not consult the Sayyids and the Ulema to find out the meaning of the Koranic statements. Instead, he puts the best of them behind bars on the plea that they are interfering in politics. The Imam holds that religion and politics go together and it is wickedness to try to project them as antagonistic. He is unhappy that Muhammad has no scruples in certain directions. For instance, the collapse of the pavilion which led to the death of Muhammad's father and brother, was a cleverly designed accident. The Imam therefore refers to the Sultan in his speeches at Kanpur as guilty of killing his father and brother. Hearing the Sheik, the audience goes wild and burns down half of the city.

But the irony is that there is a lot of resemblance between the Sultan and the Sheik. Not only do they look alike, even some of their gestures and mannerisms are similar. There is a joke that the resemblance extends to a weakness for making long and pedantic speeches also. But in the eyes of the populace the Sheik appears a god; whereas the Sultan is a devil. The Sheik is sorry that Muhammad is wasting all his God-given talents in crooked politics, while he can very well be an upholder of Islam. He can spread the Prophet's faith all the world over and continue the great work left unfinished by the Arabs.

The Sheik finally feels that it is his religious duty to rouse the populace against the misdeeds of the Sultan. So he comes to Delhi to beard the lion in its den. But he does not realise this lion is also a fox. Muhammad prepares a very neat trap into which the straight thinking Sheik Delhi falls. Pretending to be all eager that the whole of Delhi should hear what the man of God says, even if it be against himself, Muhammad toms that a mammoth meeting is to be held at the big mosque. But secretly his soldiers have been instructed to see that no citizen dares to attend the meeting. The result is that at the appointed hour the big mosque appears a vast desert with only the Sultan, the Sheik and a few servants to relieve the loneliness. The Sheik naturally fails to understand why at Delhi people are not as enthusiastic about hearing him as the people of Kanpur. He therefore thinks of going into the street and addressing the people there. Muhammad dissuades him from this move by making a wicked hint. He suggests that knowing as they do that the Sheik speaks decrying the Sultan, the people suspect there is something sinister in the Sheik accepting the invitation of the Sultan to speak at the mosque. They suspect that after all it is a drama and that the Sheik is a spy in the

service of the Sultan. The meeting must have been arranged to find out who are the people against the Sultan. Naturally, to avoid betraying themselves, people have kept away from the meeting. Therefore, says Muhammad, even in the streets people will take care not to be anywhere near the Sheik..

This sinister suggestion takes the wind out of the Sheik's sails. But the Sheik persists in telling Muhammad how the latter has insulted Islam. Muhammad points out that having come to know something of the visions of the Greeks and the Prophets of the East he cannot become a narrow fanatic, shackled by the Koran and Arabic lore. The Sheik considers it futile to pursue the topic further and is about to bid farewell when Muhammad springs another trap on him. Dramatically he pleads that the Sheik alone can help him. Ain-ul-Mulk is marching on Delhi. If there is a war, whoever may finally win, it will be Muslims who die at the hands of Muslims. To avert this catastrophe the Sheik must go to Ain-ul-Mulk as Muhammad's envoy of peace. Surely Ain-ul-Mulk will listen to the pious Sheik. This is flattery laid on with a trowel. The simple Sheik preens himself like a peacock, accepts the royal robes in which the Sultan has him decked and is immensely pleased that he looks almost like Muhammad.

This looking like Mohammad proves to be the Sheik's grave. Mounted on an elephant and dressed like the Sultan, the Sheik is about to begin parleys with Ain-ul-Mulk's vanguard, when, by the Sultan's secret instructions, the - entourage, of the Sheik start shooting arrows at the enemy. Instead of peace talks it is arrows that speak. Ain-ul-Mulk's forces have no trouble in routing the Sheik's small entourage. The Sheik himself forms a splendid target for their arrows. The Sheik is shot fatally, mistaken for the Sultan. He falls down from the elephant and is trampled to death. Muhammad meanwhile is waiting with a powerful army in the fleeing entourage, walk into the trap and are utterly annihilated. With only six thousand men, Muhammad is able to decimate Ain-ul-Mulk's thirty-thousand. It is a landslide victory.

Muhammad continues the drama by ordering State mourning for the Sheik. He has killed a number of birds with a single stroke. Not only is the troublesome Sheik "removed from his path, but Ain-ul-Mulk to whom the governorship of Avadh is restored, is taught his place. What is more, when it is brought to light that Ain-ul-Mulk was responsible for the death of the Sheik, the people revise their opinion of their governor and thereby Muhammad's stock goes up.

4. What makes Shihab-ud-din change his Idyafat and how does he pay for it?

Shihab-ud-din, the prince of Sampanshahr, is really princely in his outlook. Like his father, the Amir, he is held in great respect by the people. The prince is also on very good terms with Tughlaq. Shihab-ud-din is known for his humanity and readiness to appreciate excellence and render help wherever possible.

Tughlaq uses him as a pawn in his political chess. When he is marching to Kanauj to confront Ain-ul-Mulk, he leaves Shihab-ud-din in charge of the affairs at Delhi. The step-mother, who is prejudiced against Najib, finds in Shihab-ud-din a welcome ally. He manages the affairs of State quite well in Tughlaq's absence, and Tughlaq, on his return, thanks him heartily for his unsparing service. But Shihab-ud-din gets a jolt when his adopted brother, Ratansingh, reveals how Sheikh Imam-ud-din was trapped to his death by the Sultan's devilish stratagem. Ratansingh also hints that the Sultan's aim was to get rid of him also. Shihab-ud-din therefore consents to attend a secret meeting of Sayyids and Amirs in a house in Delhi.

When the Amirs request him to take the lead in putting the Delhi administration in safer hands, Shihab-ud-din protests that he does not belong to Delhi. The reply that it is the very reason why they want him, the outsider, as their champion. They point out the cruelty involved in transferring the Capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. Daulatabad is a Hindu stronghold and the Amirs will be powerless there. Indeed, the Sultan is working against Islam by exempting the Hindus from the 'Jaziya'. On the contrary, he is levying all manner of high taxes. Even gambling is not untaxed.

Shihab-ud-din is reluctant to associate himself with this rebellious move. The scales fall from his eyes, however, when the old Sheikh Shams-ud-din narrates how the Sultan has been imprisoning and exiling Sheikh after Sheikh, culminating in the murder of Imam-ud-din. When Shihab-ud-din points out that the Sheiks and Amirs did not turn up at the big mosque to hear of Imam-ud-din, Shams-ud-din discloses the ruse played by the Sultan. His soldiers prevented people from attending the meeting. He bares his shoulders and exhibits the wounds he received from the soldiers when he tried to go to the meeting. The Sheikh and Ratansingh put it to Shihab-ud-din that it is up to him to save Delhi from the vagaries of a cruel, mad man. Shihab-ud-din admits that they have a strong case against Tughlaq, but he is not the man to lead them. They had better approach his father of whom even the Sultan is afraid. Ratansingh points out that they are not thinking in terms of marching an army against the Sultan. Their plan is to do away with Tughlaq. Then he discloses his master plan. They will pay back Tughlaq in his own coin. Tughlaq did away with his father at prayer time. They too shall do away with the Sultan at prayer time. Next Tuesday the

Amirs are meeting the Sultan for the Durbar. Let them prolong the session till the prayer hour. During prayers the Sultan and others with him will all be unarmed. So, after the prayer starts they can stab him to death.

The old Sheik, despite his hatred of Tughlaq, cannot think of killing during prayer time. But Shihab-ud-din has begun to feel so hot against Tughlaq's high handedness that he waves aside the Sheik's objection and declares that in a matter of getting justice done, the Lord will not mind an interrupted prayer.

So it is that at the Durbar, next Tuesday, Shihab-ud-din voices the protest of the people of Delhi against the move to shift the Capital to Daulatabad. Muhammad retorts that he has explained his reasons again and again and is not prepared to entertain any more argument against the scheme. To add fuel to fire Muhammad announces the introduction of token copper currency. He cites the use of paper currency in China;

Muhammad puts on an act. He pleads with them for their co-operation in his schemes if not their understanding. He kneels before them and makes them feel embarrassed. But when he asks them to swear their loyalty on the Koran, they draw back.

Just then the hour of prayer is announced. Muhammad unbuckles his sword and places it on the throne, beside which he kneels. Half-way through the prayer a commotion outside is heard. This is taken by Shihab-ud-din and the Amirs as their cue. They pull out their daggers and step 'towards the Sultan. Suddenly from behind the curtain a score of armed Hindu soldiers rush in. The Amirs are all dragged away except Shihab-ud-din.

Shihab-ud-din is puzzled how the Sultan came to know of their conspiracy. Muhammad gives him Ratansingh's letter. Shihab-ud-din is further shocked that his adopted brother has betrayed him. When Muhammad asks him what his grievance against him is, Shihab-ud-din violently retorts that he is disgusted with Muhammad's killings; He is not Ain-ul-Mulk to be bought away by a show of kindness. Muhammad quietly takes out his dagger. Shihab-ud-din gets afraid and frenzied. He shouts that Muhammad cannot settle problems with the Hash of a dagger. Shihab-ud-din's father has been informed of everything and so even if Shihab-ud-din is killed, Muhammad will have to reckon with Ins father. Najili, who is a silent witness to all this drama, reveals that Ratansingh has intercepted Shihab-ud-din's letters to his father. Shihab-ud-din can only-scream that killing him will not end the trouble. But Muhammad who is now possessed by the devil, stabs his once great friend to death and

derives a goulish pleasure hitting at the dead body repeatedly to the extent of shocking even the soldiers.

Muhammad orders that everyone involved in this conspiracy is to be beheaded and the corpses hung of public gaze. But Shihab-ud-din is to given a State funeral to which, his father would be invited. It should be given out that Shiab-ud-din died a martyr defending the Sultan against the conspiring Amirs. Thus Muhammad proves again that no friend of his may stand against his schemes and that he can get away with any degree of cruelty.

Shihab-ud-din is the first enemy whom Muhammad kills with is own hand. This episode changes his outlook entirely. He decides that it is not words but the sword that psople understand. Henceforward, there is no limit to the cruelties he is prepared to resort to for putting his pet schemes through.

5. Trace the parallelism between the career of Aziz and the policies of Tughlaq

One of the dexterous and amusing features introduced by Karnad in the delineation of Tughlaq's career, is the presentation of the clever rogue, Aziz, who exploits the Sultan's policies to line his own pockets.

Aziz is a Muslim dhobi who has found that petty thieving is not worth the trouble. Being endowed with a highly imaginative but also pragmatic brain he evolves a scheme to be fraudulent on a large scale. When he hears a public announcer tom-tomming that henceforth any citizen, may file a suit against the Sultan for any misdeed of his officers, Aziz repairs to the Brahmin, Vishnu Prasad, whose land has been unjustly confiscated by the authorities. He enters into a post-dated contract with the Brahmin and files a suit. The court decess in his favour and the Sultan accepts the decision. Tughlaq grants him 500 silver dinars as compensation and offers him a post in the civil service so that he may have an adequate and permanent source of income. Thus the Sultan's policy of impartial justice between the high and the low is exploited by Aziz to enrich himself; The irony is that the real victim, Vishnu Prasad, derives no advantage in the process.

The introduction of the token copper currency provides 'the next field for exploitation by Aziz. He with his friend Aazam starts forging copper coins as good as those produced by the royal mint. The two thieves make quite a packet this way, Muhammad has not taken the trouble to safeguard against counterfeits. Minting the coins was not a monopoly of the government at that time. But private parties would usually not resort to minting on their own

because the face value of the coins tallied with their value as metal. They would derive no margin of profit by private minting. But in the case of copper coins it was a different story. Since the prices of silver and copper differed a great deal it became a tempting business for every cottage to go in for minting the copper coins. Aziz takes to the minting like duck to water. But then, when it becomes a widespread industry, the margin of profit becomes small and Aziz and Aazam take the silver dinars in exchange and hurry to another trouble spot, the Doab.

A famine has been raging in this part of the country and land is available dirt-cheap. Not only does Aziz buy a large tract of land, he also collects a handsome subsidy from the State as taqavi loan. Of course, the two rogues never do any farming, but run away to the hills before the fraud is discovered. This episode highlights the trouble that the failure of monsoon brings to Muhammad's plan of land reform. It also underlines the fact that Muhammad was actively interested in promoting agriculture and was generous in granting State loans to needy farmers-If his scheme failed it was because of the frowning of Nature, which was only his ill luck.

This shifting, of the capital to,, Daulatabad provides the next gold mine for Aziz. , He joins the department which is in charge of looking after the comforts of the migrating people. His official duty is twofold. He has to check up if the people under his jurisdiction are arriving in their allocated tents at the proper time. He is empowered to punish delays and absences. Secondly, he is also to distribute the provisions. Here is a fertile field for Aziz to harvest: In his disguise as a Brahmin he takes bribes from the, emigrants for condoning their lapses. If anyone is too poor, to pay him he rustles slyly punishes-them. We find him callously dealing with the woman whose child is sick. But he is all approval when another man comes to his tent after the delay of a few days and pleads that he had to look after the bodies of the dead on the way and part with the corpses for an adequate consideration. We are also told that both Aziz and Aazam for a time work as servants, shifting the corpses of all the rebels executed by the State and hanging them up for exhibition. This part of Aziz's career highlights the miseries the people have to undergo in their trek towards the new capital and the inhuman way in which the people are treated by the king's officers. In his determination to see his policy put through, Muhammad permits all manner of cruelties to those who challenge his edicts.

Aziz and Aazam become highwayman and loot the rich who have to pass through jungles. They have a stroke of unexpected luck when the beggar chiming to be the Abbasid turns up. After making sure that this man is a total stranger to these parts and is not personally known to the Sultan, Aziz has him murdered and dressing himself up in the Khaliphate's clothes, sports the signet ring and marches to Daulatabad. He and his assistant,

Aazam, are given a royal reception and comfortably housed in the palace. Muhammad's aim is to short-circuit the influence of the Sayyids and the Ulema by linking himself directly with the Khaliphate. Hence the public reception of Aziz with Muhammad kneeling before him. But then Muhammad is not taken in. He knows that the visitor is a fraud. But he fraud is useful to him.

In Daulatabad people are dying of starvation, when not killed by the soldiers. Aazam tries to escape by the underground route with a part of the loot, but is himself looted, and then murdered. Muhammad shrewdly guesses what has happened, and confronts Aziz with his fraud. Then ensues a dramatic encounter between the intelligent, imaginative and ruthless Sultan and the equally intelligent but diplomatic rogue, Aziz. The dhobi is able to tell Muhammad how every move in his career has been inspired by one policy or other, of the Sultan. When Muhammad finally bursts out that he will not tolerate a dhobi masquerading as a saint, Aziz quips that a dhobi can wash much better than a saint. Muhammad rocks with laughter, on hearing this tit-for-tat. Not only does he forgive the scoundrel but appoints him as an officer under Khusrau in the Deccan. Thus literally the rogue following a policy parallel to that of Tughlaq becomes one of his prominent deputies. .

6. What is the role played by the Abbasid Khalif?

Tughlaq has drunk deep of Greek and Eastern lore and so finds the limitations of the Koran and the dogmas of the Sayyids, Sheiks and Ulema very constricting. He hungers for pastures new. But to go against the tenets of Islam would be committing political suicide. In spite of his visionary fervor, Muhammad is determined to be a practical success. So he has the brainwave to short-circuit local theology by getting connected nominally to the Khaliphate, which is acknowledged, at least formally, as the source of all Islamic sanctions. The Khaliphate itself is in shambles and there are countless persons claiming to be descendants of the Khalif.

Muhammad picks up one of the scion who is down and out in Baghdad. He writes to this Ghiyas-ud-din Muhammad to come to his capital to make it sacred. He sends him also a signet ring for ready recognition. Communication being very slow, it takes months before the Sultan receives a reply from Ghiyas-ud-din accepting the invitation. But by now it has been decided to shift the capital to Daulatabad. Mjhamud is glad that a visit of the descendant of the Khalif to Daulatabad would give it a high religious standing among the people and would be a damper on the priests who are opposing him on religious grounds.

While this is the political aspect of the visit of the Abbasid to the capital, Muhammad is also moved by another urge. He finds that though he is called Sultan and wears the royal robes, he is unable to get the corresponding response from his nobles. Unless the nobles, the priests and the common men co-operate with him in his bold and novel endeavors, he cannot hope to succeed. But how to bend these miscellany of men to his ideas? He feels that formally he must base his actions on history and tradition. That is why the blessings of the Abbasid Khalif will, in the people's eyes, add power to his elbow. He is really in need of this reinforcing of authority.

What actually happens is a comic tragedy. Ghiyas-ud-din comes all the way to India full of hope about the good fortune that has smiled on his poverty. He travels the long way feeling that it is all too good to be true. He is self-protected in one respect. He has no money with him and therefore need not be afraid of any robbery or assault on the way. Thus it is that he comes to the jungle *en route* to Dailatabad. But fate is waiting for him in a hide-out in the form of Aziz and Aazam. In routine manner he is seized by the minions of Aziz and produced before him. Aziz is taken a little aback when he finds that his assistants have brought to him a beggar instead of one of the rich migrants. Ghiyas-ud-din threatens them with all manner of punishments. He bids them wait till the Sultan comes to hear of this outrage. To Aziz's enquiry he reveals that he is the descendant of Khalif the Abbasid, and the Guest of Honour of the Sultan.

Aziz and Aazam, promptly prostrate; before him and ask his forgiveness. But when Aziz learns that their captive is a total stranger in this part of the world and that he has not seen the Sultan, Aziz offers to accompany him as bodyguard upto Daulatibad. He paints a lurid picture of the Sultan's cruelty and the suffering in store on the way to the capital. Ghiyas-ud-din shows him the signet ring which will protect him from all dangers. Aziz is overjoyed that the Sultan's guest of honour has fallen into his hands. His crooked mind had envisaged the possibility of some clever beggar pretending to be the Abbasid in order to claim the fortune. But now he is convinced that the man before him is the real article. So he laughs diabolically and tells him that in five minutes there won't be any necessity for him to make the rest of the harduous journey to D-iuLuabad. Aziz himself will be going there as the Abbasid. Aazam tries to restrain his companion, but Aziz who will never miss a God-given opportunity asks Aazarri to get out. Ghiyas-ud-din falls at the feet of Aziz and promises to surrender to him the ring and the letters if only his life is spared. Aziz is unbending. Ghiyas-ud-din, having gained some cunning through the roughness of the life he has led, manages to divert Aziz's attention. In a flash he gives Aziz a pull and runs out. But Aziz shouts to Aazam who is outside. Aazam instinctively stabs the running

Ghiyas-ud-din to death. He" regrets the unnecessary murder tna A/iz calls him stupid. A/i/ puts on the robes of Ghiyas-iul-din, wears the signet ring on his finger and executes a dance in which Aazam cannot help joining.

Aziz, in the guise of the Abbasid, and Aazam as his assistant, arc given a State reception at Daulatabad. Muhammad gives them a warm welcome and dramatically falls at the Abbasid's feet. For the last five years prayers have been banned in the kingdom. Now they an- to be revived in the august presence of the Abbasid. But the people want not prayers but bread and housing. Riots begin. And Dauktabad becomes a city of blood and corpses. Aziz considers it safer to be in the security of the palace. But Aazam arranges with two servants to escape with his share of the loot through the underground. He is relieved of his treasure and murdered. When the news reaches Muhammad, he is confirmed in his suspicion that Aziz is an impostor. He confronts Aziz who confesses his imposture but cleverly argues that he has only been following the Sultan's own enlightened policies. Muhammad is tickled by the humor of the situation. He not only pardons Aziz but appoints him as an officer in the Deccan under Khusrau. Of course, the pseudo-Abbasid formally leads the first public prayer and then disappears, ostensibly on the way back to Baghdad. This induces in Muhammad a searching enquiry into his own ideas in relation to the theme of prayer:

Thus the visit of the Abbasid has a key-role in the drama. It highlights Muhammad's tortured religious sense, his political shrewdness, and his ability to press the most unexpected situations to his own advantage. At the same time we see that the less .sensitive can make a mockery of the whole affair and line their own pockets.

8. Trace the relation between Mohammad and the step mother.

The step-mother, whose name is not given but who is evidently a second wife of Muhammad's father, Ghiyas-ud-din, is very fond of Muhammad. Indeed, she is the only woman in the play and not even Muhammad's mother comes on the stage. We learn from Muhammad himself that Muhammad's mother believes that her son was responsible for the death of both her husband and their younger son. May be therefore she is keeping aloof from the Sultan. But the step-mother, curiously enough, forgives Muhammad and cares for his comforts, material and mental, as if he were her own son.

We first meet her in the second scene when Muhammad is crowing over with pleasure at having solved a difficult chess problem. She suggests that he communicate his triumph to Ain-ul-Mulk, his childhood companion. But Muhammad surprises her by revealing that Ain-ul-Mulk

is marching against him.. She is further surprised when he says that he does not want, sleep at all—not because of worry about Ain-ul-Mulk but because, though so many 'glorious ideas are seething in his mind, he is unable to get a root among the people for whom he is working. That is also the reason why he does not want to get married and I raise a family. The step-mother calls him a pompous ass no waste his time over imaginary things and not deal with the reality. Muhammad points out that he is unlike other asking who died senile in their youth or got murdered. The word 'murder' shocks the step-mother as it reminds her of the so-called accident in the pavilion. Muhammad calmly says that while his mother the Amirs and the others in the court, all consider him a murderer, he does not expect his step-mother to believe in the gossip. The step-mother flares up and avoiding the question Muhammad has raised, asks him not to call her by the name 'stepmother'. Evidently she expects to be called 'mother'. Muhammad derives a vicious pleasure in repeating the word 'step-mother'.

When Muhammad marches away with his army to confront Ain-ul-Mulk, he leaves Barani as the step-mother's companion and Shihab-ud-din as the *de facto* manager of State affairs. The step-mother likes Barani and requests him not to desert Muhammad under any circumstance. She is convinced that Najib is a bad influence on the Sultan and half-reveals to Barani that one day Najib will have to pay heavily for his high-handedness.

The step-mother comes to like Shihab-ud-din also and congratulates him on the good work he has done in Muhammad's absence. But she is put out when Muhammad, on his return from the victorious campaign, first calls on Najib and not her. She is shocked on hearing about the death of Sheik Imam-ud-din. Of course, she does not know the reality behind the Sheik's death. She gets another shock when Muhammad informs her how he not only forgave Ain-ul-Mulk but restored him to the governorship of Avadh just because Ain-ul-Mulk was able to point out a flaw in Muhammad's solution of the chess problem. But anyway there is little that she can do in matters political.

We next meet the step-mother in the tenth scene. In the Daulatabad palace the step-mother is pointing out to Muhammad the debacle of the token copper currency. Cart-loads of counterfeit coins are pouring in and Muhammad insists on redeeming those coins by exchanging them for silver dinars. When she asks him what he is going to do with all the copper bits, he replies he will heap them in the rose garden. She points out that it is a garden which he has raised with great tenderness. Muhammad retorts that it was the symbolic garden. But now there is no need for a symbol of a funeral. The step-mother asks him why he does not stop the funeral. Why all this killing? Why should the Amirs be man-hunted? Muhammad grimly, replies that he is out to find who killed Najib. The stepmother

rejoins that she is glad Najib is dead and her son free from his bad influence. Muhammad replies that he must know who killed the man most loyal to the throne.

Then the step-mother declares that it was she who had him murdered. Muhammad does not know whether she is joking or not. When she decries Najib as the master-cook in the kitchen of death, Muhammad reveals that of late Najib has been advising him against violence. But ever since stabbing Shihab-ud-din to death Muhammad cannot refrain from using the sword to get his things done. The step-mother retorts that she too has used the weapon of killing to put things straight.

Muhammad is as a man possessed. He is, not yet sure if actually his step-mother conspired in the killing of Najib, but anyway she wanted him out of the way which means she felt Najib was an usurper of Muhammad's love which should have flowed in her direction. Muhammad senses this and refuses to be enslaved by a woman's will, however fond she may be of him. He tells her point-blank that she will have to pay the price for her deed and can no! foolishly expect him to excuse her. He condemns her to be stoned to death publicly which is the punishment in the Islamic code for an adulteress. She has betrayed him and so is worse than an adulteress.

Love turns in Muhammad's eccentric brain into unqualified hatred. And he lives to regret his deed because the charge he puts on her is one for which he himself has to answer.

8 What is the role of Najib as Muhammad's principal adviser?

Muhammad Najib plays a decisive role in the fate-laden career of Tughlaq. He is a Hindu turned Muslim. He tells Barani that he gave up Hinduism because Hinduism talks only of the individual soul and not of the suffering world. He thought Islam is concerned more about the world and seeks to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to earth. So, with the zeal of a new convert he pursues the Islamic code with determination. Tughlaq finds him sharp of wit and far-seeing in his vision. Najib, as Muhammad himself has occasion to tell his step-mother, is more loyal to the throne than to the person of the Sultan. He is cast in the mould of empire-builders who count no price too high for building up the kingdom of their dream.

Despite his change of religion Najib continues to be down-to-earth in the policies he follows. He has no illusions about the nature of people and his techniques are tailor-made to suit the occasion. In this regard he is a corrective to Tughlaq who is carried away by his visionary idealism. For instance when Tughlaq declares that henceforward justice will be handed down impartially and any subject will be free to criticize the Sultan and

voice his grievances openly, Najib dismisses the move as a publicity stunt. He tells Barani that courage, honesty, justice and other such terms do not mean anything in dealing with a political problem. So when Sheikh Imam-ud-din starts trouble in Kanpur and then moves towards Delhi, Najib counsels Muhammad that the Sheikh should be got rid of. He should not be permitted to declare publicly that the Sultan is the murderer of his father and brother at prayer time. But Najib does not want to kill the Sheikh and make him a martyr. Also Ain-ul-Mulk who is marching against Delhi must be crushed, he explains to Muhammad how undiplomatic it was to have ordered the transfer of Ain-ul-Mulk to the Deccan when he had well settled down in Avadh. Najib makes it plain that his is a suspicious mind and his job is to suspect the motives and actions of every-one, including the Sultan. But he will do nothing that will in any way weaken the throne of Delhi. So he puts forward a subtle and devilish suggestion to kill two birds one stroke, The Sheikh very much resembles the Sultan, Let the Sheikh go to Ain-ul-Mulk as Muhammad's ambassador of peace. Muhammad is quick to grasp the adroitness of the suggestion. We know how at Kanauj, the Sheikh is killed, mistaken for the Sultan. This, in turn, leads to a disastrous defeat of Ain-ul-Mulk who is forced to surrender.

Najib, however, does not approve of the Sultan for giving and restoring Ain-ul-Mulk in consideration for his mastery of chess. But he accepts facts for what they are.

Next Najib gets rid of the conspiring Amirs headed by the simple Shihab-ud-din. Through Ratansingh he learns the minutest details of the conspiracy which is smashed at the critical moment. Najib has no scruple to completely efface all traces of the plot by removing Ratansingh and also Hindu guards involved in the episode. Mercy and sentiment are not part of his make-up.

When the Sultan banishes prayers from his kingdom. Najib suggests a valuable amendment. The prayers will be resumed only after the arrival of the Abbasid, which is quite in the distant future. Najib derives an artistic pleasure in admiring the beautiful little paradox.

We are not told how far Najib is one with the Sultan in the two disastrous ventures of shifting the capital to Daulatabad and issuing token copper currency. Most probably he advised Muhammad against both the enterprises but was over-ruled. Being loyal to the throne at all costs, Najib could not oppose the Sultan straightway. But we have it from Tughlaq's own lips that at Daulatabad, Najib constantly suggested to the Sultan to hold back his sword for the stability of the throne. But Muhammad is like a tiger that has tasted human blood and so cannot give up

man-hunting It is Najib who pays for the unrestrained cruelty of the Sultan.

The step-mother has her knife into Najib from the start. She finds in him a powerful rival to her in Muhammad's affection. She considers him her step-son's vile genius. She cannot as much as tolerate the name of Najib. But Muhammad first goes to Najib on his victorious return from the confrontation with Ain-ul-Mulk. The step mother tells Barani that if Najib goes on like this, one day he will find it very hot. Actually, at Daulatabad she arranges for Najib being assassinated. We do not know if she was the prime mover in the assassination, but it is obvious that whoever murdered the Vizier, has had her backing. Muhammad is anxious to find out who the murderer is and suspects that someone very high-placed must be behind the scene. He forces the step-mother to acknowledge that she removed the troublesome Najib. Muhammad sees red and orders her to be stoned to death, publicly. To him this is the least he can do to pay his omages to the man who was the one unshaken pillar of his throne. It is significant that after the death of Najib, Tughlaq's fortunes decline and the cleverly built-up empire disintegrates.

Najib is by no means a lovable person. But he is all intelligence and shrewdness and has a heart that has no scruples in working out the scheme his brain has blue-printed.

9. What is the function of Barani in the drama?

Zia-ud-din Barani is a historical figure to whom we owe much of the historic evidence that has come down to us about the Delhi Sultanate. Born in the village of Baran, the modern Bulandshahr in U.P., Barani was an eye-witness Indian history in the making from the time of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq to that of his successor, Firoz Tughlaq. His *Tarikhi – I – Firoz Shahi* is the History of Delhi from Balban to the sixth year of the reign of Firoz. Barani describes not only the reigns of kings and conquerors but also administrative regulations. He deals with the frequency of Mongol invasions and the expeditions to South India. He had a ringside seat to watch Muhammad's transfer of the Imperial capital to Daulatabad and the introduction of the token copper currency. In the play he is represented as a favourite of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq, his patron. He is presented as an impartial historian giving judicious attention to the merits and defects of historical personages. The play gains its credibility through the delineation of a historian who writes down the annals of the time as they occur.

In the play Barani gets on very well with everyone; Not only is he a favourite of his patron, the Sultan, but the step-mother is also fond of him. Indeed, she gets from him a promise that he will stand by Muhammad under all circumstances. She is glad that Barani is disturbed about the role of Najib

is playing. He is not jealous of Najib and he admires the Vizier's integrity. But he cannot see eye to eye with Najib's policy of ruthless extermination of all those who stand in the way of Tughlaq's progress. He consider! Najib the Sultan's evil genius. Add this draws him closer to the step-mother.

Najib, in his turn, loves to lease the historian. He has no scruple in spying upon Barani's movements and makes Barani admit that he has heard Sheik Imam-ud-din calling the Sultan a disgrace to Islam and the murderer of fatbe.l and brother. Between Muhammad and Najib, with their computer-like-brains which can spin out devilish schemed the poor historian looks a pathetic figure For instance, when Najib mentions that the Sheik resembles the Sultanl Barani is at a loss to know how this affects the two problem Muhammad has to face—the Sheik and Ain-ul-Mulk. No wonder Barani is taken aback when later he learns how Tughlaq engineered the death of the Sheik on the battle front and exploited the occasion to deal a crushing blow on Ain-ul-Mulk. In the play we get the feeling that the academic historian has little insight into the wheels within wheels that work up actual politics.

Barani again Is an eye-witness to the conspiracy of the Amirs to assassinate Tughlak during prayers. He is shocked once more when he finds Muhammad stabbing Shihab-ud-din's dead body repeatedly in a frenzy. He tries to lessen the barbarity of the deed by covering the corpse with a silken cloth. But the man-eater Muhammad snatches away the cloth, saying be wants his people to see the wounds.

At Daulatabad, Barani seeing the sufferings of the people, makes bold to advise his patron to divert his energies from politics to scholarship. He says that with his vast knowledge of philosophy and poetry Muhammad can leave a permanent mark in history, which is not made only in statecraft. In poetic language he tells Muhammad that he belongs to the company of the learned and not to the market of corpses. He advises the Sultan to give up blood-shed and fulfils his earlier faith in God, love and peace. But he finds he is talking to deaf ears.

In the final scene we find Barani wanting to return to his native village as his mother is dead. The Sultan asks him point-blank if his mother was not butchered by one of his soldiers in their routine police action. Barani thanks the Sultan for providing him opportunities to bask in his intelligence and to witness history actually taking shape. But before he can take leave comes the denouement of Aziz. The simple-hearted Barani is shocked by the hypocritical high-handedness of the Muslim dhobi. He blurts out that the rascal should be quartered and drawn and inflicted all manner of punishments. Muhammad bursts out laughing at the ferocity of the historian who on a previous occasion congratulated him on forgiving Ain-ul-Mulk and reinstating him in the governorship of Avadh. Barani is completely nonplussed when the Sultan asks him to record in

his history that he is *not* alone in his madness. He has a companion in the Omnipotent God. Barani excuses himself as a weak man and craves permission to retire. He leaves Muhammad closing his eyes in utter tiredness as the Muezzin calls the faithful to prayer.

By making an actual historical character in the play, Karnad has added a three – dimensional effect to his imaginative and interpretative restructure of history.

10. What makes Tughlaq shift his capital and with what consequences?

One of the ventures of Mubaitnadin-Tughlaq that has immortalized his name in common parlance is his shifting the imperial capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, seven hundred miles away, and after a few years, reversing the decision and retransferring the capital to Delhi. It is as much an interesting study in human psychology as in the vicissitudes of history.

Tughlaq was familiar with Devagiri even when, as crown prince, he was sent by his father to punish Prataparudra II. At that time Muhammad had personally supervised the construction of a formidable fort at Devagiri. Again, during the early years of his reign when Sultan went to the Deccan to suppress the rebellion of Baha – ud – din Gashtasp, he was struck with the strategical importance of the situation of Devagiri and started toying with the idea of making it the capital of his growing empire. Muhammad's sovereignty stretched from the Doab and the plains of the Punjab to the coast of Gujarat in the west and Bengal in the east. In Central India, Malwa, Ujjain, Mahoba and Dhar were under this rule. The Deccan had been subdued and its principal powers had acknowledged the suzerainty of Delhi. Muhammad could see the drawbacks of Delhi as the imperial capital. The Mongols repeatedly threatened Delhi and made life and property insecure. A centrally situated capital such as Devagiri would facilitate further southern conquests and make the capital a safety place. From Devagiri, which he now renamed Daulatabad, almost all the provinces were equidistant. Muhammad was confident of exercising control over the provinces in Hindustan with the aid of the communications which existed between the north, and south. Tughlaq also took into consideration the fact that Daulatabad was predominantly Hindu. Making it the capital would increase his standing among the Hindus. Contrary wise it would lessen the power of the Amirs, Sheiks and Ulema who ruled the roost at Delhi and made things hot for the Sultan. Muhammad thought it one of the missions of his life to be equal handed in his dealings with both Muslims and Hindus. Thus the shift of the capital was not dictated by the mere caprice of a whimsical despot.

But the plans of mice and men go away. The Sultan did not budget for all the contingencies. The change might have been effected fairly smoothly had he remained satisfied with the transfer only of the official machinery of the States. Indeed, at one point in the play, Muhammad seeks the cooperation of the elite in this operation so that Banlatsbad may be a more beautiful Delhi. But the elite could not see eye to eye with the Sultan and there was very stiff opposition to the proposal. We find the Amirs hatching a conspiracy to do away with the Sultan lest their own power should be reduced. Of course, Muhammad is able to nip the conspiracies in the bud and condemn to death all the conspirators. The reaction of the conspiracy on Muhammad, however, turns tragic. He resolves that since his will and judgement have been challenged, he will force his decree ruthlessly and more extensively than originally planned. He orders all the people of Delhi – men, women, and children – to march en masse to Daulatabad with all their effects. Being scientifically minded, Tughlaq provides all sorts of facilities en route, such as camps, food, clothing, medical assistance as well as pecuniary help. Those who have no money to feed themselves during the journey, are fed at State expense. Barani, who does not approve of this shift, still records that the Sultan was bounteous in his liberality and favours to the emigrants both during their journey and on their arrival. But all these concessions prove of no avail. People, like the old watchman at the Fort, who have lived in Delhi for generations and to whom the city is endeared by numerous associations, leave it with broken hearts. The sufferings attendant upon a trek of seven hundred miles are incalculable. Many of the migrants, tired by the journey and helpless with home sickness, perish on the way. Those who reach the journey's end find exile in a strange, unfamiliar land unbearable and give up the ghost in despair. The play gives a harrowing account of the tribulations suffered by the unfortunate victims of the Sultan's brainwave.

As we are painfully aware, even when a plan is drawn up with good intentions the benefits of it often do not reach the people for whom they are made. Men like Aziz and Aazam exploit the situation and line their own pockets; unmindful of the sufferings they cause to the helpless women and children. Corruption becomes rampant and only money speaks. Literally it is highway robbery.

The play also refers to a bazaar gossip that a search was instituted in Delhi under the Sultan's instruction to find out if any of the inhabitants still lurked in their houses. The truth seems to be that the Sultan's orders are carried out by his minions in a relentless manner. It is not Muhammad's intention to cause needless sufferings to the population. It must be said to his credit that when he sees the failure of his scheme, he orders the inhabitants to go back to Delhi. On the return journey he treats them with generosity and makes full amends for their losses. When he finds that insurrections are taking place in North India and the west, he realises the fatal flaw in his scheme. If South India cannot be ruled from Northern Delhi, North India

also cannot be effectively controlled from the distant south. The play only refers to the Sultan's reversal of his decision and gives no details of the various inducements he provides to the people to reestablish themselves in the deserter capital. But it makes quite a long time before Delhi regains anything of its former glory and prosperity.

Thus Dalatabad remains a monument to misdirected energy.

11. Describe the folly of the token copper currency

Rightly has Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq been called "The Prince of Moneyers". One of the first acts of his reign was to reform the entire system of currency on proper lines and adjust it to correspond to the changed values of gold and silver. But far more daring and original is his attempt to introduce a token copper currency. He draws his inspiration from the paper currency prevalent in China. He argues that after all the value of the currency depends upon the faith of the people in the government. So he is convinced that as the ruler of one of the greatest empires India has seen he is entitled to issue a token currency which people will accept at face value.

It has been said that the motivation for this issue of token currency was the heavy drain on the treasury because of his numerous expeditions and the prodigal generosity with which the Sultan treated all those who found favour with him. Also the transfer of the capital distant Daulatabad entailed a huge expenditure because he had made provision for the food, shelter, medical treatment and other expenses of the people on the move. Apart from this the failure of the taxation policy in the Doab and the famine that stalked most of the fertile part of the kingdom had brought about a substantial fall in the revenue of the State. It was not the case that the Sultan was faced with, bankruptcy, because he saw to it that genuine silver Dinars paid in exchange for all the counterfeit copper coins that poured into the treasury. The Sultan's idea was to conserve gold and silver for his grandiose plans of conquest and administrative reforms. But, above all, it was the originality of the idea and the love of experimentation that drove Muhammad to issue copper coins in the face of opposition from almost everybody.

The results of this innovation are dramatically presented in the play. Forgery is freely practiced by the Hindus and Muslims, and almost every cottage becomes a mini mint. People pay their taxes in the new coin and purchase all sorts of luxury goods. The village headmen, merchants and landowners suppress their gold and silver and clear their liabilities with coins counterfeited by themselves. We find how Aziz and Aazam set up a plant to turn out false coins galore and clear a substantial profit. The result is that the State loses heavily. It is impossible to distinguish between the coins issued by the Royal mint and those produced counterfeit. Thereby the coin

loses its credibility and trade comes to a standstill. Gold and silver become scarce. Merchants refuse to accept the new coins which become as valueless as pebbles or pot-shreds.

It resounds to the credit and integrity of Muhammad that when he sees the debacle of his venture, he keeps his word by allowing the people to exchange copper coins for gold and silver at the treasury. We get a graphic picture of this in the tenth scene where we are told that five hundred cart-loads of counterfeit coins appear at the treasury gate every day. But Muhammad does not send the counterfeit coins to the treasury. Instead, they are all heaped in the rose garden he had planned with poetic fervour. The garden and the currency both have lost their charm for the Sultan. In the 12th scene Aazam describes how the Sultan visits the copper hills in the garden at night and, like one in a trance, digs his fists into the heap, raises his arm and lets the coins flow through his fingers. It is a perfect picture of irredeemable frustration. It is noteworthy that Ibn Batuta who visited Delhi three years later found that there was no trouble about the currency and the people had forgotten about the copper coins that had been completely withdrawn.

Muhammad's is quite an original and brilliant scheme and if it fails the blame is not his. First, to the people at large, copper is copper. However intelligent the Sultan's idea may be, he dashes his head against the rock of conservatism. Secondly, the mint is not a State monopoly and there is no machinery to prevent forgery. In those times numismatics had not sufficiently advanced to make the government issue almost unreplicable coins. It must also be remembered that it was a period in which there was a great scarcity of silver not only in India but also in England and Europe. Even after Muhammad's death very few silver coins were issued until the middle of the 16th century. Muhammad was fully justified in trying the experiment, but the technical know-how for his success was not available to him. It was once more a case of a genius haunted by ill-luck.

12. Trace the role of prayer in the dynamics of the Play *Or* Tughlaq's approach to religion

The religious convictions of Tughlaq offer quite an interesting study. He is a great scholar who has read vastly not only in Islamic history and tradition, but also in the Greek and Oriental approaches to life and the world. Hence his brain is a crucible in which all sorts of new ideas are in the melt and schemes galore issue from his rich imagination. Any thinking man cannot but wonder about the ultimate. Muhammad by no means is an atheist. He believes in a God but not necessarily of the Koranic variety. He finds that many things cannot be explained in terms of the statements in the Koran. So while

he accepts the Koran reverently, he refuses to be bound by it. For him God is a tremendous power which eggs man on to all manner of adventurous experiments. Therefore, he is not amenable to the authorities of the Imams, Sheiks and the Ulema. He finds them using their standing with the common people to play selfish politics. So he deals with them ruthlessly, arresting some, banishing others and arranging for the tall ones like Sheik Imam-ud-din to be killed. He has no scruples in this regard because for him the success of his God-inspired scheme is more important. And anyone standing in the way must be removed.

It is perhaps in this spirit that he connives at the death of his father and the younger brother. When Ghiyas-ud-din return after his victorious campaign in Bengal he is received in a specially erected pavilion at Afghanpur. It is widely rumoured that the pavilion was cleverly engineered to collapse when the parading elephants stepped into them. The common people make cynical jokes about the incident. At the time of the collapse of the pavilion Muhammad was away at his prayers. Therefore nothing could be done to extricate the body of Ghiyas-ud-din and the younger prince, till Muhammad returned from his prayers. That saw to it that the two were dead beyond recall. Muhammad could, of course, defend himself with the plea that he could not interrupt his prayers even if he were informed as soon as the pavilion collapsed. No religious leader could find fault with him on that score. But common sense tells us that God will not relish a prayer that is used as a convenience for perpetrating a tragedy.

Not only common people but Muhammad's mother another and the still fonder step-mother believe in the gossip. Sheik Imam-ud-din openly talks about it in his public sermons. But Muhammad himself does not categorically deny or accept the charge. We have to infer that he is deeply involved in the affair.

Retribution comes when the Amirs who are discontented with—the Sultan and his policies conspire to do away with him. But it is the Hindu Ratansingh who chalks out the devilish scheme of assassinating the Sultan at prayer time. The advantage is that at prayer time a Muslim should not carry any weapon on his person. Actually Muhammad unbuckles his sword and places it on the throne before which he kneels in prayer. But the Amirs continue to keep the hidden daggers and at a sign draw them out and step towards him. But Muhammad, who has already come to know of the details of the plot has kept a score of armed Hindu soldiers behind the curtain. The prohibition of prayer times does not apply to them. They fall upon the Amirs and drag them away to be executed. Muhammad completes his prayer and then only deals with Shihab-ud-din. Prayers should transform the mind and raise it to nobler levels. But what Muhammad does just after his ceremonial prayer is to stab Shihab-ud-din to death with a ferocity that even the soldiers cannot stand.

It is to be noted that the play begins with the people talking about the rigorous manner in which Muhammad has been enforcing prayer in the public. One young man is all praise for Tughlaq as the first Sultan who has made the five time prayer compulsory. But the people, are not much impressed by this enforcement. For most of them, prayer is a mechanical procedure to be got through as quickly as possible. Muhammad too comes to realise that while he repeats the words enjoined by his religion, his heart gives no convincing response to them. Evidently Muhammad thinks about the role of prayer in a man's life deeply. He comes to the conclusion that prayer is only a fraud—a cloak: to cover wicked deeds and evil intentions. So he bans prayer, in his kingdom with the same sternness with which he has been enforcing it till now. It is Najib who introduces an amendment and he proclaims that public prayers are suspended till the arrival of the Abbasid. No one knows when the Khalif's descendant will reach Daulatabad and therefore the amended decree as good as abolishes prayer from the Kingdom.

Muhammad, however, finds that he cannot get out of the urge to pray. After he has sentenced his step – mother to be publicly stoned to death, he instinctively falls on his knees and prays to Allah to have mercy on him. He implores God not to let go his hand. His skin drips blood and he is like a pig rolling in the gory mud. He begs Allah to raise him, clean him and cover with him His Infinite Mercy. He confessed that now he has no one but God.

It is at this juncture that Barani arrives with the news that the Abbasid is coming and the public prayers can be resumed. Muhammad smiles to himself at the tragic irony of it all. He confesses that against his own orders he had been trying to pray and finding that the words mean nothing to him. Anyway, the Abbasid arrives and does lead the congregation in the prayers, but not before the Sultan has discovered the fraud and arranged for Aziz to disappear after the prayers. The public prayer thus becomes a double mockery.

The play ends with the Muezzin calling the faithful to prayer. But Muhammad by that time is an utterly nonplussed individual and appears like a ship that has lost his moorings and is drifting along uncharted waters.

Thus the theme of prayer enters the play at various points from the rise of the curtain to its final drop. But it makes no impact because as depicted in the play it looks a hollow formality not adding to the richness of life in any way.

13. Is Tughlaq a genius or a mad man?

Or

The Personality and character of Tughlaq

On any reckoning Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq is not a small man. He rules over an empire as vast as that of Ashoka before him and Akbar after him. He reigns for twenty-six years at a time when Sultans died or got murdered within a very few years after their coming to the throne. He is known as a great scholar and there is practically no department of knowledge with which he is not familiar and in which he cannot hold his own against any disputant.. His mastery of chess is highlighted by the Ain-ut-Tughlaq incident. He is noted for his generosity and it is said that there was a special department in the treasury to look after his acts of munificence. He is also very much interested in the improvement of agriculture and industries. He is determined to see that justice is dispensed equally to all his subjects irrespective of their religion.

All these are on the positive side. But any historian during his reign has to cognize what appears like Himalayan blunders and unpardonable eccentricities. The shift of the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad seven hundred miles away and the compelling of the whole population of Delhi to migrate to the new capital read more like a fairy tale. We cannot conceive of such an exodus even in our own times when communications and State aid are far superior. In the play we get harrowing tales of the sufferings of the people forced to quit their ancestral homes and take residence in a thoroughly unfamiliar location. The move enables rogues like Aziz to help themselves to huge fortunes. Again, the introduction of the token copper currency paralyzes trade, destroys the faith of the people in the currency and encourages counterfeiting. Only men like Aziz profit thereby. And the Sultan has to make good the losses from his own private wealth.

Another black side of the picture is the cruelty that accompanies most of his actions. People who try to disregard his edicts have to pay with their lives. He imprisons many of the religious leaders like the Sheikh Bad al-Din, He does not hesitate to engineer the death of Sheikh Imam-ud-din. Again, when he finds Shihab-ud-din leading the conspiracy against him he stabs him dead with his own hand and seems to take a ghoulish delight in stabbing the corpse repeatedly. Those who disobey his orders regarding the march to Daulatabad are hunted by his soldiers, beheaded and their dead bodies stuffed with straw and exhibited in the public street. Even to his step-mother, who has extraordinary fondness for him, he behaves in a brutal way. When he discovers that she is directly or indirectly responsible for the death of Najib, he orders her to be stoned to death—a punishment prescribed in the Islamic code for an adulteress. In Daulatabad, when the population revolts, his soldiers have a field day,

butchering whomsoever they came across. In fact, Ibn Bauta describes Muhammad as a man “who above all others is fond of making presents and shedding blood. He punishes little faults like great ones and spares neither the learned nor the religious nor the noble. He tortures and executes men and women without the slightest hesitation. His cruelty seems to have no limits and is revolting even to professional soldiers as on the occasion of the assassination of Shihab-ud-din. Indeed Najib towards the end advises him to hold back his sword for the stability of the throne. But having tasted blood like a tiger he cannot restrain himself. He fashions a new philosophy that words cannot persuade people, only the sword can. He man-hunts the Amirs in order to find out who killed Najib and as a sequel one of the Amirs commits suicide because he knows the real murderer.

When we analyze the play we can see how the element of cruelty develops in Muhammad. In the very first scene we are told of the clever ruse by which he removed his father and younger brother from his path to the throne. It was quite an artistic murder. The next removal of Sheikh Imam is also artistic but not less clever. He takes advantage of the remarkable physical likeness between the Sheikh and himself. The breaking of the conspiracy of the Amirs is also quite dramatic. But the way in which he kills Shihab-ud-din cannot draw our admiration. When he comes to the removal of his step-mother he grows still grosser, and sentencing her to be stoned to death is a far cry from his earlier acts of artistic punishments. Finally, he lets loose violence unrestrained. He tells Barani that the latter mother must have been butchered in the street by his soldiers. He seems to be completely unmoved by the tragedy.

Finally, he confesses that he is growing mad, but acts mad in the way he longed for. Being a visionary he had high hopes of bringing off miracles in administration, empire building, dispensation of justice, patronization of Scholarship, innovation in currency and agriculture, evolution of new principles of taxation and the like. But these visions remain spectral and bring no one any good. On the contrary, for his imaginative whims it is the populace that has to suffer. At the end he goes so far as to say that his madness is akin to God's and when his failures are noted down in history, he must be mentioned as being in God's eternal company. This is madness with a vengeance.

Muhammad certainly does have the makings of a genius, but the elements are fused in him in the wrong combination resulting not in the transmutation of lead into gold but into lead. Genius undergoes an evolution in reverse and the result looks indistinguishable from madness.

14. Analyse Muhammad's failure as ruler and man

Muhammad has been described as one of the grandest failures in history. All his life he battled against difficulties and the odds were against him. He

imagined vastly, aspired highly and ended in utter ruin. He failed but it was a failure with a difference. The fall was great because the climb was high.

It must be noted that in the face of tremendous obstacles Muhammad never abandons his task in despair. Outer circumstances conspire against him, but he never refuses their challenge. His grandiose scheme for improving agriculture collapses because of the severe famine that raged for more than a decade in the most fertile parts of his dominions. His taxation policy is brilliant but counterproductive because it has to be applied in a drought-infested land. His approach to currency reform is equally ingenious but it is far in advance of the times. The man in the street has not been educated in the concept of token currency and the royal mint does not have the technical know-how to prevent counterfeiting. The shift of the capital to Daulatabad was geographically justified. Having conquered part of the Deccan he could proceed further south only with a southern headquarters. It would also save the Imperial capital from the periodical harassment by the Mongols. But in his hurry he has not made North India stable enough to be ruled from the south. He puts his trust in the availability of rapid communication between all key-points in his empire. But in actual practice it does not work because the highways were infested with robbers like Aziz and Aazam. It is noteworthy that the Abbasid takes such a long time to reach anywhere near.

Again he has the insight that religion must not be equated with fanaticism. He declares that his faith in the Koran is not an exclusive but an inclusive approach. He is well-stepped in the wisdom of the Greeks and the prophets of the Orient. He wants to put this wisdom into practice. He plans to have a rose garden at Daulatabad where every rose is to be a poem. And even every thorn is to be a stimulant to higher thoughts. But what actually comes to pass is that no roses bloom but the whole garden is filled with counterfeit coins.

As a General he is superb. The way in which he is able to put down the insurrection of Ain-ul-Mulk having an army of thirty thousand with a force numbering less than six thousand is a feather in any General's cap. But battles are won and not only by the power of arms or cleverness of planning. The reaction of the people is a deciding factor. Muhammad has to face a number of insurrections which finally lead to the disintegration of his empire on two grounds. First, the adverse economic conditions make for great discontent among the people and it is easy for the provincial rulers to hold the government at the centre as the scapegoat and march the people against the capital. Secondly, in his eagerness to be truly liberal in his outlook, he has earned the anger and distrust of his narrow faith subjects. The Ulema and the Sheiks, who in the name of religion used to rule the roost, find their power gone into the hands of the Sultan who does not allow religion to be mixed with politics. It is easy for the dispossessed

religious leaders to work up the mob against what they present as an un-Islamic ruler. Therefore, Muhammad who spent sleepless nights planning the welfare of his people could not carry the people with him. It was a case of loves labour being utterly lost. The waters of genius unfortunately run into the desert sand of dead habit and narrow superstition. Added to this is a major handicap he suffers from A policy, however brilliantly conceived, cannot yield fruits unless the personnel assigned to carry it out have the necessary capacity, understanding and willingness. Muhammad fails for lack of support from his officers, who are more like Aziz who believes in making hay while the sun shines. He repeatedly declares that he has few true friend and it is a great tragedy that even those friends become not available to him finally. Shihab-ud-din, the good friend, turns, like Brutus, into a conspirator. Sheik.Imam-uddin who is really a venerable figure, rouses the mob against him and has to be removed. Ain-ul-Mulk, his companion from boyhood whom he has raised to the governorship of Avadh. marches against him because of a transfer order The step-mother who loves him more than his own mother, destroys his only trusted aide, Najib. Even the academic Barani goes away towards the close of the play on the pretext of having to attend his mother's funeral Thus the Sultan of one of the largest empires that Indian history has seen, stands all alone, almost a mad mart-at the drop of the curtain It is ill-luck with a vengeance.

It must, however, be remembered that as in Greek tragedy, the fall of the hero hinges upon a fatal flaw in his own character. Muhammad is intellectually brilliant. He is clever in strategy and determined in his will. But he is impulsive ,and not amenable to correction. Because he finds his intelligence far superior to that to that of those around him, he thinks there is no point in availing himself of the counsel of others. Najib, as he himself recognizes, is a mature statesman who can think unsentimentally and plan for the stability of the throne. But at many points Muhammad brushes aside Najib's advice and has to pay dearly for that indifference. Muhammad is convinced that his thinking is the only correct one and should be enforced without counting the cost. Najib. no doubt, does suggest a certain amount of violence in dealing with political hostiles, but, the mass killings that Muhammad lets loose are not approved by Najib. Muhammad himself says that after killing Shihab-ud-din he is like a tiger that has tasted human blood. He switches his faith from the persuasive power of words to the annihilating power of the sword. The result is that starting as an adorer of God and a lover of men, Tughlaq ends as a miserable atheist and a hater of men. At the fall of the last curtain we find him disgusted both with the outer world and the inner. He has no moorings either external or internal. Tughlaq is a meteor that flashes across the sky for a while astounding the world by its brilliance, but disintegrating into nothingness and producing untold misery to others in that process.

15. How far do you think is the play a commentary on contemporary Indian History?

Girish Karnad uses mythical and historical episodes to highlight problems which confront the modern Indian at various levels. In his first play, *Yayati*, which is a story borrowed from the 'Bhagavatba', he discusses the theme of responsibility. In *Tughlaq*, which came three years later, he has taken a chapter from the Muslim period of Medieval Indian history and drawn striking parallels between what happened more than six centuries back and what is happening in contemporary India.

In one of his articles Karnad himself has admitted that the twenty years of Muhammad's rule are in many respects similar to the seventeen years of the Nehru era. Tughlaq, both in history and in the drama, enters the¹ stage as one of the most intelligent monarchs who sat on the throne of Delhi. He was an idealist and a visionary who planned much and planned boldly. But most of his plans came to an ignominious end and the failure was as terrific as the projection of the adventure was grand. We can see in the play how an extremely capable man disintegrates before our very eyes. Tughlaq's idealism is handicapped by the flaws in his own character. We find him impulsive, impatient, insensitive to cruelty and violence and always cocksure that to all the problems confronting the State and the society he alone has the correct answer.

After India gained her political freedom without the firing of a single shot, thanks to the Satyagraha technique of Mahatma Gandhi, hopes rose very high both in the country and abroad that India was all set for a glorious epoch of progress and power. Nehru's idealism of a 'One World' with each sovereign Nation willingly co-operating in the cause of universal peace, appealed strongly to every section of mankind in a war-weary world. Nehru championed the cause of the politically subject peoples both in Asia and Africa. He came to be looked upon as the political conscience of the world. Wherever he spoke, at home or abroad, he did not miss the opportunity to underline the need for an international outlook on the part of politicians and citizens. He put India very prominently on the political map of the world. His plea for intelligent and sensitive co-operation between the haves and the have-nots roused sympathetic responses in every part of the earth. This is echoed by Tughlaq who pleads for equi-handed justice towards all his subjects whatever be the religion to which they belong. The play opens with a poor Brahmin filing a suit against the Sultan for a transgression of his officers who have illegally appropriated the man's property. The Sultan accepts unconditionally the verdict of the Chief Justice. He not only pays five hundred silver dinars as compensation to the complainant but also provides him with a government job so that he may live in fair measure of security for the rest of his days. But in practice the measure does not succeed. His Muslim subjects resent the Sultan's policy as disloyalty to Islam. It is only rogues like Aziz who exploit the situation.

The internationalism of Nehru provoked strong opposition from many of the political and religious parties in India. There was a hard-core feeling that the welfare of India was being sacrificed at the altar of Internationalism. Though the outside world accepted Nehru as the voice of India, within the country itself he did not get the willing co-operation he had budgeted for. We find in the play Tughlaq shaking himself free from the shackles of the Koran, the Ulema and the Sheiks and dreaming in the light shed by the Greek philosophers and Oriental mystics, this rouses the ire of the leaders of Islamic religion. The tirade of Sheik Imam-ud-din and the conspiracy headed by Shihab-ud-din are pointers to the disaffection and mistrust treated by the Sultan's policy and ideals. The Sultan dramatically goes down on his knees before the assembled nobles and passionately pleads for their co-operation, even if they find his ideas difficult to understand. Nehru, the intellectual and dreamer, was also in a similar position – pathetically unable to have his ideas accepted whole – heartedly by the other political and religious parties.

The opposition only makes Tughlaq much more adamant in the course he has chalked out for himself and the people. Despite the almost universal protest he insists on the shift of the capital to Daulatabad, seven hundred miles away. Equally obdurate is he on the issue of a token currency of copper. Nehru's industrial policy at the cost of agricultural development bears a striking resemblance to Tughlaq's fatal schemes. Because the agricultural front has not developed on sound lines there was continued food shortage in India during most of the Nehru period. This necessitated the lease-lend arrangement with the US., known as P L. 480. Naturally strings were attached to the American offer and much tight-rope walking 'became necessary not to fall into the clutches of American Imperialism. Contrariwise, Nehru's India had to lean more towards Moscow, thereby accentuating rather than toning down the friction between the two power blocks. This, in turn, provided a handle for the detractors of the Nehru regime. Daulatabad and the copper coinage sealed Muhammad's fate. Kashmir and the Pakistan War were legacies of Nehru's internationalism which in practice often meant vacillation in foreign policy.

The insurrection of the trusted Am-ul-Mulk in Tughlaq's case is on a par with the attack by the trusted China on India. Even as the Ain-ul-Mulk problem is not satisfactorily solved in the play, the Chinese problem also hangs as the Sword of Damocles on India's foreign policy.

Tughlaq was able to fashion an Empire which rivalled in vastness the Ashokan Empire. Similarly, Nehru was able to project India on the world map to an extent no ruler of this land has been able to do before in history. But towards the end of the play we find the empire of Tughlaq disintegrating. Similarly, the reorganization of the States on the linguistic basis instead of integrating the nation has only fostered fissiparous tendencies. The full effect of the wrong-headed policy is being felt only today when we

find the sense of Indianness has practically disappeared and only linguistic labels stick. Tughlaq, like Alexander, dreamt of a united nation under his sovereignty. But he had to witness the formation of a number of independent kingdoms out of his empire even in his own lifetime. Nehru too died broken-hearted that the unity for which he strove all his life eluded his grasp finally. This is all the more tragic because his mentor, Gandhiji, had been able, by methods not exactly congenial to Nehru's outlook, to weld subject India into a united political force. Nehru, despite all his far-sightedness and idealistic aspiration, could not raise the magnificent edifice of his dreams on the splendid foundation laid by his political Guru.

A major reason for Tughlaq's failure was that he was a lone wolf. He was not amenable to advice. He planned as his uncontrolled intellect prompted him and insisted that his will was law. Nehru also was, as the biographers have pointed out, a lonely man taking no one into his confidence. Neither Tughlaq nor Nehru believed in joint planning and joint responsibility. Each ploughed a lonely furrow and the result was disastrous to the nation—disaster that could have been avoided if, as in modern science, the team 'spirit' had been put into practice.

It is but fair to state that the resemblance between the Tughlaq regime and the Nehru era is not on all ours. In Medieval India the king was necessarily a dictator invested with absolute powers. Nehru, as Prime Minister of a democratic country, had to abide by the decisions of Parliament. Tughlaq was at an advantage in the sense that theoretically he could be a law unto himself. But Nehru had to compromise in his plans if Parliament were to approve them. In that sense Nehru was more handicapped than Tughlaq. This was both a blessing and a curse. At every stage Nehru's impulsive schemes got checked. Good plans, were thus delayed or even scrapped. But also bad plans got discarded in the face of strong opposition. Therefore, Nehru's discomfiture was not as sleep as Muhammad's disintegration.

Aasam : A professional thief, friend of and assistant to Aziz. He helps Aziz in counterfeiting coins and arranging highway robberies and finally acts as personal assistant to the impostor Abbasid. He gets murdered by the servants with whose help the plans to escape with his loot from the Daultabad fort.

Abbasid : One who claims to be a descendant of the Khalif. In the play an obscure Ghiyas – ud – din plays this role. He gets murdered by Aazam.

Amir : A political chieftain in Muslim India.

Ain – ul – Mulk : Companion of Tughlaq from childhood, trusted Governor of Avadh, but piqued by his transfer to the Deccan, he marches against Delhi and is defeated at Kanauj. Because of his mastery of chess, he is reinstated by Muhammad as Governor of Avadh.

Aziz : A Muslim dhobi who poses as the Brahmin Vishnu Prasad and gets a government job. Assisted by Aazam he receives a government subsidy for a unfertile land in the Doab, makes a pile by counterfeiting currency indulges in highway robbery, and finally poses as the Abbasid. Claims to be following the public policies of Tughlaq in his private life. The Sultan rewards his sense of humour by appointing him as an officer under the Governor of the Deccan.

Barani : Historian hailing from the village of Baran in Avadh. He gets an opportunity to witnessing from the front seat the history of the times. Gets on well with both Tughlaq and his step – mother, but dislikes the cunning and cruel Najib. He leaves Muhammad’s services when his mother at the villages gets butchered by the Sultan’s soldiers. He is a historical figure and to him we owe much of our information of the Sultanate.

Ghiyas – ud – din : See Abbasid.

Imam – ud – din : Shiek Imad – ud – din is a Muslim scholar and religious leader held in great respect by the people. He preaches against the Sultan’s disloyalty to Islam. Muhammad exploits the physical resemblance between himself and the Sheik to get the latter killed by Ain – ul – Mulk’s soldier’s Kanauj.

Kazi – i – Munmalik : The Chief Justice of Delhi.

Khusrau : Governor of the Deccan.

Muezzin : Who calls the faithful to prayers.

Muhammad – bin – Tughlaq : The hero of the play; a genius verging on madness. He has become a by – word for vacillation.

Najib : Muhammad Najib, the Vizier or Chief Minister of Tughlaq. He is a convert to Islam from Hinduism. Extremely clever, he master – minds Tughlaq’s political plans. He is a pragmatist, uninfluenced by idealism. The step mother gets him murdered.

Ratansingh : Sardar Ratansingh, a Hindu General, who is the adopted brother of Shihab – ud – din. He prompts Shihab – ud – din and the Amirs to assassinate Tughlaq while at prayer, but betrays the conspiracy of the Sultan.

Sayyid : A muslim elite claiming descent from the prophet.

Shams – ud – din : Sheik Shams – ud – din Tajuddafirm, an old Shiek of Delhi who is angered by the Sultan’s un Islamic policy. He it is that persuades Shihab – ud – din to enter the conspiracy but he does not approve of the Sultan being assassinated during prayer.

8.5 REFERENCES

Poems are from Contemporary Indian Poetry in English ed.by Peeradina, Macmillan

LESSON- 9

EVAM INDRAJIT-BADAL SIRCAR

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- 9.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
- 9.1 INTRODUCTION
- 9.2 ABOUT THE PLAY
- 9.3 THE SUMMARY OF THE PLAY
- 9.4 LET US SUM UP
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9.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Writing about Badal Sircar's *Evam Indrajit* (literally, 'and Indra-jit') is like going on a sentimental journey; a nostalgic foray into the recent past of the Indian theatre; an encounter with the bitter-sweet memories of a struggling sensibility trying to strike roots in a barren land; because, after all, it is only in relation to Indian theatre history that *Evam Indrajit* really makes its presence felt; otherwise it is just a very good sensitively written play, like many others written in the last decade in India.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The year 1962 is important to India for many reasons. 1962 was a year of great political turmoil. But it was also the year when Dharamvir Bharati's Hindi play *Andha Tug* was performed by Theatre Unit (Bombay). *Andha Tug* was a small beginning but the seeds of creative pride had been sown and a determined effort at looking at one's surroundings was to become an imperative which went beyond the platitudinous slogan of seeking one's roots. This imperative found its first fully conscious expression the same year in Calcutta, where a lean and balding Bengali architect was fulfilling his assignment as an urban designer and also writing a play, later to be recognized as a milestone in the history of modern Indian drama. The play was *Evam Indrajit*, written in Bengali by Badal Sircar.

Immediately after Independence, the concept of a composite Indian culture had taken birth. While on one level it prodded Indian artists to compete with the best in the world and assert their Indian identity, on another level it served to instil in the mind of the artist the almost pitiable craving for a sanction from the West. The measure of omniscience and superiority granted to

the cultural palate of the West was ridiculous and humiliating, but even this humiliation ultimately contributed to the idea of a composite Indian culture.

In the theatre, the Indian People's Theatre Association (the cultural front of the Communist Party of India) had been very active in the pre-Independence era. But some of its political decisions in the late forties led to the disillusionment of many creative talents hitherto associated with the IPTA. With the coming independence, the IPTA lost its hold on many of its stalwarts. One of the major breakways was Sombhu Mitra who was primarily fifties. His production of Tagore's *Raktakarabi* in 1954 and his adaptations of Ibsen's plays shaped the future of the 'minority' theater in India, and Indian theatre of the sixties drew its inspiration directly from Mitra. The fact that he traveled all over the country with his plays helped in shaping the talent of the sixties.

9.2 ABOUT THE PLAY

With the performance of Sircar's *Evam Indrajit* in Bengali in Calcutta in September 1965, theatre practitioners all over India became aware of a major talent a major play. The play provided for them the shock of recognition. It was about the Indian reality as they knew it, it was a theatrically effective and crystallized projection of all the prevalent attitudes, vague feelings and undefined frustrations gnawing at the hearts of the educated urban middle class.

The intellectually alive urban middle class regards itself as the backbone of the country. Their so called middle class values have been glorified and yet their genuine and deeper values have always been attacked by those who swear by fashionable Marxist dogmas. The middle classes have been made to feel guilty for option for stability, aspiring for culture and believing in a national identity. In Bengal, the contradiction was resolved at a certain level with the middle class aligning themselves with the left middle classes were opting for the armed forces or the administrative services. *Evam Indrajit* is in some ways about the residue; the residue consists of those who have failed to adjust, align and ceased to aspire, and also those who are enmeshed in the day to day struggle for survival.

9.3 THE SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

The play starts with the Writer in search of a play. As the furiously tears up his manuscripts, his inspiration appears as a woman whom Sircar calls Manasi – 'the creation of the mind' and perhaps as Indian counterpart of Jung's anima. The writer's dilemma is related to what he considers the limitedness of his experience. He does not know 'people', he has not experienced life at its primitive and basic reality; and he is goaded to write only about those who at the moment are sitting in the auditorium (incidentally, the middle classes in Calcutta and Bombay are known for their addiction to theatre in spite of the inroads it makes into their budget). The writer finds them undramatic (Sircar

hitting at the traditional concept of the dramatic in relation to subject matter). Meanwhile The Mother, eternal and typical, keeps popping in to deliver her homilies. There is a totally bewildered incomprehension on her part of The Writers need to write at the cost of neglecting important human functions like eating and sleeping. Throughout the play we shall find The Mother and Manasi counterpointing each other.

The writers suddenly turns towards the audience and calls out to four latecomers and asks them to come on stage. As the four give their names, The writer does not accept the name of the fourth. The fourth ultimately confesses to having shied away from giving his real name. He is not Nirmal, but Indrajit, (the name fo the mythical rebel Meghnad who defeated Indra, the Indian Zeus). Fear prompted him to practice this minor deception– the fear of the consequence of deviating from the social code (its rules are never defined, but they range from social inhibitism to deep rooted social taboos). From this point in the play The writer takes over like an ubiquitous and omniscient presence, probing the lives of Amal, Vimal, Kamal and Indrajit.

The humdrum existence of Amal, Vimal and Kamal is made theatrically captivating and we laugh at them, sympathize with the monotony of their existence, and then like Indrajit (because everybody in the audience identifies himself with Indrajit), start aspiring for a life harnessed to definite worries and cares because the ‘anguish’ of being aware has become an impossible burden.

The yearnings and dissatisfactions of an adolescent Indrajit or his insistence on an existence beyond geography, are feelings that the educated middle class mind has known often. His love for Manasi, the taboo attached to it (she is his first cousin on the mother side), his wanting to break the taboo and failing to accomplish it, his anger at the state of affairs and his total inability to do anything are again common experiences in India. His failure to fulfil his love makes him see his own existence through the wrong end of the microscope. He finds our mea little world ridiclous because it can be blown up by the flick of a switch, because it is so small when placed against the vastness of the cosmos. Then comes a stage when he realizes that even the fulfillment of his love would not have provided the answer. A visit to London (a onetime Mecca for Indians) proves disappointing. He contemplates suicide as an act of faith, but finds himself incapable of the act.

At this point Sircar suddenly changes ‘scale’ (a feat in which he is very accomplished which he employ as his major technique throughout), with Manasi intruding upon Intrajit’s cogitation to ask him to eat some food – which has been the function of The Mother so long. The writer feels betrayed, and Mansi is shocked at what she has said, and reverts to her original role to ask, ‘Have you written anything yet?’.

The writer insists that Indrajit does not have a core, a commitment,; he is too elusive to be contained within the structural framework of the play, because he denies reality and questions its very base. But Manasi insists that Indrajit is good material because he can still dream, and it does not matter whether his dreams accomplish anything or not. The writer asks her, “But how do you know”? Manasi does not know, she only believes, and that is all she can do.

The writer asks himself : Belief? In What? Belief in pataaal, in the Nether World, in the circle for condemned souls? At this point a bolder shift in scale is effected with the entrance of Indrajit, slightly cynical and married to a giggling wife. She is also introduced as Mansi, because Indrajit has concluded that distinctive individual qualities are a fiction of the mind.

But the real Manasi still there at the same old place. Indrajit still meets her from time to time, but it is no longer the same. For Indrajit finds himself looking at parallel railway tracks on either side with an illusory meeting point : the train does not come on these tracks any more; if it had, it could have provided an opportunity of total surrender and release from human bondage. He does not believe in his dreams any more, for he has now come to the bitter awareness that they were just dreams dreamt by a person who thought that he had the potential but in fact is a very ordinary person – he is Nirmal.

The scenes with the real Manasi, in terms of real time, have taken place in the past. But Sircar’s fondness for Indrajit and what he stands for forces him to indulge in a sleight of hand : and in terms of theatrical presentation Indrajit is taken out of a vivid emotional past (the last scene with the real Manasi) straight into a sort of limbo, a no man’s land in unreal time, for a final confrontation with The Writer.

The writer now asserts his belief in a travel towards no defined goal, knowing for certain that the road is meaningless, the journey futile and irrational. Indrajit is quick to see the sisyphus analogy, and the play ends with an assertion that goes beyond logic and reaches out to us like a cry for help from a drowning man with a sense of the essential and inescapable sadness of life. A political commitment on the part of Indrajit would not have shaped his destiny differently; it would have only dissipated his complexity because Indrajit is the eternal question mark, and he still seeks an answer.

Structurally Sircar anticipates and captures the hybridization of the period; for the complexity of Indrajit’s situation is such that stylistic punctiliousness must give precedence to what needs to be expressed with uncompromising honesty.

When Indrajit unwittingly emerges almost a decade later, as a character in Satyajit Ray’s *Pratidwandi*, then in spite of his real ‘feel’ in cinema, one finds that his wings have been clipped. An Indrajit so totally circumscribed by the realism of cinema never achieves the evocative richness of his original theatrical frame work.

9.4 LET US SUM UP

If the student is through with the material given he/she can answer both the textual or general questions that can be asked on the prescribed texts.

9.5 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

1. Comment on the contribution of Badal Sircar to Indian Drama through *Evam Indrajit* ?

2 . Consider *Evam Indrajit* a Social Satire ?

3 .Comment on the role played by Indrajit by highlighting his adolescent dissatisfactions?

9.6 REFERENCES

Poems are from Contemporary Indian Poetry in English
ed.by Peeradina, Macmillan

UNIT III

PROSE

LESSON- 10

LETTER TO LORD AMHERST ON WESTERN EDUCATION RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY

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10.2 ROY'S PLEA FOR WESTERN EDUCATION

10.3 LET US SUM UP

10.4 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

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10.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The six essays prescribed in unit-III is from the anthology of Indian prose and these selections prove how Indians are capable of using the language in a precise and effective manner. A wide range of styles bring out the complex values which Indian culture and history uphold.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Raja Ram Mohan Roy writes this letter to the honourable William Pitt, satirically praising the present government (the Britishers) and indirectly asking them to introduce Western Education instead of the Sanskrit School which they were intending to start in a short while.

10.2 ROY'S PLEA FOR WESTERN EDUCATION

Roy in this letter makes it very clear to the English government the need for Western education. At the outset he points out the difficulty for the Britisher to understand the native people of India because of the language barrier. He was laudable for proposing an enlightening idea of the establishment of a new Sanskrit School at Calcutta to improve the natives of India through education. He portrays the stagnant situation and the difficulties of the students who strive hard to master this difficult language, which is of least help to them. He expresses his realistic hope of having European

Gentlemen of talents and education to instruct the native people with Arithmetic, Science, Philosophy and Anatomy.

Roy explains the difficulty in the perfect acquisition of Sanskrit language, for instance Khad - eat, Khaduti he or she eats; he asks whether taken as a whole the word would convey *he, she* or *it eats*. For these reasons he wanted the British Government to make use of the money set apart for the betterment of the Natives of India in a more effective and meaningful manner. He cites an example of a student of the Natya Shastra who has not improved his mind after learning Sanskrit, in the scientific realm.

Thus Roy humbly puts forth his view to recommend European Educational System instead of the new Sanskrit School that is already in existence.

10.3 LET US SUM UP

we have learn advantages of European Educational system through the letter of Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

10.4 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

Discuss Rammohan Roy's arguments in favour of the establishment of English schools.

10.5 REFERENCES

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Nehru

LESSON – 11

THE SECRET OF WORK

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11.1 INTRODUCTION

11.2 VIVEKANANDA'S VIEWS ON NON-ATTACHMENT AND
WORK

11.3 LET US SUM UP

11.4 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

11.5 REFERENCES

11.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This essay was written by Vivekananda who was the disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He was a great philosopher represented India in the parliament of religions in Chicago. Studying his writings will help the Indian student to understand the Indian heritage in a better manner.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda is one of the greatest seers of modern India who symbolizes a rare blend of spiritualism and pragmatism. This essay, the secret of work, discusses a work – ethic derived from the concept of karma yoga and that of non-attachment to work which is the secret that is referred to in its title. Therefore students will be benefited by reading this essay

11.2 VIVEKANANDA'S VIEWS ON NON-ATTACHMENT AND WORK

Vivekananda says that to help a man is great but indeed greater is the man who helps others who are in dire stress. A man's miseries disappear when we help him. But he will be the happiest if all his needs are removed forever. Spiritual knowledge alone is strong enough to remove all the miseries of a man. Out of the three helps that can be rendered to man – spiritual, intellectual and physical, spiritual help is wholesome for it removes man's miseries forever. A man's physical needs cannot be fulfilled until he is spiritually strong. After spiritual knowledge, intellectual knowledge follows. Intellectual help comes next to spiritual help and it is higher than that of giving life to a person because knowledge constitutes the real life of a man. Vivekananda equates ignorance to death and knowledge to life. Ignorance and misery leads a man's life into darkness and makes the life worthless. Physical help comes next to intellectual help and it is not the only help possible in this world. It is the last and least help

of all for it cannot bring permanent satisfaction to a man. Physical need of a person always comes back- like hunger. Therefore a person's misery can cease only if he is satisfied beyond his wants. So the help which makes a person strong spiritually is the highest and next comes intellectual help and then the physical help.

Ignorance is the mother of all the evils on the earth. It can be conquered only by a spiritually strong mind. Unless there is a change in the temperament of a man any amount of charity is of no value to mankind. Bhagavd Gita, the Holy book of the Hindus exhorts mankind to work continuously. Everything in the world has both good and evil. Good actions give good results and bad action gives bad results. Both bond the soul. The Gita gives a solution to the bondage of soul. It says that we should not attach ourselves to the work we do. If so the binding of our soul won't be there. Swamiji explains how to attain this non-attachment to work.

Vivekananda uses the takes the example of the simple pond to explain the mind. Like ripples, the thought in the mind does not die completely. It leaves a mark in the mind and resurfaces again. It is called samskara. All the work we do, actions, thoughts everything leaves a mark. They work subconsciously. They decide our mind. Our past life and actions decide our present life. If a child hears good words and grows in good surroundings the good impressions stay in the mind of the child. The resultant character is good and even though he wants to do evil he cannot do evil for his character is already established. Likewise if a child is brought up in bad surrounding hearing bad words, doing bad actions and thoughts then the character is established as bad. Swamiji compares the character of a person to that of a tortoise. Only the character controls a person. If the character is established it won't change easily.

Freeing the soul in the goal of yoga. In order to reach the height of Buddha and Christ man must work continuously. He must free himself from both good and bad. Vivekananda uses an example to explain this. We use a thorn to remove another thorn in our finger. After removing we discard both the thorns. Like wise, we must counteract the bad impressions with good ones. After conquering the bad with good we have to disregard both. We must work continuously but the action or the thought must not bind us to the mind. It also must not affect the soul.

Even though we meet many people only a few faces remain in our minds. Other fade. Though our eyes register everyone in the same way the one face that impresses alone remains in our mind. Perhaps we might have pictured him in our mind, and after a glimpse of that person the impressions in our mind will be kindled. It creates a great effect upon our mind; we have to work continuously and must not bind ourselves to anything. We are 'sojourners' on this earth. As Sankhya says that the nature is for the soul and not the soul for

nature. Man must learn from it as he learns from a book. Nature helps the soul to educate itself, to have knowledge through which it frees itself. This will enable the human beings to be detached from nature. People must learn to be detached from it. If not it will bind us and we will become a slave to it and the result will be misery.

People must love to work and also be free to work. Man must work like the master and not like a slave. Slavery never brings love in a person. But man generally works like a slave which results in bondage and that leads to misery. It is all selfish work. So man must work through love and freedom. Love, he says, never comes until there is freedom. There is no true love possible in the slave. If we buy a slave and tie him down in chains and make him work like a drudge, but there will be no love in him. So if we work like slaves for the worldly things then there will be no love left in us. Our work too won't be true work even if we work for ourselves or for our friends and relatives. Every act of love brings happiness. Real existence, real knowledge and real love are connected with one another. They are related to each other and if one of them is present the others follow it. True love can never cause pain to the lover as well as the beloved. He quotes a man and wife as an example to elucidate his views. Suppose a man loves his wife he expects his woman to be a slave to him. He too is a slave to her. That is morbid love and it causes pain if she does not do what he wants. True love brings only happiness and if it brings pain then it is not true love. If your love is true it does not bring pain or jealousy or selfish feelings.

Lord Krishna in his discourse says that he does not gain anything from the whole universe. He loves it. Since his love is not expecting anything he is unattached. Real love makes us unattached. If there is an attachment it brings pain. It takes one's life time to reach this un-attachment. It is the goal of love and freedom.

Parents do a lot of things for their children. They do not expect anything in return. Therefore when we expect something in return attachment comes in and problems follow. The thought of obtaining return ends in misery because it will hinder our spiritual progress. Just as god is incessantly working without attachment we should also be unattached.

The idea of complete self-sacrifice is illustrated by a story a mongoose had told about what is real sacrifice. A poor family in the midst of a famine gave all their meagre portions of food to a stranger and finally died of starvation. When the mongoose who happened to go to that house rolled on the few granules half of his body turned gold. But the other part remains the same because he has not come across such a sacrifice.

So just doing some charity out of one's abundance as the Pandavas did once is not real sacrifice. True charity is to help others even at the point of

death. The karma Yoga concept is that the true life of work is indeed the true life of renunciation which is hard.

11.3 LET US SUM UP

Through this lesson the Indian Heritage as depicted in the work. “The Secret of Work” written by Swami Vivekanantha.

11.4 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

1. What is the importance of spiritual knowledge?
2. Describe the story told by the mongoose to illustrate self sacrifice -

11.5 REFERENCES

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Lesson – 12

HOME RULE

BAL GANGADHAR TILAK

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- 12.6 TILAK'S CHALLENGE TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT
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12.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Tilak was a powerful and great thinker. He came as a symbol of radical youth in the midst of the freedom struggle. Swadeshi and Swarajya were the rights of Indians he claimed. His speech inspires us even to-day that is why his essay is prescribed.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Widely acclaimed as 'the father of Indian unrest' was born on 23 July 1856 at Ratnagiri. Tilak was a brilliant student and was known even in his childhood for his fierce self-respect, regard for truth and his intense reaction to injustice.

After completing his education Tilak spurned government service and decided to devote himself to the larger cause of national awakening.

12.2 TILAK AS A REFORMER

Tilak was a conservative so far as the question of social reforms was concerned. Tilak's uniqueness lies in the fact that at a time when British imperialism was at its Zenith, he aroused a desperate people to demand Swarajya as a matter of right.

Tilak used the partition of Bengal to create unrest all over India through his speeches and writings. He spent six years in jail and emerged to launch the home rule agitation for obtaining autonomy with the empire in 1916. Tilak carried the message of home rule to the farthest corners of the country. It was because of the untiring efforts of Tilak that the home rule movement spread and forced government to come out with the declaration that the goal of British policy was the realization of responsible government in India.

12.3 THE NEED FOR INDIA TO AWAKEN AGAINST THE BRITISH RULE

Tilak begins his essay, saying that the rule of the white official class in India is becoming more and more unbearable to the people. He brings out the idea of thoughtful men in India that the authority of white officials must be transferred to the representatives of the subject people. Tilak brings out the various ideas prevalent. Some people think that this can be done only by humbly requesting them or petitioning the government who supervise the white official class. Some think the above idea would be improbable and remind the maxim "the mouth does not open, unless the nose is stopped". Some people wish that a spokesman must mediate to stop the rule of the officials. But the opinion of Home Rule party is that whatever is wanted should be plainly stated and obtained by following the path of passive resistance. This brings out the opinion that the exasperation of the thirty crores of the inhabitants of India must always necessarily remain dormant.

12.4 THE POLITICAL VIEWS DISCUSSED BY TILAK

Tilak, then tries to bring out his views and the views of the people down the years.

12.4.1 THE YEAR 1914 TILAK'S VIEWS MADE CLEAR

Tilak, during the six years of his absence from India, finds that an attempt has been made by the English press in India and in England to interpret his actions and writings and speeches on the subversion of British rule in India. But he tries to take the first public opportunity to prove those nasty and totally unfounded charges against him. He admits that he has his own differences with

the government as regards certain matters. But he feels that it is absurd to take his action and speech as that of an enemy. He declares that enmity has never been his wish and states that people are desiring to make reforms in the system of administration and not the overthrow of the government. He does not hesitate to say that this opposition is not only peculiar to him alone but also to any political progress.

Tilak feels that British rule will bring together not only the civilized methods of administration but also the different communities of India. So that a united nation may grow in course of time. He believes that the liberty – loving British could have conceived and assisted the people in developing a national ideal. He feels that the present crisis is a blessing in disguise that has universally evoked united feelings and sentiments of loyalty to the British throne.

12.4.2 THE YEAR 1916 - INDIANS NOT READY FOR SWARAJ

He admits that no one is seeking to obtain the right by the use of the sword. He feels India can help England. So that England too will acquire a sort of glory, sort of strength and greatness. Tilak says that the bureaucracy considers this to be bad and they feel that Indians are not fit for swaraj. He criticizes this feeling of the British because there has been swaraj in India. Even before this. Tilak tries to give example of many systems of administration like peshwa's regime, Mohammedan regime. He accuses Britishers indirectly and calls sycophants like Nana phadnavis, Malik Amber and Aurangzeb as fools. He feels that they are treating Indians as children. He says that it is good for people to be like children but he asks when are we going to grow up.

Tilak wants people to raise their voices for freedom and right to carry on our own affairs. He says that he does not believe in people who have come over to rule the country as superior in intelligence and learning. He challenges that Indians also can show as much learning, courage and ability as the British. He feels that there are conjunctions in history and in astronomy when the mohammedan rule was declining. The Marathas had risen of late. Afterwards the English having set foot in India, the whole power passed into their possession, power and ability.

He strongly asserts the change of the arrangement of administration. He feels if this continues every man in India will become more and more effeminate. He brings in the idea of some people who say, 'what does it matter if there is slavery?. Do they not give us to eat?. They do not starve any one to death'. But he condemns that even beasts and birds get to eat. To eat is not the aim of man. To feed the family is not the end of man. Even a crow lives and eats offerings. A crow maintains itself. Tilak does not consider it manliness merely to maintain oneself and fill the belly and obey the commands of the administration. Therefore, he wishes to take a portion of this authority and give it to the Indians.

12.4.3 THE YEAR 1917 INDIA NOT FIT FOR SELF GOVERNANCE

Tilak implies that those who imagine that Indians are not capable of governing are using the phrase 'Home Rule', which it self is limited in scope. They say that India is not now fit for self-government. If Indians ask for the reason, they tell that are deficient in education, and there are many castes and quarreling among themselves. Britishers feel that they alone can bring about a balance between rival sections.

Tilak tries to pose many questions like what is 'unfitness?'. Do they mean to say that before the British came here there was no peaceful rule anywhere in India? What was Akbar? Was he a bad ruler? He says no history could say that the empires of Asoka, Guptas, Rajputs had managed their states without any system of administration. He says India was governed peacefully than the German empire and the Italian empire. He asks whether these emperors were unfit to rule the country. He assures that Indians are prepared to show their fitness if opportunities are granted, to them. He asserts that the charge of unfitness comes only from those who hold the monopoly of power. He says that no ancestors would agree with this argument of "incapability" of Indians.

12.5. THILAK'S ARGUMENTS FOR HOME RULE TO BE ACQUIRED THROUGH LESGISLATIVE PROCESS

Tilak says that Indians are only given sub-ordinate posts and without their aid in the subordinate departments it would be impossible for the British people to carry on the administration. He points out that only few posts had been reserved for Indians in civil service and in judicial department. And Tilak says that he has not seen any government saying that Indians are irresponsible and have misused their opportunities. He also points out the resolution has been passed saying that Indians have done their duty very well as members of executive councils. They say that they are well administered. So the whole evidence is in favour of the Indians. The argument of incapability, he says, is an insult. Tilak proposes that Indians have logic and experience and they also must be backed up by persistent agitation and a fixed determination to attain that truth. The home rule is intended for that purpose.

Tilak says that Indians need to tide over this and for that their fight must be constitutional and legal. He says there are two ways of dying; one is constitutional and the other unconstitutional. And if the fight must be constitutional it must be courageous also.

12.6 TILAK'S CHALLENGE TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT

Tilak mentions that the British government must be told courageously and without least fear what we want. He wishes that government to know that the whole nation wants home rule, as defined by the congress. He says that there can be no shaking, or wavering, or shaking. It is said that it is the 'right' of Indians to have home rule and he asserts that 'Indians' cannot be separated from 'Home Rule' as 'heat' cannot be separated from 'fire'. He advises that Indians' ideas must be clear and motives must be honest to assert the right.

12.7 LET US SUM UP

Tilak assures that their efforts are bound to be crowned with success and there is no need for despair. He finally concludes by remembering the proverb, "god helps those who help themselves".

12.8 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

Summarize in your own words Tilak's opinions on foreign rule in India and the need to agitate for Home Rule

12.9 REFERENCES

Dr.Sudhar Pandey, Dr.Shridar, B.Gokale. Vidya S.Netrakanti, ed.Rose Petal Selections from Jawaharlal Nehru (OUP)

LESSON- 13

STUDENTS AND THEIR DUTIES

GOPALA KRISHNA GOKHALE

Contents

- 13.0 OBJECTIVE
- 13.1 INTRODUCTION
- 13.2 LIFE OF STUDENTS
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- 13.4 LESSON END ACTIVITIES
- 13.5 REFERENCES

13.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Gokhale's address is something that every student must read and the benefited to understand the role of a student life and his duties in society.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

The essay, 'students and their duties' is an essay presented by Gokhale as an answer to the address given by the students of Madras who organized an open air public meeting near the Victoria Public Hall on 25th July 1911. Mr.Glyn Barlow, Principal, Pachaiappa's College Chaired the session.

Gokhale tenders his most sincere and grateful thanks to the students of Madras for their invitation to him. The highly appreciative terms and the cordial introductory remarks from the Chairman filled him with happiness and he assures that it would long live in his memory. He asserts that there could not be greater joy than to be in the midst of students again with their glowing enthusiasm, with their generous sentiment, with their happiness and hopeful natures. He again assures that the welcome given by the students had been very special than any other welcome given to him. He, then, takes over the stage to discharge his responsibilities as it rests on him. He acknowledges that giving advice is more easy, but not always easy to act upon.

13.2 LIFE OF STUDENTS

He believes that the subject of the duties and responsibilities of students is one of the most well-worn subjects on which any body could be called upon to speak. Gokhale tries to say something new or striking which could be particularly useful to the students. He permits himself to note the practical aspects of the student life in Madras. He recollects his own student life and tries to propose that student life is one of the happiest days of one's life. He remembers that elderly people used to tell this statement and says during those days he couldn't understand the meaning of it. He funnily puts this statement where the happiness lay exactly in the demand made by teachers or in the succession of examinations or other hardships. He says that during his days, he has been very reluctant to understand this statement, but he now understands the meaning of that observation. He says that the life of a student is a sheltered life.

He says that the responsibilities to students are definite and there is no need to exercise his own judgement. But he assures that later on life will be totally reversed. He says that worries and anxieties come only after the life of a student where the consciousness of the little done and the vast undone would peep out. He kindly reminds them that the student days are the happiest of life. But there are some responsibilities also attached to it.

13.3 GOKHALE'S CATEGORIES OF DUTIES OF STUDENTS

Duty which you owe to yourselves

Duty which you owe to your fellow-students.

Duty which you owe to those in authority over you

Duty which you owe to those who are you, not students, but people of the wider world around you.

He says that the realization of these duties and responsibilities give the students a good account of student days.

13.3.1 DUTY TO YOURSELVES

He regards this duty as two –fold :

- a) Stock of knowledge,
- b) Importance of character

a) STOCK OF KNOWLEDGE

Gokhale says that having a stock of knowledge will suffice not merely for the examination but also helpful in later days. A student must get along with the duties and also acquiring knowledge. He gives a personification to knowledge as an exacting mistress who needs devotion, whole-hearted, on the part of the person who seeks her. Such whole-hearted devotion is possible only in the days of studenthood. Therefore, the first part of the duty to yourselves is to take the utmost advantage of the present position to acquire stock knowledge.

b) IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTER

Gokhale says that the success in life depends not only on knowledge but also on character. It is an invidious thing to distinguish but both are indispensable. He urges the students to take more attachment on the importance of character as to knowledge. This character must show itself in earnestness, in energy of action. The building up of character must raise the whole life of the people amidst whom they move and for whom they are expected to work. It must naturally act upon the stronger, the firmer and the nobler part of the student. He assures that a fairly high character even in school or college life may not always be easy to retain the same character in the struggles of later life. So, building a strong character for himself / herself would place them high in later days.

13.3.2 DUTY TO- FELLOW STUDENTS

Gokhale says that the foundation of the habit of co-operation is really to be laid in the student days. He reminds the students his twenty-five years (own) experience of public life in one quality more than in another, it is aptly in the instinct and habit of co-operation. Many of the leaders wish well to the country, start movements and are keen and anxious to promote these movements. But they pull themselves in separate ways because of the insufficient recognition of the value of true spirit of co-operation. He says that this habit of co-operation can be acquired only during student life and they must make use of the opportunities properly. He says that the habit of co-operation is not easy to acquire in the later-life if not in student days.

13.3.3 DUTY TO PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Gokhale considers this duty into three fold :

Parents and guardians

Reverence to teachers

Authorities under whose rule you have to live

a) Obedience to Parents and Guardians

Obedience to parents and reverence for teachers during the time of studenthood are the two of the most essential conditions necessary for acquiring knowledge. These are the two finest traditions of the East which have been universally recognized. He does not mean to say that the student must slavishly follow the recommendation of parents and teachers when they are able to judge for themselves. He personally feels that this obedience to parents is carried too far from this country. He feels that when once the student completes the education and commences the struggle of life, he owes his duty to himself and to the country. He thinks that youngsters must claim to decide upon their own future after college days. He likes to check that obedience to parents should not be overdone. So, he concludes this part by saying that to start on one's career absolute obedience to parents is necessary.

b) Reverence towards Teachers

In the same way, the students must owe reverence to the teachers while at school or college. He refers to some complaints that he had heard that the present relations between teachers and pupils are largely to do with mercenary (money). He admits the complaint because the large number of students that attend colleges and schools cannot receive personal attention as in the ancient times where the teacher student relationship was different. But Gokhale assures that Guru and Sishya this would not change the fundamental relation between teacher and the pupil. A proper feeling of reverence for the teacher is one of the principle lessons of the school or college life which includes the appreciation of discipline. He reminds the students that along with the habit of co-operation and a true spirit of discipline voluntarily subordinates the judgement, convenience and personal gain to common good.

Gokhale says that there is great dignity in restraint which is voluntarily endured. He says that there is nothing humiliating and the feeling of restraint is one of the attitudes towards one's teacher. This obedience to parents and reverence to teachers are the two duties that one can owe to those who are over in authority.

c. Duty to Government

A student must owe a duty to the rulers, the Government which is the supreme authority. He advises that during students days, it is no part of their work to sit in judgement over the authorities because it does not affect them in any way. He says students with their generous minds and unsophisticated hearts naturally fall an easy prey to stirring up emotions. The student or her can give his judgements only after the studies are over. Obedience to authority is important.

d. Duty to Wider World

The last duty that the students owe is to those who are in the wider world. This helps them to acquire knowledge of their needs, observe their condition, observe their struggle, to acquire an attitude of mind, so as to sympathize with those who are struggling, even though one cannot immediately give them redress. There is a great deal of injustice and when it comes to students' part, they are expected to contribute their share to seek for He asserts that students must be bound to observe and study the condition before they take any active part in any activity.

13.4 LET US SUM UP

Gokhale takes the opportunity to remind the students about their duties and responsibilities as a true leader of the nation. This lesson can be of great use to students even to-day because of its relevance to modern times.

13.5 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

What are Gokhale's ideas on student life and how are they relevant to modern times

13.6 REFERENCES

Dr.Sudhar Pandey, Dr.Shridar, B.Gokale. Vidya S.Netrakanti, ed.Rose Petal Selections from Jawaharlal Nehru (OUP)

Lesson - 14

VIBHISHANA

V.S.SRINIVASA SASTHRI

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- 14.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
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- 14.2 THE CONTROVERSY OF VIBHISHANA
- 14.3 WHO IS A TRAITOR
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14.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This lecture is a model of eloquence and stately prose of V.S.Srinivasa Sasthri, who was one of the greatest parliamentarians, orators and statesmen of India. It is prescribed not only for its beauty of language but also for Indians to be thinking people and not go while prejudices.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

His lecture on Ramayana presents a lucid and learned exposition of the ideals of true patriotism and devotion to dharma through an interpretation of the character and role of Vibhishana in Ramayana who might be mistaken for traitor. Vibhishana is the brother of Ravana. Here Sastri equaled Gokhale to Vibhishana and defended both, for they were mistaken by the fellow Indians.

14.2 THE CONTROVERSY OF VIBHISHANA

The famous Dadabhai Naoroji congress had concluded in the year 1907. The congressmen were relieved for the split in congress was averted at that time. In 1906, Gokhale thought of giving a series of lectures about severing the ties with British which might have negative effects upon the Indians. This was misquoted in the Bengal daily, 'Bande Mataram'. The editorial compared Gokhale to Vibhishana who was a traitor. This hurt Gokhale very much. Sastri had a strong belief that Vibhishana was an example of devotion to Dharama and was sincerely practicing it. He cannot be equaled to a traitor who abandons his kinsmen and motherland. Sastri did not approve the belief of north Indians

who called Vibhishana as traitor and he said that the understanding of Ramayana differed amongst the north and south Indians. He also found that some people in the south too believed so. But Valmiki, who wrote Ramayana held Vibhishana in the highest esteem. So Sastri felt it was his duty to enlighten the Indians about Vibhishana and his motives. According to Sastri, Vibhishana was always right in his deeds.

14.3 WHO IS A TRAITOR

Sastri in his essay explains who is a traitor. He gives a definition of a traitor as “one who betrays his country or his nation to the enemy who has invaded the country and make war upon it...it would apply to any politician or public worker who sets himself deliberately for private profit, or who, for the sake of title or for some such purely worldly considerations, sets himself against the efforts made by patriots for the liberation of their country”. Sastri was not considering the hatred of the politicians of his day. For him politics does not go deep down into the heart of things or into the thoughts of people. It doesn't have any connection with the belief in god. He wonders why politicians are indulging themselves in defaming others in the other parties. Each party has its own political wisdom and political truth in its doctrines. We have to regard these parties as allies in the task of serving the nation. Instead they accuse each other and try to disgrace the other party to the public. The great men in the opposite party are pictured wrongly and Sastri wishes that such a trend should not be there in the minds of youth. He also advises the youth to recognize the great men in the other parties who must be treated as great benefactors of the day.

14.4 ADVICE TO THE YOUTH

He also says that the youth must not narrow down their sympathies and their hearts. He declares that he along with the other older men had suffered in the hands of the young men. For him democracy in the best form of human governance. It must be served by “brave men, true men and first class men”. It is prone to be abused by the people who think that abuse and hatred are the hallmarks of politics.

Sastri doesn't want to be misquoted and he chooses his words carefully to explain about patriotism. According to him, “patriotism is not necessarily a virtue of human character. It is an emotion. It is a high feeling an inclination of the heart of a noble order, of an exalted character”. The benefit or loss depends on how the emotions are directed. An untrained ignorant mother cannot bring up her child properly. Though she brings up her child without caring about her personal health she becomes the source of that child's weakness or wickedness. The love of that mother won't be able to cope with the evil practices. They teach their children to love the noble and the sincere. They also teach their wards how to avoid the degrading situations. So the good for our nation lies

entirely in the hands of the parents. The strongest passion and noblest emotions in the people are used for the upliftment of a country.

14.5 PATRIOTISM

In the earlier times patriotism had different meaning especially where it was largely confined to tribes and communities. It extended from the families to little villages and then it meant a kind feeling, a love of one's kinsmen, a love of people. People belonged to different communities and their welfare was the prime concern for them. Then they migrated to different places and their community concern changed towards the land. Thus the word patriotism emerged as a feeling concerning a country where we are born rather than to a feeling concerning the people to whom we belong. From being communal or tribal it gradually transferred itself to the country where these communities or divisions settled down permanently. We expect our people to call themselves as Indians rather than calling themselves as Bombyites or Bengalis. If they still call themselves region wise we put them down as men with crude ideas. Also, if a man identifies himself with religion and says that India comes next to religion then we regard that man to be unpatriotic or patriotic in a very limited and narrow sense. Sastri calls that the hall-mark of a true patriot, how during his childhood days, would be proud to say that 'I am an Indian first and then a Hindu or Muslim or Sikh'. But the present generation differ and they give importance to their religion first and care least for the nation.

To illustrate the idea let us take the story of Vibishana, the brother of Ravana in Valmiki's Ramayan. Vibishana saw the contrast in the characters of Ravana and Rama. Though his brother had made him so comfortable and important, he understood it was the great Rama who was the ideal man to follow. A man must be able to follow the right choice. One can be good or bad. Here was Vibishana who seems to have what is called world patriotism - the common good. You cannot remain neutral if you have understood the purpose for which mankind has been put on this planet.

Vibishana's critics say that he should not have exposed Lanka and the evil in his own people. But actually he was making a choice. He allowed Dharma to conquer adharma - virtue over wickedness.

Finally Vibishana becoming king over Lanka after the battle is over and Ravana is vanquished was also interpreted as the greed of Vibishana. Sastri says it was not so. The only way to save Lanka which became a bereft state was for Vibishana to become king. This act of his was not a proof of selfishness but a proof of his unselfishness. So as students you should understand that the character of Vibishana not as a traitor to his brother but as a Saviour of Lanka, who by joining forces with Rama, purged Lanka of evil and saved it from foreign domination and took upon himself the rebuilding of Lanka.

14.6 LET US SUM UP

Sastri feels that it is not the narrow nationalism or patriotism full of divisions that we should follow. We should rather think of the nation as a whole and think in terms of internationalism.

14.7 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

What are Srinivasa Sastri's view on patriotism

14.8 REFERENCES

Dr.Sudhar Pandey, Dr.Shridar, B.Gokale. Vidya S.Netrakanti, ed.Rose Petal Selections from Jawaharlal Nehru (OUP)

LESSON - 15

INDIAN CULTURE

SRI AUROBINDO

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- 15.4 AUROBINDO'S DEFENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE
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15.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The essay, 'Indian Culture' presents the culture of India in the view of Sri. Aurobindo. He has written this essay during his sudden shift from the political to the spiritual domain. This essay gives a clear picture of how Indian culture is sufficient to fortify normal human experience.

15.1 INTRODUCTION

Aurobindo had his education in England and he was very westernized. He joined the Civil Service and entered the political activities in 1893. But in 1910 he met Sister Nivedita and became her spiritual son.

15.2 USE OF INDIAN CULTURE

Sri Aurobindo begins the essay with some questions.

- ❖ 'Does the Indian culture have the power to make normal life strong and noble'?
- ❖ 'Has it any practical and dynamic value to make life better and guide it correctly'?

Sri Aurobindo wonders whether Indian culture will give the strength to make an ordinary human being an important and better person. He doubts whether it has any practical use. He says that if it is not of any use to ordinary people, it will not be able to survive any longer in modern times. If it is not of any use it is considered to be a dead culture.

It will become an exotic plant of the Southern Himalayas which can live only in the hot house and die when exposed to the open air. He says.

"It becomes an abnormal Himalayan Hot house splendour...."

" No anti-vital culture can survive"

Culture must be of service to man. A culture which does not do any good to better the material life of man on this earth will not perish. If it is too intellectual or spiritual then it will not be of service to man in his ordinary life. Even if the culture has contributed to knowledge, science, philosophy as well as art, poetry and architecture it is not enough. All these are only a kind of decorative part in culture. In the past it had made a stable and orderly society possible in a noble manner. But it should facilitate progress in the present also, by inspiring the life and development of man on the earth. Culture must inspire the terrestrial endeavour of man. Culture should help man to progress.

The end of man's life may or may not be spiritual salvation or death, but without doubt the world is a wonderful work of God and the crown of his creation is Man. A great human culture must acknowledge this truth and promote the growth and greatness of this race of human beings on earth. If it doesn't do so then it has failed.

15.3 WESTERN CONCEPTION OF INDIAN CULTURE

Critics of Indian Culture think that our failure of culture is because of the same reason – Westerners think that Hinduism is an entirely spiritual system. They feel that it is not based on the reality of life and it doesn't inspire man to achieve anything. They feel that it makes people lazy. According to Aurobindo Westerners have a wrong idea about Indian Culture. They believe that it undervalues life and endeavour. Westerners feel that all its literature, its art are all good but what is expected or needed from the Indian culture is absent "...the salt of life is absent".

Aurobindo calls it as the salt of life. Here Aurobindo brings a mythological reference to compare Indian culture. He says that Apollo, the

journalist attacks the Indian culture as Indian barbarism. Many European critics are making fun of Indian culture. They feel that India has philosophy, but it doesn't give value to materialistic things. Sri Aurobindo doubts that the fault is in the teachings of the Indian Culture.

“Life is conceived as a shoreless expense in
which generations rise and fall as helplessly
and purposelessly as waves in mid ocean”.

Europeans feel that Indian culture does not give importance to the individual. Aurobindo points out that Europeans recognize only Buddha and Asoka, the disciple of Buddha as great personalities. They think that it's drama and poetry are unrealistic and filled with the supernatural. European critics assure that there is nothing in Indian Culture and they try to wipe it. They say that it is the fault of Indian culture. They feel it as an exaggeration and a violent caricature. They believe,

“There is no power of life in this religion and this philosophy,
there is no breath of life in this history,
there is no colour of life in this art and poetry : that is the blank
result of Indian Culture”.

15.4 AUROBINDO'S DEFENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE

But such an opinion is false, says Aurobindo. Any one who knows the history and has read the literature of this ancient civilization is aware of the truth. The European mind misunderstood it because it is different in essence from Indian Culture. Aurobindo says,

“India has lived and lived richly, splendidly, greatly,
but with a different will in life from Europe”.

Three basic concept of Indian culture

Culture must give original conception of life. Indian culture has an original and unique idea about life. Indian values differ and they are not easy for an outsider to understand, being too lofty for the untrained mind. There are three things by which the life value of a culture is judged.

- ❖ It's original conception of life
- ❖ the forms, types and rhythms that have shaped the various components of life
- ❖ its aims are realized in the actual lives of men and the community

Most Indians are familiar with the European concept of life. They are very much influenced by it and try to imitate it and assimilate it in their lives.

15.5 EUROPEAN CULTURE

The European idea is that God created the Earth and man is the centre of creation. This anthropocentric (man as centre) view has not been changed by science. It gives importance to reason, beauty, utility, enjoyment of life and economic welfare. Europeans are concerned about man and physical earth. They listen to the needs to man. They center their views on man.

European culture recognizes two forces

- 1) The free power of the individual ego
- 2) The organized will of the corporate ego

It is the conflict between these two forces that has given colour to the history, art and literature of Europe. On the one hand there is a passionate enjoyment and satisfaction of the ego of the individual and on the other hand there is the effort to govern life by means of reasons, science, ethics and art based on utility. Over the ages, many things have come and changed it and made it complex, like Christianity for example.

At present, the sense of corporate life dominates with importance being given to intellectual and material progress, with science governing the political and social state leading towards a general welfare.

“There is an idea of intelligent utility,
Liberty and equality.....”

This has made them mechanically concerned with external materialism and a slave to man-made machines and other devices, though some are trying to make it more human again. The European concept of life on the whole is imperfect and narrow. Though it is concerned only with life on earth, it recognizes that life is difficult but noble.

15.6 INDIAN CONCEPT OF CULTURE

The Indian idea of the world and life is 'not physical, but psychological and spiritual'. It recognizes the spirit that is innate within all matter and nature as a machinery that executes the power of the life-force.

“Matter is the body or field of a consciousness hidden within it, the material universe a form and movement of the spirit”.

Man is a spirit who uses life and body. Indian culture has faith in this concept of existence and practices it. It aspires to take the mind of man that is tied to life and matter, to greater spiritual consciousness. Because of this reason, others criticize it to be only powers of the spirit that exist for the sake of the spirit as Upanishad says. This is the Indian attitude that body and form are even more important as they support the spirit within. Therefore human life is not unworthy. On the other hand "... it is the greatest thing known to us" and was devised even by the Gods is what the puranas say.

But the human life is only an instrument to help the spirit of man realize its divine origin. So, man's life can become exalted enough to make him even a God. This dignity given to human existence by Indian culture is by greater than that of the west and cannot be understood by them. According to them, man is only a creature made by God whose Salvation is difficult and who can be sent to hell if he fails. Only his reasoning mind and will can help him to be better than what God and nature made him to be.

Indian culture however has a far more noble idea of man. It sees him as a spirit in a body capable of becoming a God.

“.... he is a divinity and an eternal existence;
he is an ever flowing wave of the God - Ocean,
an-inextinguishable spark of the supreme fire”

He can be identified with the divinity from which he came and can be greater than the Gods, he worships.

The natural half-animal creature that he is at the beginning is not his real being: ‘His in reality the divine self’. He can outgrow his natural self and find his divine self. From an ordinary human being he can become a semi-divine man or a ‘Mukta’ (one who has attained salvation) or a ‘Siddha’ (who has got supreme felicity). His spirit can become one with God with the spirit of the universe and what is beyond. Man need not be limited and shut in by his ego. He can rise to a higher state of being by his ego. He can rise to a higher state of being by using any of his powers – through his mind and reason, or his heart with its power of love and sympathy, through his will to do the right action, or through his ethical nature or even his aesthetic sense and love for beauty or through his inner soul with its power of “absolute spiritual calm, wilderness, joy and peace”.

15.7 MISUNDERSTANDING OF WESTERNERS ABOUT INDIAN CULTURE

This sense of the spiritual liberation and perfection has been there since vedic times. It has been considered as something normal and possible though

difficult. Westerners, however, are unable to agree with this idea. They think it to be unrealistic and fantastic. It is a blasphemy against God to think that man can be equal to him. It is against the ego as it means a negation of personality when man forgets himself in the face of divinity. It goes against reason. They think it to be an illusion created by barbaric ignorance and arrogance.

But even in Europe, the stoics, the Platonists and the Pythagoreans have approached closer to the Indian thought. At present many Europeans too believe in many Indian ideas but they are a small number, like the Theosophists. European science, philosophy and religion still regard it with scorn.

15.8 SUPERIORITY OF INDIAN CULTURE

However, Indian culture has claimed the spiritual way of perfect existence as it's aim and has searched for ways to achieve it. Indian culture has tried to connect this perfection with man's normal living and imperfect nature taking him gradually, in stages towards this supreme goal. At present there is a growing gulf between man's earthly status and spiritual possibilities. But we must go to the best times of Indian thought.

According to Indian thought, the mind sees the world as a reality and other half sees it as 'Maya' (illusion) and 'Lila' (divine play). Man must enjoy life to the full in all it's aspects. Life is an intermediate reality and is not denied at all. The normal life of man has to pass through various stages. His powers must develop as he works out the values of life. Man must enjoy life. Then only he can go on to 'self-existence' or 'supra-existence'.

“The spiritual perfection which opens before

him is the crown of a long, patient, millennial

out-flowering of the spirit in life and nature”

This belief in a gradual spiritual progress and evolution has led to the accepting of the idea of Re-incarnation as true. Man has gone through many lives and forms before he was born as a human being. The human life is the means to divine perfection. But here again it is a slow progress and process. So there is a plenty of room in it for human action and experience, including the satisfaction of the senses. But it is bound by law or Dharma.

15.9 DHARMA

Is the just and perfect law of living according to Indian culture. Everything on earth has it's Dharma and for man it is ideal living. There is no one common rule for all men. Life is too complex to allow such simplicity.

Each one is different –work, place and capacities vary. Therefore, the social law or Dharma is flexible and is not rigid, allowed for variety. The scholar, ruler, poet, priest, trader, servant, etc., are trained differently and their ways of living also differ. Each has his type of nature and there must be a rule for perfection of that type. Lawless desire cannot lead human conduct – it should be controlled and governed, directed and guided. Thus the Dharma was specialized to suit different types of men but it had some universal elements also. It is the law of ideal perfection for the developing man and soul of man. It laid down the discipline for the self-perfecting of the individual. It focused on all facets of the holistic development of man intellectual, social, religious, aesthetic, etc...

Therefore the ideal man was a complete individual. He could be a 'Srestha' (a good man) or 'arya' (a noble man of high upbringing). He had to have love, compassion, benevolence and patience in his heart: courage, truth and honour in character. He should give respect where it is due but must also have power to govern. Though modest, he must be independent and have a noble pride. He should be wise and intelligent with a love for learning and able to appreciate poetry, art and beauty. He must show skill in his work. Above all he must be religious with a love of God. He must be good in social relations and be a good father, husband, son, brothers etc. This idea is clearly described in the literature of ancient India during two millenniums. It was the creation of a rational mind that was spirit – wise and worldly – wise with firm ethics but flexible intellectually; a mind scientific and aesthetic, patient and tolerant of difficulties and weaknesses, but strict in self-discipline.

But even this ideal nature, shaped by Dharma was only the foundation for a higher thing- the great aim of spiritual liberation and perfection. A mortal manhood is not the end, but an immortal divinity through which he emerges into a great spiritual freedom. This is the supreme summit the individual reached after various stages.

Thus one finds that a well governed system of the individual and communal life regulates the three powers mentioned earlier. Natural functioning is recognized; pursuit of personal and communal interest as well as the satisfaction of human desires and needs are admitted to. There is need for knowledge and labour to achieve these ends. But all are controlled by Dharma and man is not allowed to forget that there is something that is higher than all this that he can attain God – consciousness or realize his divinity if he wants to. And ways and means are provided for him to do this according to his capacity and nature. There were masters to teach him and he could see other greater men practice it. Spiritual freedom and perfection are not impossible ideals but is the highest human aim possible for man is based on the law of the Dharma. This idea informs all the other motives of the Indian civilization and its culture.

15.10 LET US SUM UP

Thus, Aurobindo Ghose views Indian culture in a different perspective. He brings out a better view of Indian culture. He also makes the European people to understand the Indian culture and what it is aimed at. He was also writing at a time when outsiders did not know much about India. Therefore he wanted to make it known to the world that he belittles western culture and glorifies Indian culture.

15.11 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

Make a study of the essay and bring out Aurobindo's concept of Indian culture

15.12 REFERENCES

Dr.Sudhar Pandey, Dr.Shridar, B.Gokale. Vidya S.Netrakanti, ed.Rose Petal Selections from Jawaharlal Nehru (OUP)

LESSON - 16

INDIA : OLD AND NEW

ROSE PETALS

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16.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The prose selections, Rose Petals, a collection of speeches and essays written by Jawaharlal Nehru have been prescribed so that the students will be made familiar with the good style of Nehru and thereby improve their English.

16.1 INTRODUCTION

Pandit Nehru saw the spirit of India in the wealth and diversity of Indian history – its crafts and arts, its religions and in philosophies, its secular and scientific reflection as well as in the humble traditions, practices and life-styles of its rural and tribal people.

Nehru in these essays brings out his thought and sentiments about the past, present and future of the Indian people. He urges Indians to cultivate a critical and responsible attitude to success as well as failure.

16.2 INDIA OLD AND NEW – I : BEFORE INDIA IS REBORN

Though the British had come to trade with, but later subjugated India they were ignorant about her. They came to exploit her resources. But had not realized how India had her ups and downs.

Before British, she had withstood the onslaughts of many invaders. But through the ages she had not forgotten the wisdom that she had acquired through the Upanishads at the dawn of history. Inspire of all the degradation she had undergone, she had clung to her nobility, majesty of soul and immemorial culture.

Though often broken up politically India's Spirit was always guarded by a common heritage. India has become Bharath Matha, Mother India, a beautiful lady. But the beauty of the lady is marred by the poor people who are suffering beyond compare. We cannot blame the British for all the ills. They have given us science, the greatest gift of all. What India now needs is to stop blaming others, shoulder the responsibility and face the future and forge ahead.

- What according of Nehru are the social conditions of India and how can the further the saved?

16.3 THE SOLUTION TO INDIA'S PROBLEMS

Nehru beiges by saying how a group of people have come forward to rebuild the Nation of India after our National Struggle. During this great and long struggle we did not realize what was happening in the outside world.

In the being of the 29th century there has been an awakening to the new spirit of freedom in almost all of Asia, Islamic world and in Europe. As this phenomenon has been universal we should look at the Indian context within a wider spectrum. We cannot isolate India and her problems from the rest of the world. Without indulging in petty conflicts and minor questions and communal differences we should channelise our forces in a wholesome manner towards progress.

In 1936 Nehru in his presidential address to the Indian national congress in Lucknow voices out his views on the decay of British imperialism. Through authoritarian means the voice of dissention or rebellion is being crushed and the British government does not welcome criticism. Power corrupts and degrades the possessors. Suppression of the press and literature and ban on organizations and keeping people in prison without trial are the highhanded actions of the government that are disgusting to Pandit Nehru.

It is time for all the anti-imperialist forces in the country to join hands and look at out problems in the background of the problems around the world;

“mighty forces are at grips with each other --- subject people are rising against imperialism”. Exploited classes face their exploiters, seeking freedom and equality. This should help us to arrive at a historic sense. Only then can we view current events in the proper perspective and understand their real significance. Only then can Indians appreciate the march of history and keep in step with it.

Nehru feels that the present situation of poverty in India can be solved only through socialism that would bring about revolutionary changes on the social and political front. The capitalistic economy followed is feudalistic and anti-poor. Though Nehru does not believe in the consequences of Russian socialism, he feels that a balanced kind of socialistic philosophy is very necessary if India has to progress.

He expresses his desire as President of Lucknow Congress, at that time, which was not so favourable towards industrialization and socialism, that it should accept these new ideas.

He ends the speech that socialism will help eradicate the problem of untouchability, because once the economic status of the poor improves there will be less of social barriers and victimization.

- Summarize the views of Nehru about the need of socialism to rebuild an egalitarian Indian society

16.4 THE NATIONAL FLAG

On July 22 1947 in his speech in the constituent assembly, Pandit Nehru reads the resolution on the National Flag to be adopted.

Nehru says ‘some times in a brief period we pass through the track of centuries’. It is not the mere act of living that matters but what one does in a brief life time and the same applies to the nation also.

During the freedom struggle, during times when people felt low, looking at the flag they revived their spirits and many had found comfort in death by clinging to the flag.

The national flag has been designed to modernize the unity in diversity representing the mixed spirit and tradition of the nation built up through thousands of years in India. The flag is the symbol of freedom.

Wherever the India flag is unfurled it will spread the message of comradeship; a message that India wants to be friendly with every country and that it wants to help all people who seek freedom.

- How does Nehru bring out his deep love for his nation and his commitment to its growth through his views on the national flag?

16.5 A TRYST WITH DESTINY

In the speech in the constituent assembly on 14th August 1947 Pandit Nehru gave this soul stirring speech about the birth of a new India. He spoke those words that still remains fresh in the memory of people; ‘at the stroke of the midnight hour when the world sleeps, India will awaken to life and freedom’.

When an age ends, at the point of transition, the long suppressed energies find articulation. At the solemn moment of rebirth India which started a quest of identity, continues to look in to the future gearing up her potential to face challenges and made use of the opportunities.

Freedom and power follow the new found independence and we envisage as new responsibility. The responsibility rests in the legislative members to keep true to the pledge of service and help the million of people who are suffering.

We have to work hard and give reality to our dreams. To bring prosperity to the individuals, to win the faith and confidence of the people and build a noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell.

- Why and how does independence become an opening of opportunity for India to march ahead with secularism as the watch word?

16.6 OUR INHERITANCE

This speech was the address of Pandit Nehru at the Aligarh Muslim university on 24th January, 1948.

Nehru states by saying how the past six months have been a period of sorrow, meaning the pangs of the partition. But he hopes that the old and youth will help rebuild our nations. Though some recent events have challenged Nehru’s dreams, he hopes that new free India will provide opportunities and advancement to all the citizens.

INDIA’S STRENGTH IS TWOFOLD

1. Her own innate culture that has bloomed and blossomed down the ages.
2. Her ability to draw from other source and other cultures.

He address the Muslim students that though he may be a Hindu, we should member that the past holds both the people together that has been the inherited story of India, the coexistence of both. So the present and the future should not divide both the brethren. It there has been a change in the atmosphere it is not because of the political changes but because of the exchange of the spirit.

Pandit Nehru points out how the partition of Pakistan was an unnatural event, but it was inevitable. But just because Pakistan has separated from India it doesn't mean that the division should be narrow and partisan. Though the partition was done on religious reckoning, India he says will go as a secular country and colour and creed and language will not create divisions.

We must cultivate nationalism leading to internationalism. Nehru tells the students that they as young people should rise above communal spirit especially in educational context and in institutions. Nehru invites the Muslim students to the free and contributes towards building because whatever religion one belongs to he or she is first and foremost an Indian.

- What is Nehru advice to the students of Aligarh Muslim university?

16. 7 INDIA OLD AND NEW II

India from the dawn of history has an unique and individualistic dimension which after the impact of outside influences has evolved as a composite culture.

Nehru is only fearing whether India will also allow its individuality to be tarnished. The fear arises out of the fact that the industrialization of the west will swallow up India's unique character.

Pandit Nehru feels that India is more feminine in nature because though she is capable of hard and brutal tasks, as a nation India remains soft and peace loving. Women in the past and in the present have held such high positions and have performed brave feats, but they remain feminine.

But now the times are changing due to urbanization and industrial revolution. Though the automobile has come in, it is still the bicycle age just as the plough remains though agriculture has been mechanized. The old and the new co-exist. So this concept of co-existence is the basis of the political philosophy of India. Other religions and faiths are accepted easily. There is no imposition of one's creed on others. This spirit of tolerance is commendable.

The political revolution of making India an independent nation has led to the concept of Indian nationalism. India has become a forerunner of other countries achieving freedom from colonisation. There is an economic aspect

attached to this nationalism. The abolition of land lordism and the co-operative movement and state owned industries have led to a socialistic pattern that has grown immensely. To achieve this end the five-year plans were formulated: and mass education and compulsory primary education have led the social revolution.

The result of these efforts from independence to 1962, when Pandit Nehru writes this article have been spectacular. The average age of life expectation has increased along with better health conditions, eradication of diseases, and the consumption of more and better food is a success. The development of the revolutionary institution called Panchayat Raj and decentralized power has been handed at the village level so that the people can govern themselves.

In conclusion the greatest success story is the progress based on democracy which is a redeeming feature when compared to the military and autocratic regimes in other parts of Asia. Democracy helps to maintain not only the individuality of the free citizen but also help sustain the Indian philosophy and way of life.

- Explain the concept of co-existence

16.8 SYNTHESIS IS OUR TRADITION

In 1959 in one of the Azad memorial lectures, delivered in New Delhi, called 'India to-day and tomorrow' Nehru wonders how he could describe 'India to-day'. The history of the beginnings of India filled him with wonder. It was a virile and vigorous race a part of a mature and tolerant civilization.

But a important heritage of the past in the magnificent Sanskrit language which sent its vibrant message to far countries. It produced the Upanishads the Gita and the Buddha. Sanskrit was the vehicle of the highest thoughts of philosophy and literature. The Ramayana and Mahabarat are proof of this. These epics were dovetailed in to the fabric of life of millions of Indians for thousands of years. If they are last the Buddha is last. India will cease to exist.

Pandit Nehru finds a paradox at that time in the life of India. After the great past glory a kind of deterioration had set in the affairs of Indians in the form of caste divisions, narrow social customs and ceremonials. On the other hand a certain vitality has stayed on with India in spite of the streams of people who flowed in to her: she never quite forget the thought that stirred her is the days of her youthful vigour.

The coming of Islam followed by the western colonization, nor only dominated as, but also helped fresh ideas to be absorbed by India and to-day India is familiar with nuclear science and atomic energy. Economic progress

and welfare state are good for India. But apart from these _odernization, the faith of the people continues. Pandit Nehru says as seen so far, change is essential but continuity is also necessary. This was proved by Gandhiji finding a synthesis between the past and the present.

As we look the coming of Islam made the Hindu system shrink back. But it also brought freshness which could be channeled in the proper direction. Wise rulers like Akbar realising that the only hope for the future was harmony went for a solution based on synthesis this when Muslims went to other nations in Christendom there was conflict, but in India a synthesis was developed down the years.

Gradually the tolerance of the Hindu religion combined with the western thoughts of progress resulted in a new nationalism. Raja Rammohan Roy sought a synthesis between old India and modern trends Vivekananda rejuvenated old India in modern garb. The cultural and political movements grew and culminated in Ravindranath Tagore and Gandhiji.

In the realm of science there was no conflict between science and religion as it did in Christian countries. Instead in India two forces developed the growth of nationalism and the urge for social justice. Socialism and Marxism became symbols of social change and it appealed to the masses.

Continual adjustment is needed in a new situation. To-day world peace is of paramount importance. Pandit Nehru believed that to bring about peace in the nation and with neighbouring countries five principles are necessary which he called as Pancha sheel.

In India we have opted for socialism that is why the zamindari system has been abolished. Democratic means have to be incorporated. A new set of values have to replace the selfish acquisitive nature of the rich. The curse of caste must cease.

There are major religions in India. Hinduism and Buddhism which were joined by Islam and Christianity. Though science and religion may differ in views and ideas, a new synthesis can evolve if only higher things of life other than ceremony and rituals were looked for in religion. We should continue to perpetuate this harmony to build a strong India in the future.

- What are Nehru's hopes and wishes regarding the future of India which should be rooted in synthesis of cultures and beliefs.

16.9 NATIONAL SOLIDARITY

This is a speech of Pandit Nehru – a broadcast to the nation on 19th October 1963.

Any nation if it has to be prosperous and strong it needs to uphold the quality of solidarity. Solidarity is that one phenomenon of unity that holds the whole nation and its people together. In spite of differences this feeling of solidarity is the element which helps any nation to progress and truly enjoy freedom.

The real strength of a nation is not only in the military defence but the unity of the people and their hardwork. The strength of India was seen when the people united against the Chinese aggression in the recent past.

But soon after that the immediate effects of the Chinese aggression passed away. Once again the people went back to their petty squabbles and divisions and fights. There is also the menace of poverty which continues. There are also threats to our solidarity through religion, caste, language and even conflict between states.

But ‘we are a great country, a country with enormous variety, a variety that is good.’ This variety should always make us feel as a large family which has to be held together and defended through mutual co-operation.

- How does Nehru show as that the solidarity of India as a nation can be achieved in spite of both the variety and unity it has?

16.10 BUILDING INDIA

In a meeting of ministers in 1954 Pandit Nehru said that somebody asked him ‘what is your problem’, he had answered ‘we have got 360 million problems’ in India. Problems have to be considered from the individual’s point of view, not to be looked at from a mass perspective through graphs and charts.

Next, when we come to solving the problem words are thrown at us regarding the approaches of solution to problems – socialistic approach, Gandhian or communistic. Regarding words Nehru feels that words are ‘tricky’. Words are ultimate vehicles or representations of ideas. The association of words with events and the connotation of words according to people can create a lot of havoc. So Nehru says ‘Beware of words, great as they are’, it is not more words that we need.

What we need is the action to put the words into use. People need food, shelter and better health conditions. The policy which usually is made up of words that India needs to-day is to bring about equality among her people.

India is at the crossroads of past experience pushing her on towards a future where everyone will work, work and work. Nehru says emphatically that we need achievement. Democracy is good, but it should not make people lazy

and create wastages. Laziness, selfishness and sluggishness will deter all progress we need to build this immense country of ours into a strong nation. In this journey the slow, lazy and weak will be left behind.

- Why does Nehru want work and work and work?

16.11 WHY INDIA IS NON-ALIGNED

In Dec 1956 Nehru spoke these words in the Television and Radio address in Washington D.C.

India with its history of thousands of year has been preaching and practicing tolerance. The sons of India carried beyond its boundaries, enriching other nations, human thought, art, literature, philosophy and religion. The message of peace that India disseminated culminated in the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi who spearheaded a movement of revolution thought peaceful means acceptable to the people of India and to the ruling nation of Britain.

Having gained political freedom India now has launched a massive scale economic revolution through democratic measures: gigantic plans have been envisioned and put into practice. For example, the successful completion the first five year plan and the beginning of the second plan giving importance to agriculture and industry, urban and rural development. Nehru pants out how the same dynamism and enthusiasm Americans have towards development is also possessed by Indians.

Just as America has made strides of progress in technology India and the other Asian countries, who have shed off the foreign yoke of colonization are also keen on progress. At the same time he should realize that as to-day the world has come close it is necessary to achieve goals though peace and co-operation among the nations. It is necessary for individual countries to raise the voice of protest against outrageous aggressions like what has happened in Egypt and Hungary in a peaceful but firm manner.

That is why India has chosen the policy of non – alignment. Each country must be independent and not subject to the coercion or manipulation of other countries. Non-aggression, non-interference, peaceful co-existence and free trade and free exchange of ideas are the tenants of non-alignment. To keep up good relations with nations inspite of difference of opinions and political ideologies is the means to preserve one's sovereignty and at the same time have fellowship with all nations.

- Do you think non-alignment is significant in to-day's world

16.12 THE BASIC REALITY

In an address at the university of California October 31st, 1949 Nehru points out the need for India to be governed by those ideals India has held for many centuries. Those ideas are essentially of peace and co-operation, national freedom, growing internationalism and equality among people and nations and the alleviation of poverty and misery worldwide.

Having achieved political freedom, India as a nation has realized that it is not an end but the beginning of a great movement for the amelioration of the sufferings of its masses due to economic disparities. Mahatma Gandhi wanted to wipe every tear of every face in India and in Asia, but that may not be possible, though raising the standard of living of the people is certainly possible.

We live in an age of paradox and crisis. There is the talk of peace and at the same time there are fears of war and aggression. The conflict of ideologies and narrow nationalistic feelings hinder internationalism.

We cannot live in a world of idealism facts have to be faced. The basic reality is that in spite of stupendous technological development, crises arise out of human affairs: thought and conflicts leading to chaos. The means used to control the problem situation should be positive. Ends do not justify wrong means. Peace must be achieved through peaceful means, not through war. To-day this is violence and hatred in the world. We should combat evil and aggression by the right means.

Nehru concludes his speech by pointing out the rise of centralization of authority in the state and in any nation. Sometimes the authority or the state impinges on the rights of the individual. But a balance should be maintained. Individuals should be assured of freedom and opportunity. Nehru discusses such problems with the students who are the hope of the future.

16.13 LET US SUM UP

Thus we have seen that in these essays Nehru has spoken about the great tradition of India and how Indians should look forward to building a new India. He feels that socialism is the answer to the problem of inequality in our society.

16.14 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

Why does Nehru say 'we live in an age of paradox and continuing crisis'?

16.15 REFERENCES

Dr. Sudhar Pandey, Dr. Shridar, B. Gokale. Vidya S. Netrakanti, ed. Rose Petal Selections from Jawaharlal Nehru (OUP)

LESSON - 17

MAN AND SOCIETY

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17.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The following essays have been prescribed to make the youth get up from lethargy and complacency. Nehru's ideas of education are the thrust of these essays.

17.1 TEMPER OF YOUTH : INTRODUCTION

In 1928 at the All-Bengal student's conference, Calcutta Nehru addressed the gathering. He says that the present day world needs socialism as the yardstick to dispel the problems in the world.

- ◆ The British rulers of India seem to be frightened at the word socialism. Communism is not to be shuddered at and avoided. Nehru may not agree which the means communists use, but the basic idea of socialism he feels is the best.

- ◆ Appreciating Russia for its fight against imperialism and class system Nehru feels that socialism gives equality to all. He believes in two important ideas, socialism and internationalism (Russia has welcomed foreign, especially Chinese people) which has helped Russia to become a foe to imperialism. Similarly our quarrel is not with the people of England but with in imperialism.
- ◆ Nehru feels that no nation has the right to force any ideology of its own. But self-admiration and self righteous hem are dangerous. Each nation must by overcoming the backwardness of traditions and isms adopt novel ideas and improve the conditions as Kemal Pasha and Amanullah led Turkey and Afghanistan towards progress. So also we India's must also give up glorifying the past and start moving towards progress.

Discusses Nehru's concept of socialism as a cure to problems of nations.

17.2 THE AIMS OF EDUCATION : INTRODUCTION

Pandit Nehru addresses the All India educational conference at Baradari on 27th December, 1939. The ultimate objective or ideal of education is the improvement of the individual which leads to social progress.

- ◆ The true advancement of the individual is subject to the impact of the environment of each one. The complexity of prejudice and superstition, political and economic conditions either helps one or holds back progress. Inequalities and cut throat competitions and an acquisitive society deters progress. So this environment must be changed.
 - ◆ It rests with the students and the educationists to change the social outlook and the society we live in the change must first take place in the mind. The students should be trained not to be acquisitive but change the rotten social fabric of selfishness by nearing a new texture of co-operation and values.
 - ◆ The role of the teacher in this noble endeavor is like that of a missionary with an ardent spirit motivating the students to build up our nation where every individual is given his due.
- How can education change the decadent fabric of our social fabric according to Nehru.

17.3 UNIVERSITIES : INTRODUCTION

Nehru in a circular issued on 3rd July 1961 points out how the need for quality in higher education especially in technology is the need of the hour. The course structures and textbooks etc should be carefully formulated and prepared.

- ◆ Nehru believes that though the best medium for learning should be the mother tongue for any child, the peculiarity of the India diversity in the linguistic realm will only bring about division and isolated centres of learning if regional languages were the only media of studies.
- ◆ There is also a complaint that standards of learning are not what they ought to be. So in order to enhance the standards of technical and scientific learning centres of Advanced Study are going to be set up. There will be research and exchange of views and knowledge between professors and students countrywide.
- ◆ The centres must create the proper academic atmosphere for serious and sustained work. To achieve this goal team work is of paramount importance. The standard of the universities must be kept up leading to the building of a corporate interlineal of India so if universities function in different languages as cannot have close co-operation between professors of different regions. The quality of life is more important than the knowledge generation.
- ◆ Finally the vice chancellor is the hub on which the whole machinery of the university revolves. He should be a man of learning and high academic standards because it not only an administrative post but he is a key person in moulding the personalities of the students.
 - How does Nehru conceive the impact of universities on the lives of the futures citizens?

17.4 STUDENTS AND POLITICS : INTRODUCTION

In this article Pandit Nehru overture says that it is important for students to involve in politics. Politics need not be shunned by students as some people believe.

Those who vote in elections should take part in political so that they understand olitical issues. Otherwise they will remain passive, neutral or indifferent. Students should know the issues and problems of life. To-day there are various isms in the world – nationalism liberalism, socialism, communism, imperialism, fascism.

All thinking individuals and more so students must not only know what the issues are but also take part in political activities to help the people of the country.

Theoretical knowledge must be accompanied by practical activity. Nehru who writes this in 1928 points out that the then government was not encouraging students to take part in politics. But in free countries the spirit of adventure has helped students to do mighty acts.

Everywhere we have seen that in times of crises, for example, during the world war the students were found in the warfront and not in the classrooms. But involvement in politics should be channeled by discipline. To-day (in 1938) India is passing through an abnormal phase (of the freedom struggle) and students must take part in politics.

Why is it necessary for students to enter politics?

17.5 THE SCIENTIFIC OUTLOOK : INTRODUCTION

This address was also given in 1938 at the national academy of sciences. Jawaharlal Nehru for first and foremost rational thinker who at great respects for science and the way it had affected the 20th century.

- ◆ Pandit Nehru had to involve in the freedom struggle in public life and go to jail and he could not stay peacefully in an academic situation and do scientific research. But he says 'I too have worshipped' at the shrine of science and counted myself as one of its votaries.
- ◆ We live in a scientific world. Though the history of man is thousands of years old, it is the past 150 years that have seen revolutionary and explosive days because of the scientific advancement. The most important boon has been the scientific outlook though half of the population still have a pre-scientific mentality in the early days of scientific changes there was a conflict between science and religion. But science has come to stay. Science has not only changed the outside, material world, it has also helped man to learn more about himself; a peep into the mind with the advent of the science of psychology. Religion should wear the garb of science and lead man towards progress.
- ◆ So it is time for Indians to accept the scientific outlook. The meaningless controversies of the past should be given up. The scientific method now pervades all the spheres of life. Nehru wishes that science will help the people as a nation grow mightier and seek fresh worlds or adventure and progress.

What is Nehru's attitude to science?

17.6 THE ROLE OF WOMEN : INTRODUCTION

Speaking at the convocation of the Prayag Mahila vidyapitha, Allahabad in January 1934, Pandit Nehru says that if our nation has to rise then the women who lag behind and remain ignorant and uneducated must be made to rise as individuals.

- ◆ In the past our great women have done exploits. But the percentage is minimal. The majority of women have suffered because of the matriarchal system, subject to man made laws and customs.
- ◆ At the moment women in western countries have succeeded in setting a measure of freedom. But women in India are still under bondage and have to shrug off the fetters that suppress them.
- ◆ Nehru challenges the young ladies who are receiving their degrees not to go back to a narrow world of family and friends alone and forget the need to help the women of India. They must arise against oppression and evil, because they had the privilege of pursuing higher education.
- ◆ So far the alien government in India has not encouraged creativity, adventure and exploits by Indian students.
- ◆ Nehru tells the young ladies to fight against evils of untouchability, gender bias, casteism and even the institution of purdah. The marriage laws of India need to be reorganized to give woman her freedom and dignity. The young women should have mental stability and healthy bodies through physical exercises to bring forth happy children.

➤ What are Nehru's ideas about the role of women in India society

17.7 THE ROLE OF CULTURE : INTRODUCTION

The culture of any race depends on the natural paradigms. It is the natural growth from the soil. Our literature, our culture has grown and has been affected by the Himalayas, its forests and great rivers of India among other things. But India also took in a lot of good ideas and things from other cultures also.

- ◆ Religions of the world have had very strong and sometimes too narrow an influence of particular cultures. But a nation or a race is and must be built on past experiences, so the roots have to be well placed and firm for the tree to blossom and flourish.

- ◆ Culture means some inner growth of man. The capacity to understand others is an important sign of culture. A cultured mind is open to new ideas and difference of opinions.
- ◆ Added to this, a scientific approach to problems is necessary in the modern world to imbibe new ideas through reasoning.
- ◆ Almost all countries believe that they are superior and they should and impose their ideas, way of life, thinking etc on others. India was complacent about calling herself spiritual. But India received a rude shock when she was exploited and put down by stronger and technically superior cultures. It is good to be spiritual, but it should not be magnified at the expense of progress offered by science and technology.
- ◆ The concept of nationalism is good. But it should only help in progressing and not cessation from progress or at times it leads to aggression but the best thing would be for a balanced point of view.
- ◆ Pandit Nehru finishes this address at the Indian council for cultural relations, in April 1950 by saying that Indian culture should not be glorified while so many people are starving. It is important to think about these needs.
 - What are the salient features of culture that Nehru speaks about?

17.8 THE FUNCTION OF LANGUAGE : INTRODUCTION

In an article in the National Herald in 1949, Nehru points out that a language is a test of a nation's character. If a language is strong and vigorous so will the people be. A language that is precise makes the people think precisely makes the people think precisely.

- ◆ A beautiful ornate language, if it does not change according to the environment and the changing times is of no use. Classical languages of the ancient times could have been commendable in many ways, but if they are unsuitable in a democratic age they cannot reach out to the masses.
- ◆ A language must therefore vary and grow and become the language of the masses. It has to become the language of science. Classical languages like Latin in Europe, Sanskrit in India and Persian which came later cannot be the language of the whole of India. Hindi or Hindustani is the single language that can unite India.
- ◆ English is a language with the greatest receptivity, flexibility and capacity for growth. So also can we make Hindi suitable to the modern world.

- ◆ People do not understand that language has to grow ultimately because it should be able to present views in a precise manner.
- ◆ As Sanskrit is a great treasure bestowed on India, it should be given utmost importance to bring out the best literature and present it to the world. Any language can become the vehicle of the culture of a nation and it has to increase in value, practicability and inherent worth.

➤ What are the functions of the language according to Nehru?

17.9 SANSKRIT : INTRODUCTION

In the discovery of India (1946) Nehru commends the beauty and richness of the Sanskrit language. It is an amazing and luxuriantly evolved language strictly keeping with in the frame work of grammar laid down by Panini two thousand years ago.

- ◆ Any language is greater than the grammar or its origin, it becomes the living embodiment of thoughts and fancies and culture. The words are not only beautiful but have deep significance and host of associated ideas that sometimes defies translation.
- ◆ The modern Indian languages are the children of Sanskrit. Since the poetry and philosophy of Sanskrit are untranslatable, foreign scholars have found it difficult at times. Any translation so far done has not brought out the beauty of the original; whereas the authorized version of the Bible is not only a noble book, but gave the English language strength and dignity. Nehru hopes that such good translations will come out of Sanskrit literature in the future.
- ◆ Though Sanskrit has ceased to be the language of day to day life, it has traveled beyond seas and has influenced Thailand's culture. Sanskrit words still live in the modern languages in spite of the fact that Persian had come to stay in India with the invasion of Islam.
- ◆ He ends by pointing out how ancient Indians attached a great deal of importance to sound and hence Sanskrit had a rhythm and musical quality. Books in Sanskrit have been written on a variety of subjects including dramatic works. Sanskrit with its dominating influence perhaps had not allowed other Indian languages to grow into great languages. But it is interesting even in modern Thailand (at the beginning of the 20th century) that Sanskrit words have been adopted into new technical, scientific and governmental terms.
 - How does Nehru look at Sanskrit and its place in the global linguistic domain?

17.10 ASIA : INTRODUCTION

This is an address that Nehru delivered at the Asian relations conference on 23rd March 1947 at New Delhi. The conference has given an opportunity for the countries of Asia to unite. The whole of Asia has been through together.

- ◆ The Asian countries which had for the past two hundred years suffered the impact of imperialism of the highest are now free at last. Because of the subjugation of the western power the countries of Asia were isolated. But India had always had contacts with the north – east – east and north west parts of Asia.
- ◆ The position of India is unique. Many cultures have come and gone. India has become a land of rich and variegated culture. If you visit the south east countries like Japan and China and the south western lands like Afghanistan and west Asia the vitality of India's culture can be perceived by its influence on the people.
- ◆ The coming of Iran or Persia to India brought about intercourse between India and China. Nehru does not want to glory in the past, but Asia is emerging as a powerful force and the Americans or Europeans need not the fear that Asia is going to revolt.
- ◆ In the history of the world Asia is going to acquire importance. The west has drawn Asia into wars and conflicts. But unless Asia plays her part well, there will be no Peace. The countries of Asia have one more duty and that is to uplift the millions of masses who are living below the poverty line.
- ◆ We need a world forum to make the world become an ideal one. There should be an Asian federation strengthening the larger body – the United Nations organization.
- ◆ But we are not advocating narrow nationalism. The freedom we look forward must spread over the whole human race the architects of this great freedom like Kemal Pasha and Gandhiji, who are engaged in alleviating the pains of those suffering. The masses of Asia have to be given their due. Surely the spirits of Asia will inspire us to do so.

- What does Nehru want the Asian nations to do is the age of transition.

17.11 THE FASCINATION OF HISTORY : INTRODUCTION

In the Glimpses of history Pandit Nehru speaks about the fascination that history holds for many people. But in order to understand people or

peoples and ideologies it is important to go the context of the past. We cannot judge the past with modern ideas.

- ◆ History is not a magic show, but there is plenty of magic in it for those who have eyes to see. The ancient civilizations of Egypt - Babylon - Nineveh – the Indus valley – the coming of Aryans to India – the wonderful Chinese, Greek, Roman, Byzantine empires – the Arabs, the south American civilizations – the Mongols – the middle ages in Europe – coming of Islam to India – the great architectures of the world – the great renaissance and reformation – the expansion of the south east Asians – the industrial revolution – the colonization of Asia and Africa – finally the advance of science and its wonders – all these present a fascinating galaxy of historical pageant.
- ◆ But empires have risen and fallen. The past has brought gifts to us that the present can build on and face the future. History has many lessons to teach us. The old days were times of unquestioning blind faith in religion. Nehru feels that it is this phenomenon that the greatest temples, churches and mosques were wonderful: but those built now do not fascinate us as those of the past.
- ◆ Our age is one of disillusionment doubt uncertainty and skepticism. The injustice and unhappiness and brutality of the world make us plunge into darkness and oppress us Matthew Arnold saw the world as ‘a darkling plain, where ignorant armies clash by night’.
- ◆ But we need not despair and be negative. We can still go on enriching the lives of others through friendship and art and beautiful things of life – appreciating things and positive thinking should lead us towards action.
- ◆ It is time to seek adventure and go up the mountain seeking challenges and not just staying in the valleys of comfort zone.
 - Summarize Nehru’s views on history

17.12 THE SICKNESS OF HUMANITY : INTRODUCTION

In a letter written in 1957 Pandit Nehru says that there is feeling of depression growing within him even though he was not a pessimist, having heard of the possibility of the present generation having the power to destroy the whole world through modern warfare.

- ◆ War and the need to go for Arms acquisition are threatening the world. Fear and distrust are the motivating such activity. Even the great advance of education has not got rid of these fears. Fear feeds upon fear, as violence feeds upon violence.

- ◆ It is time for political leaders to solve this problem. Gandhi is one such leader. But all the political leaders are not so. Two great wars have brutalized humanity. Ideologies like Marxism communism have encouraged violence to achieve political or economic ends.
- ◆ The cold war between America and Russia is also a matter of grave concern. May be the answer to the problem is that pacts be formed and weapons disarmament be encouraged.
 - Expand the idea that war begins in the minds of men.

17.3 THE GREAT ADVENTURE OF MAN : INTRODUCTION

Spoken At Belgrade in 1955. Nehru says man has been engaged in 'adventure' for thousands of years inspite of ups and downs. Taking advantage of science and technology man has unveiled the secrets of nature.

- ◆ Today the progress of science has brought new visions and new ideas. But some seem to be thinking about atomic power and war. So the need of the hour is to rule out war of violence and look forward to peace and co-existence.
- ◆ Nehru believes in the freedom of the individual and the nation through a democratic system. Evil in the world should not be combated by evil means. Peace and peaceful means alone can bring about salvation to the world. India which is built on a socialistic pattern believes in truth, beauty, tolerance and gentleness. The children and youth of the world are looking forward to a better world and will continue the quest of adventure and they have to be encouraged.
 - What are the prospects of world peace?

17.14 LIFE'S PHILOSOPHY : INTRODUCTION

The last article in this section is taken from the discovery of India (1946). Pandit Nehru says that he used to have a clear-cut idea of his own philosophy of life. But the recent chaotic happenings in the world have made his views vague and disturbed. The growing distaste of politics seems to have brought about this change in his attitude to life.

- ◆ Nehru's approach to life in the beginning was one of positive thinking based on scientific outlook. But now evil seems to triumph over good and the end seems to justify the means.
- ◆ In the beginning, a kind of vague humanism appealed to Nehru. All religions seemed either to do with superstitions or dogmatic doctrines, so religion did not appeal to him. But he says that religion did supply that deeply felt need of human nature. But though religion and science seem to

conflict externally, religion does deal with the invisible which cannot be ignored.

- ◆ Science can help us and make us progress. It cannot illumine the problem of human existence. Religion merges into mysticism and metaphysics and philosophy. Nehru does not care for mysticism. Metaphysics or philosophy appeals to the mind, thinking persons tend to dabble in metaphysics and philosophy.
- ◆ In the ancient world though people were not interested in external advancement like the modern man, they often turned to philosophical speculations.
- ◆ As for himself, Nehru says that he is interested in this world, in this life, not in some other world or future life. Though the theory of the soul leaving the body, which has resulted in the theory of reincarnation, is not altogether false, Nehru for one does not subscribe to any of these religions, faiths, spiritualism and manifestations of the spirit which can be explained in the working of psychology and coincidence.
- ◆ Nehru says that he does have a sense of mysteries of unknown depths. But he does not call it god because gods have come to mean much that he does not believe in. He is able to enjoy a pantheistic kind of experience but he will not attach any idea of god to it.
- ◆ What appeals to Nehru is a kind of ethical thinking, to differentiate between right and wrong. A study of Marx and Lenin had produced a powerful effect on his mind. But the Soviet Revolution and its aftermath of curbing individual liberty did not appeal to him.
- ◆ Nehru feels a moral approach to life is good. Man must be willing to face facts and join the social revolution. Attributing religious ideas of karma, rebirth and deterministic theories to condone social evils don't appeal to him.
- ◆ He concludes the essay by commending the amazing spirit of man. Through trials and sufferings and sacrifice man has held on to ideals, truth, faith for country and honour. Man seems to have both god like and devil like characteristics. With firm conviction that the spirit of man cannot be overridden by perils and dangers, we can look forward to the joys and beauty of life and wander in the enchanted woods of nature. He finishes with these poetic lines:

To stand from fear set free, to breathe and wait,
To hold a hand uplifted over hate, and shall not loveliness
be loved for ever?

Comment on Nehru's philosophy of life.

17.15 LET US SUM UP

In the about the essays Nehru has spoken about many essays on education, language, Asia, the fascination of history and his philosophy of life.

17.16 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

1. Give a moral direction to the future generations who should have a historical sense.

17.17 REFERENCES

Dr.Sudhar Pandey, Dr.Shridar, B.Gokale. Vidya S.Netrakanti, ed.Rose Petal Selections from Jawaharlal Nehru (OUP)

LESSON – 18

ON A PERSONAL PLANE

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

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- 18.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
- 18.1 THE GREATEST TREASURE
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18.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The section ON A PERSONAL PLANE contains writings which are very personal and outspoken on the part of Nehru. They are soul searching and the student is able to have a glimpse into Nehru's mind and personality.

18.1 THE GREATEST TREASURE : INTRODUCTION

On 2nd February, 1948 in the constituent assembly Jawaharlal Nehru pours out the anguish of his soul after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi a few days ago.

- ◆ 'A glory has departed and the sun that warmed and brightened our lives has set and we shiver in the cold and dark' he said. He says it is a shame that an Indian had killed the greatest Indian. It has been a failure that we could not protect the greatest treasure that we possessed. Words cannot adequately praise this great soul. The nation and government has failed to protect this eminent person. The whole world has paid homage to this one man.
- ◆ Great people live in mostly monuments and statues, but Mahatma Gandhi was like a father to all of us. He had that divine fire in him which lighted every Indian. He lives in the heart of millions and he will live for immemorial ages. We are not worthy to praise him. He led this nation by

example demanding labour, work and sacrifice from us but he suffered a lot. One of the children he brought up had struck him.

- ◆ The future generations will judge us. At the moment we have been plunged into darkness. But that spark of light Gandhiji has left behind in our hearts can be kindled.
- ◆ We can and we will be able to make an effort, by remembering him and following the past and be illumined to do the right things.
- ◆ We are standing at the cross roads the past and the future both qualified with their pains and dangers. But this sorrowful moment will pass soon and we could always remember this great soul as the greatest symbol of the India of the past, and may I say, of the India of the future.
- ◆ He was a man of god in his life time. But he is greater in death. Gandhi would not care for mere mourning, the only way we can pay our proper homage to him is to work, labour, sacrifice and thus prove that to some extent at last we are worthy to his followers.
 - How will India be illumined again after the loss of Gandhi.

18.2 THE RASTHTRAPATI : INTRODUCITON

Taken from the Autobiography this is an excerpt that Nehru had written in 1937 about his two year tenure as president of the congress.

- ◆ This piece of prose must be properly understood. Nehru talks about how as the Rashtrapati of the congress, he had to make public appearances, in a chariot or open car, especially when he had to smile and wave at crowds who rushed to the streets to see him.
- ◆ Nehru is assailed by all kinds of thoughts. He wonders whether India needs Caesars who are looked upon like demigods. He feels that leaders can easily become fascists and dictators. But democracy does not need fascists and autocratic rulers. But he says 'Jawaharlal cannot become a fascist'. He only wants India to move ahead. Two years of congress presidentship is too much and enough. If a person is given leadership for a long period he may consider himself indispensable. Nehru does not want power and praise. He is also tired because of long years of the freedom struggle. He only wishes to serve his nation.
 - Why does Nehru think that he may become a dictator.

18.3 KAMALA : INTRODUCTION

1946 Nehru in prison thinks about his wife Kamala. This letter brings out is the respect and affection for Kamala.

- ◆ Kamala, his wife, he says had an elusive quality about her. Having been married for twenty years but sometimes, he wondered whether he knew her at all. He says a hundred aspects of her came to his mind.
- ◆ Kamala was an unsophisticated young girl when she got married. But she was a deep person and self dignified, but with no guile. She was farsighted and would voice out her opinions frankly.
- ◆ Nehru feels sorry that in the beginning, at a time she needed him, he was too busy. But he always looked forward to come back to kamala every time after a prison visit (He spent 14 years in prison from time to time). In the early days, Kamala Nehru felt wanted, to become a part of his great vocation and public life. At a time when he had not yet taken her into his work he says she used to remind him of the character created by Jagore called Chitra who wanted to share the challenges life as a mate to her hero.
- ◆ In the early 1930s Nehru and Kamala started working together. It was a delightful experience for both of them. But soon the civil disobedience movement sent him back to jail. When he was in Nainital prison the women of Allahabad under the leadership of Kamala shouldered the responsibility of organizing the work against the hard governmental acts. When Nehru came back Kamala was sick and dying. Nehru says that the best time that brought himself and Kamala close to each other. It was a wonderful bonding and understanding between them.
- ◆ Nehru felt sorry for Kamala's last days and how he could not nurse her continuously before she died. But Kamala became a part of his conscience. Even in the German prison where he was sent, he was able to bear the loneliness thinking of her. Kamala became for him a symbol of Indian women. In the early 1930s when they had gone to Ceylon they became very close on it was a wonderful but short-lived period of comradeship. Nehru and Kamala had both realized how marriage is an odd affair and it is a great legacy of mankind. It is a special relationship which needs to be cherished if mankind has to survive, because human existence is nothing, but relationships.

➤ How are Nehru's respect and affection brought out in 'Kamala'.

18.4 TO INDRA GANDHI : INTRODUCTION

Pandit Nehru who could not spend much time with his daughter, wrote to her letters which formed the *Glimpses of the World*. He gave her moral coverage and a philosophic outlook coupled with the need for her to feel for the masses and suffering of India.

- ◆ Nehru speaks about the effect that jail life had on him. The confined life in the jail gives a new perspective to life. Some get crushed and injured. But some others develop a richer life and deeper understanding, a more human outlook and poise to one's whole experience. Being denied the basic enjoyments of life, one begins to realize how we should not take things for granted. Ennui or boredom is something one has to overcome in the prison.
- ◆ Nehru tells his daughter about the process of growing up. Since life is full of contradictions one has to grow up. Nehru confesses that he has taken a long time to grow up because his childhood was one of stability. But as for Indira she has been born in turbulent times and has become mature even at a tender age.
- ◆ He says life is a queer business as long as everything is normal, it is smooth. But when problems come our way, then we have to think and probe into things. But one thing is clear - the only unchangeable law of life and world is that everything changes.
- ◆ An individual must face destiny. In the world to-day there is so much of corruption and vulgarity. But the individual must rise above the caprices of life.
- ◆ Nehru has a solution to depression. He says he never gave in to depression. There is vitality in him and that should be realized by all the people and they should look forward to a future full of promise, with the same strength of mind. The root of modern man's problem Nehru feels is the loss of link or connection with nature. Nehru has read books of philosophy and science. It is only a close relationship with nature that can help us.
- ◆ Nehru asks two questions 'why does one do anything?' and 'why does one act?' The answer is that in the journey of life man delves in to the depth of the unconscious self that urges us to do things.
- ◆ Nehru asks Indira Gandhi if she had read and met the writer, Virginia Woolf. He himself has liked to read Virginia Woolf, especially, *To The Lighthouse*. The stream of consciousness technique has a magical quality about it and one gets to glimpse not only into the past but into one's most inner being.

What are Nehru's views of life brought out in the letter to his daughter?

18.5 WILL AND TESTAMENT : INTRODUCTION

In his will and testament written on the 21st June 1954 Nehru by saying that he has received so much love and affection from the Indian people and he cannot repay in any way, but he is going to live a life worthy of the people and their affection. To his colleagues Nehru owes a debt of gratitude.

- ◆ After his death Nehru says he does not want any religious ceremonies to be performed. He doesn't believe in ceremonies. When he dies, his body has to be cremated, even if he dies in a foreign country.
- ◆ His ashes should be sent to Alahabad. A handful of it must be thrown into the Ganga because from childhood he has been attached to the river. Ganga is the river of India revolved to the people of India belonging to diverse races and different cultures Ganga to him has been a symbol and a memory of the past of India, running into the present and flowing on to the great ocean of the future.
- ◆ The people of India should continue the like with the past but shed the shackles that hinder her progress be it culture or tradition Nehru feels that he too is a link between the past and the future.
- ◆ He then wants a major portion of his ashes to be strewn from the Aeroplane into the fields of the part of India where the peasants of India toil, so that his ashes will mingle with the dust and soil of India and become an indistinguishable part of India.

18.6 LET US SUM UP

We have so far learnt various writings of Nehru.

18.7 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

1. How does the will and testament of Nehru prove his love for his country and people

18.8 REFERENCES

Dr.Sudhar Pandey, Dr.Shridar, B.Gokale. Vidya S.Netrakanti, ed.Rose Petal Selections from Jawaharlal Nehru (OUP)

UNIT IV

FICTION

Lesson – 19

R.K.NARAYAN

THE GUIDE

Contents

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19.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This lesson is devoted for detailing one of the works of R.K. Narayan besides his life.

19.1 INTRODUCTION:

R.K. Narayan, novelist, short-story writer, essayist and journalist, is one of the few Indian writers in English who have succeeded sensitively portraying the varied and colourful life in twentieth century India.

19.2 LIFE AND WORKS OF R.K.NARAYAN

R.K. Narayan was born in 1906 in Madras and had his early education there. He graduated from the Maharajah's College, Mysore, in 1933. He began as a teacher in a local high school but resigned after five days and chose writing as a career. He has written regularly for magazines and newspapers. His short, stories used to be a regular feature in the Sunday Hindu. His first novel, Swami and Friends, appeared in 1935. This was followed by Bachelor of Arts (1937), The Dark Room (1939), The English Teacher (1945), An Astrologer's

Day (1947), Mr.: Sampath (1949), The financial Expert (1952), Waiting for the Mahatma (1955), and The Guide (1956). Among his later novels maybe mentioned Malgudi Days (1957), Lawley Road, Next Sunday, Dateless Diary (1960), The Man eater of Malgudi (1961), Gods, Demons and Others (1964) and The Sweet Vendor (1967). His latest is A Horse and Two Goats (1970). Several of these volumes have been published in England. His The Guide has been made into a play and presented both at Oxford and Cambridge: It was also selected for the Sahitya Akademi Award in Literature for the year 1960. Narayan was invited by the Michigan State University as a Visiting Professor. He has also journeyed to the Philippines to write the biography of its President. He was awarded the honorary D. Litt by the University of Leeds in 1967 and was honoured by our own Government with: the title of 'Padma Bushan' for his distinguished services to Literature.

R. K. Narayan is a man of letters' pure and simple. He is a story-teller par excellence. He has touched a vast range of Indian Life and thought, but political issues and social conflicts do not figure in his stories except as general background for the fortunes of his enjoyable characters. He has a keen eye for detail and his awareness of the contemporary Indian situation is penetrating.

Employing a pure and limpid English, easy and natural in its run and tone, he presents human nature with veracity humour and compassion. He unveils with delicate touches the contrariness or The human predicament. The conflicts that lie between appearance and reality, profession and performance, the spirit and the flesh, are brought out without malice. He believes in the fundamental goodness of man.

R. K. Narayan has projected a small South Indian village called Malgudi in or around which all his events take place. The descriptions are so suggestive that the reader comes to have a strong feeling for the place's identity. William Walsh calls it a blend of "sweet mangoes and malt vinegar". The Oriental and the British are mixed in these pictures with pleasing harmony. The tiny shop with its keeper hunched on the counter selling betel-leaved and English biscuits ; a wedding with its horoscopes and gold-edged, elegantly printed invitation cards ; Kabir Lane and Lawley Extension ; Mempi Hills and Albert College ; the shaved head and ochre robes of the sanyasi and the English catalogue of cricket bats—all these bring out the amusing mixture of the East and the West that every one of us in present – day India is only too familiar with. Narayan himself had said that the mission of an Indian writer should be to express "the way of life of the group of familiar with whose psychology and background he is most familiar. By This standard Narayan's achievement is marvellous. He has succeeded in communicating to the English reader the subtleness of Indian sensibility.

19.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE

The Guide' is a very appropriate title for R.K Narayan's saga about Railway Raju. The hero of the story plays four different roles in his career and in all of them he functions as an interesting guide.

First' Raju is interested in the passengers who alight at the Malgudi Railway Station where he has a bookstall. In his readiness to help others, finds himself attending to their various requirements. It is in a spirit of camaraderie that he finds for the new comers passengers, lodging and conveyance which will suit their pockets. Then it dawns on him that this can as well be a way of living. He gathers miscellaneous from second-hand books coming into his stall and with this knowledge he entertains the tourists. He uses this newly gained information as his own original wisdom. For instance, if the tourist desires to see the source of the Sarayu, He will arrange for the ramshackle taxi of his friend Gaffer to take the tourist to the spot in the dense forest up the hill where the Sarayu starts as a trickle. He emphasizes to his customer how only Gaffur's taxi can negotiate the formidable mountain paths. After seeing the location of the source of the river, Raju waxes eloquent to the next batch of tourists about the awful beauty of the Sarayu at its source and makes it a ' must' in their itinerary. Raju. is shrewd and thereby he is able to divine after a minute's conversation with, his customer how much the latter is prepared to spread on the four. He adjusts the programme accordingly choosing a Posh Hotel or a chatra according to the convenience of the passenger.

Every tourist is impressed by Raiu's services and recommends him to others. Soon Railway Raju becomes a by-word and every tourist alighting at Malgudi Station first wants" to contact Railway Raju. The guiding of the tourists is such a whole- time job for him that he entrusts the Railway stall to the care of a boy.

It is his profession as a tourist guide that brings him into contact with, Rosie. In Marco, Raju finds him an eternal traveler. But it is the arrival of Rosie that gives an entirely new turn to his activities and feelings. He falls for Rosie at first sight and when he finds Marco neglecting her, he cashes on it and he is extra solicitous in his attention to Rosie's needs. He takes her to see the dance of the cobra and is delightfully surprised to see the dancer in her. From thereon Rosie more and more dependent on him, as her husband is impervious to her aspirations Raju has the gift of the gab and he has no difficulty in showering fulsome praise on Rosie. She becomes his mistress, and when Marco finally rejects her, having discovered her unfaithfulness, she comes to Raju as her only sympathiser. Raju now grows from a mere lover into a guide in the cultivation of her art.

Rosie becomes a popular dancer because of her inborn talents and unrelenting perseverance. But without Raju's assistance, she might have been a lovely flower, born to blush unseen and waste its sweetness on the desert air. Raju organizes Rosie's programmes with the expertise he has gained as a

tourist guide. Again, he makes up for his ignorance of art by eliciting relevant information from Rosie and those who come to visit her. Presently he can talk on Bharata Natyam like a professional and even pretends to guide Rosie on the stage through appropriate glances from his seat in the front row. His salesmanship is testified to by his changing Rosie's name to 'Nalini'. Just as he became a success as a tourist guide he becomes a still greater success as Nalini's guide. He makes money hand over fist, but this is his ruin. He starts, leading an ostentatious life, complete with drink and gambling. Since he forges Rosie's signature he lands in jail for a couple of years.

His two-year term in prison is a continuation of his guiding career though on a minor key. He becomes quite friendly with all the prisoners in that place and also he is highly serviceable to the warders and the Superintendent. He organises the kitchen garden, and the brinjals and cabbages he grows are a treat to the eye. When the two years come to a close he feels sad that he has to leave the prison. He proves to be flexible adjusting himself to any situation in which destiny place him.

Raju's last role as a guide is in the deserted temple on the river bank of the village at Mangala, very soon he impresses the people as a Swami. The simple villager Velan comes to him with his domestic problem about his sister who will not marry a groom of his choice. Raju, because of his irrepressible tendency to offer his services, asks for the girl to be brought to him. He has no solution to offer for the tangle. But the girl is mesmerised by his shrewd glance and purpose words, and agrees to her brother's choice of the groom. As a result, Raju, the ex-convict, gains the reputation of being miracle worker. Food and adoration come to him unsought from the pious villagers and Raju finds he has no choice but to assume the role thrust upon him by them.

Situations force him to be a Sadhu. Raju takes to his new role with his usual enthusiasm. The villagers find him warm in his fellow-feeling and always ready to help them. He organises classes for the children and discourses for the grown-ups. He is in his element as he harangues them on all manner of themes with attractive quotations and illustrations from the store of knowledge that he has acquired.

The people adore him as their patron saint. So when the rains fail and when there is famine & pestilence all around they look to him as their saviour. A violent quarrel brewing between two factions in the village becomes the funding point. Raju does not want the price on the scene. So he sends word through a half-wit that unless they stop fighting he will not take any food. The moron reports to the villagers that the Swami is going without food because there are no rains. The villagers hail the Swami as a Mahatma who is undertaking a twelve-day fast to get rain. It is a fateful coincidence that in one of his discourses Raju had waxed eloquent on "Puranic examples of rain being brought by a good man fasting for a couple of weeks. Raju finds his sales talk has boomeranged. He tries to cut the Gordian knot by making a clean

confession to Velan of his entire career. But, strangely enough, Velan takes this as further proof of the Swami's humility. Raju has to go through the twelve day ordeal amidst much publicity. He dies thus for a noble course.

Raju works as a tourist guide for money; he functions as an art-guide for love he finally makes a supreme sacrifice as a spiritual guide.

19.4 RAJU AS A VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCES

Railway Raju is an memorable character. Who does not do things but allows things to happen to him. Throughout his romantic and chequered career he shifts from one role to another, not out of his choice but because he cannot help going along with a tide.

Situations shape him to be a tourist guide. He owns a stall at the railway station. Though he does not know any other place other than Malgudi town, when visitors ask him about nearby places of interest, he goes into lyrical descriptions of the beauty and importance of the spots the tourist is interested in. He has the gift of the gab and he uses it skilfully. As a result he accompanies the tourist to those spots and then uses the personal knowledge he has gained to trap fresh tourists. Raju is eager to be pleasant to everyone. His ideal is to be of service to all. Ultimately he emerges as a tourist guide.

Accidentally Raju becomes the lover of Rosie. When she wants to see a cobra dance, he arranges for it and discovers the potentialities of Rosie herself as a dancer. The indifference of Marco to Rosie's aspirations in the field of art drives her closer to Raju. He poses as a lover of art and finds that he has to sponsor Rosie's programmes. His financial resources are at the lowest ebb but the students of the Albert Mission College want a dance item in their college day celebration. Rosie gets her first chance and becomes famous overnight, Raju never dreamt of becoming an impresario but his relation with and sympathy for Rosie forces him to accept this role. Once he has taken up a role he starts playing his part to perfection. He becomes as skilful an impresario as he was as a tourist guide.

Circumstances lead him to the prison. His third role as a convict. Anxious to avoid the revival of Rosie's interest in Marco, Raju forges her signature in a document and keeps the secret from her. This results in two years imprisonment. Even as a convict with his irrepressible urge to please people he befriends all the other prisoners and becomes a much-sought-for helper to the warders and the Superintendent. Again, he plays his role to perfection. It is even said that he was sorry to leave the prison."

The final role thrust on him is that of the Sadhu in the temple on the river bank. He sits on a slab by the river bank only because he has no money and no home to return to. But this is taken as the height of renunciation by the simple villagers. Attempting to talk big about things which he does not know and a readiness to please others as far as possible, make Raju play the role of the

Sadhu. When Velan brings before him the problem of his 'difficult sister, Raju reels off some high-sounding aphorisms that have no relevance to the case. He casts a puzzled glance at the girl and this works magic. The girl becomes obedient to Velan and the whole village starts talking of the Swami's miraculous powers. The knowledge he has gained of human nature, its hopes and fears, aspirations and frustrations, enable him to handle, the problem of the villagers to their satisfaction. As usual, he brags but the tall talk pays dividends. He rises steadily in the esteem of the simple people in whose midst his life is cast.

Raju's death is result of an accident. It is an situation from which he is unable to escape. To avoid the breaking out of a quarrel among the villagers, Raju sends word through a half with that unless the villagers remain good, he will not take any food. What the halfwit tells he villagers is that the Swami will not eat because there are no rains. The villagers see in this unverified declaration of their Swami the highest gesture of renunciation and service. It is an irony that a few days previously Raju had waxed eloquent on rain descending when a sage fasts. The villagers thereby conclude that the Swami is undertaking a twelve day fast to bring the much-needed rain. Even Raju's confession of his whole career to Velan does not alter the course of destiny. He is forced to undertake the fast. And, the villagers in their piety bring him no food.

Raju makes the best of the bad job. The one unselfish step he has taken in his whole career, is to treat the fasting seriously if the village is to be benefited. When things had taken an unexpected turn Raju has to resign himself to the situation and went through the twelve day ordeal with great solemnity. At the end he was claming that he could here the raining on the hills. The knowledge he has gained of human nature, his hopes and fears, aspirations and frustrations, enable him to handle, the problem of the villagers to their satisfaction. He rises steadily in the esteem of the simple people in whose midst his life is cast. Situations transform the hypocrite Raju into a saint.

19.5 SATIRE IN THE GUIDE:

Narayan shows masterly skill in working out the transformation of the Railway Guide into a half reluctant and half- purposeful Guru. A mosaic of ironic complications are neatly woven together but the irony is not a mere blend of the comic and the tragic. As we follow Raju's career told in two series of narrations, one by the author and the other by the Swami, the reader is disturbed by a number of "questions about human motives and actions. The problems of the man and the mask, appearance and reality, ends and means or focus.

It looks as if everyone is in someway or the other a fraud. Raju boasts to his tourist clients about the beauty of a spot which he has never seen. He speaks of the source of a river for which he has never cared. Patronising Gaffur's

ramshackle taxi, he extols it to the skies as the only vehicle that can negotiate the forest path. Not knowing anything about dance he becomes a successful impresario. He can get a train reservation at a moment's notice, reinstate a dismissed official, nominate a committee member, get a boy admitted in a school and procure a vote for a co-operative election. All these he considers important social service bought at the current market price. The satire is pungent in Raju's declaration that the permit is more powerful than the once almighty dollar. When Raju is arrested for forgery not a single one of his drinking companions coming to his rescue.

Again, with his single dhoti and shaven head he is mistaken for a Sadhu. He gets caught in the trap of the credulity of the simple villagers. He plays his part by making pontifical statements that mean nothing. When Velan brings before him his 'problem sister', Raju says that what must happen must happen. He gazes at the river and adds that no power on earth or in heaven can change the course of the river.' Again, it is to prevent a conflict between the two factions in the village, that Raju threatens not to touch food. But the idiot boy misdelivers the message and the villagers take it that their Swami is undertaking a fast to bring down the rains. There is rich irony in the situation when Raju longs for bondas and the respectful villagers come to him empty-handed. There is further tragic irony in Velan accepting the Swami's autobio-graphy as further evidence of his humility.

Narayan's satire focuses on the fraudulent Sadhus and credulous disciples, and also questionable lawyers. The 'adjournment lawyer' who handles his case with Seth is an expert in getting hearings postponed. The more famous lawyer from Madras who handles the forgery case is also an adjournment lawyer at a higher level. He can go on talking about his case nonstop. The judge would never get a chance to say anything in between. When finally Raju is sentenced, the lawyer looks gratified. He declares that normally Raju should have been sentenced to seven years. The lawyer takes credit for knocking five years off the verdict.

Narayan's satire on fraudulent individuals pervades throughout the book. Almost in every page there is matter for laughter, even as the teacher of the pyol school is a fraud. He gathers a score of children every morning on the pyol, reclines on a cushion in a corner, flourishes the cane, abuses the little ones in choice language and traces their genealogy on either side with thoroughness. Equally ludicrous is Marco who will not yield an anna without a voucher, but who will write off his entire fortune if a properly filled-up slip of paper is submitted to him. His appearance itself is comic. With his coloured glasses, thick jacket and a water-proof helmet, he looks like a spaceman ready to take off any moment. He is passionately interested in the pre-historic paintings in gloomy caves but he is not aware of the living artist in his wife. Narayan's satire is handled elegantly to expose the evils of society. The novel thus throws light on common human weaknesses follies and foibles.

19.6 PORTRAYAL OF THE INDIAN SOCIETY IN THE GUIDE:

The name Malgudi has become synonymous with R. K. Narayan's novels. The major events described in his stories are supposed to have happened in this typical south Indian 'town. The fabric of social life found pictured here bears resemblance to the slice of humanity found in any other semi-urban settlement in India. It can with justification be claimed that Malgudi is the microcosm of India. Perhaps R. K. Narayan has as his model Thomas Hardy who has created an unforgetable Wessex as the back drop for his novels. The inhabitants of Malgudi are the proto-types of the vast multitude of Indians occupying different parts of life. The art of R. K. Narayan also reminds one of Jane Austen who gave truthful representation of the society which came within the compass of her experience. R. K. Narayan has given the view that an Indian writer may aim at expressing the way of life of the group of people with whose psychology and background he is most familiar. In providing a miniature representation of the contemporary society with, odd and eccentric characters he has taken a detached view not making explicit where his sympathies lie.

We come to know of Malgudi through Narayan's maiden work *Swami and Friends*. From the details of its description we come to know it to be a small town with an agricultural background in the process of Westernisation. R. K. Narayan's successive novels give an account of the growth of this town as a result of industrialization and the impact of Western culture. In the course of development Malgudi has attracted visitors of dubious nature from the outside world. And also new residential areas have sprung up which required the formation of new streets. New institutions were added in due course. Though community life comes under strain as the society is exposed to outside influence the essential nature of its humanity remains the same.

Raju in the story recalls his life in the village and we get a vivid picture of the innocent folk there. It is always Narayan's intention to poke fun at the frailties of the custom-ridden Indian society. But at the same time he is aware of its rich traditions which contribute to its stability and help the continuation of its cherished values in social life.

The unique feature of Indian society is its caste system. In giving an ironic view of Indian panorama Narayan never fails to portray the ludicrous situations the system affords in the social context. It is told in the novel that Rosie belonged to a family of temple dancers who were looked down by the upper classes. Allergic to the tradition of her caste she wanted to free herself from it. She got a degree and wanted to pursue an independent career. She saw the matrimonial advertisement of Marco in the Newspapers expressing his preference for an educated bride irrespective of caste. Narayan just mentions the prevailing caste system without revealing his views on the merits or demerits of the system.

The novel pictures the social life of a lower middle class people with significant details. It gives a poignant view of an agricultural community which had suffered for generations. But the members of this community are knit by the bond of strong attachment for the family. In the story we are told about the brother of Raju's mother who is much devoted to his sister. In times of difficulties the brother is called for and is required to give assistance which he offers with devotion. When the sister's family is ruined he gives her refuge.

The innocence of the villagers often land themselves in legal tangles and are made victims of pretenders in the profession. We see the character of an adjournment expert in the novel. When a criminal Case was filed against Raju for abusing his creditor; the taxi driver Gaffur got the services of, this lawyer for him. This adjournment lawyer was well known for his ability to slow down court proceedings for which he was paid substantially. When Raju was charged with the act of forgery he was defended by a famous lawyer 'from Madras. He had a knack for splitting a case into bits and arguing each bit for days together. He charged an exorbitant fee. He gave no time or opportunity for the judge to say anything. He gave a twist to the case that it was Raju who was offended. But the judgement was unfavourable to Raju. The lawyer was gratified that his argument was successful in reducing the punishment to two years instead of seven- years' imprisonment.

The way the ex-convict was elevated to the rank of a saint, bears evidence to the gullibility of the people and their unreserved faith in the saffron-clad ascetics. The rustics of Malgudi did not bother to verify the identity of the person whom they expected to do miracles for them. The villagers brought a variety of presents to him. His mystifying statements were taken as gospel, truth. Velan is a typical disciple whose unflinching devotion to his guru can become the model of a blind follower.

The way the general public and the agencies of the government behave does not seem to be exaggerated to one who is familiar with Indian context. Narayan jocularly describes the vivid scene. As the crowds increased, the health authorities came with the preventive measures. Press reporters swarmed the place despatching telegrams without end. The roads were choked with traffic and the whole area reverberated with devotional songs. An American journalist also visited swamiji and took several photographs. The government deputed doctors to examine his condition periodically.

The people's faith in the exaggerated spiritual powers of ascetics is satirised in the behaviour of rustics of Malgudi. The superstitions of his countrymen become the butt of Narayan's satire. In the novel we get a glance of Indian polity with its warth and moles.

19.7 CHARECTER OF RAJU

Raju, the prominent character of *The Guide* is fit to become the hero of a picaresque novel. The most characteristic feature of R. K. Narayan's writing is the use of irony which makes his words humorous and at the same time thought provoking. This is evident in *The Guide*, especially in the characterisation of the hero using delicate touches which bear the tint of irony to make up his profile. As to his heredity he was son of a petty grocer. He had no inclination to study and so he became a dropout. Hence he was apprenticed to his father's profession, shop keeping. His education which was left incomplete was supplemented by bits of information which he picked up on the railway platform. The second hand books which were sold in his stall gave him sufficient material for his general reading. What he learned by bits and scraps was put to profitable use when he launched his career as a tourist-guide.

The vocation as guide opened up splendid occasion for Raju to meet a wide spectrum of humanity which further enriched his grasp of men and matters. The arrival of Marco and Rosie to Malgudi marked a turning point in Raju's life. It appeared that all the professional training he has so far gained was destined to be of service to this pair. Marco came first, enlisted Raju's service, and started sight-seeing. He was later joined by his wife Rosie. She was an enchanting figure and it turned Raju's head. He vowed to minister to her needs at the first sight itself. Marco and Rosie were an odd pair who shared no common interest in life. Marco appeared rather eccentric in his dress and manners; but he was a scholar interested in cave paintings and mural decorations; epigraphy was his sole interest in life. Inscription on stone in remote places attracted him, But Rosie's ambitions in life was to become a model of a top class dancer; but her husband had given little notice to her talents. He despised her liking for Bharathanatyam which for him is no better than monkey tricks. But Rosie found in Raju an admirer of her talents. Her desire to see a Cobra dance was fulfilled when he took her to a village.

Their stay at Malgudi brought estrangement to the couple. However Raju took them to the Peek house, the forest bungalow at Mempi Hill, an ideal place for their stay. But Marco was head over heels with what seemed to Rosie eccentric pursuits while she was allowed to sulk in loneliness. Raju exploited the misunderstanding between the husband and wife and ingratiated into the favour and finally dethroned Marco from her heart. He was able to win her by his own artifice and the disenchantment of Rosie with her husband facilitated the conquest. By his glib tongue and manoeuvring skill he was able to persuade her to break her marriage vow and make her his mistress. Thus he proves himself a depraved person and adopt a course which further undermines his character.

A silver lining in his character is his genuine concern for Rosie. He devoted all his time and energy to give her training to become an

accomplished, dancer. After Marco left Malgudi in a huff the lovers lived as husband and wife avoiding the inconvenience of a conventional marriage.

Her first performance was at Albert Mission College annual function.. This marked the beginning of her flourishing career as a dancer. He changed her name to Nalini. Invitations for performance came from distant quarters. Money flowed in. It became the challenging task of Raju to take the role of manager to chart out her programmes and handle the financial matters. He was able to hold the show for some time,

They moved to a posh house in the new extension and lived in style. His old house fell to his creditor. There was further proof for the depravity of his character. He took to drinking besides gambling.- This marked another dimension to his depravity and hastened his fall. There was a turn for the worse when Marco's volume entitled The Cultural History of India was brought to the house. Raju hid the book as he was afraid that it might soften Rosie's heart to Marco. But the review of the book -appeared in the 'Illustrated Weekly' with Marco's photo. Rosie's passion for the ex-husband was revived and Raju found himself in bad light. Raju's guilt of hiding the book was also revealed. The episode revealed that he was capable of stealthy behaviour in small matters. Next came the final blow when Raju forged Rosie's signature to retrieve Rosie's jewellery from the Bank. He suffered imprisonment for a term. Full play of irony is found in

in the description of Raju's exemplary behaviour in the prison. The man who was guilty of all offences in the outside world became the model of a prisoner in the jail. He was allowed to walk behind the superintendent as his A.D.C.

The finest moment in his life came when he was compelled to act the part of saint. The gullible villagers headed by Velan attributed spiritual powers to him. He was constrained to take a role, for which he was the least qualified. He was mute to fast while he hungered for 'bonda'. He was forced to starve to bring rain to the scorched land. He confided to Velan the true story of his life. But it enhanced the dimwitted Velan's faith in him. He was put under the obligation of praying for the villagers for rains standing in the river. As there was no escape he finally assumed the role the villagers had given him and devoted his thought to unselfish purpose for the first time. Before his fall he imagined that it rained on the hills.

Raju was caught in the net of his own weaving from which there was no escape. Martyrdom was imposed on him. His sainthood was only skin deep. Though he told the whole story to Velan there was no sincere repentance for his past sins.

19.8 LET US SUM UP

R.K.Narayan in the character of Raju brilliantly exposes the evils of society. The characters are memorable. The graphic portrayal of Malgudi is arresting.

19.9 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

1. Comment on the character of Raju?
 2. What is the significance of the title “The Guide”?
 3. How does R.K.Narayan portray the evils of society?
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LESSON - 20

ANITA DESAI

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20.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This lesson details about one of the important Indian Women writers called Anita Desai and her works

20.1 INTRODUCTION

The emergence of women novelists in Indian English literature took place as early as the last quarter of the nineteenth century. After independence, that they could make solid contribution to Indian English fiction. The post-Independence period, has brought to the forefront a number of noted women novelists who have enriched Indian English.

The woman has been the focus of many literary works in this period. Writers like Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande have achieved recognition in recent times.

Problems of women which were till now in the periphery have now shifted to the centre. Through the eyes of these women writers, one gets a glimpse of a different world till now not represented in literature. Women, who were till then treated as second class citizens were assigned their due place in these novels. These novels present a picture of the impact of education on women, her new status in the society and her assertion of individuality. The works of Indian women novelists like Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande can be compared with those of the Canadian novelists like Margaret Atwood and

Margaret Lawrence. All these writers write of life as seen by women and life as affecting women.

Anita Desai probes the irrational which surfaces in Human' relationships and expresses a dimension of existential doubt. She takes up the question of cultural counter. She exhibits a deep concern for feministic principle. 'She also examines the creative process. She tries the technique of discovery of her creative potentialities while revealing the thematic material. In all her writing the spirit of humanism and her love for humanity is explicit.

20.2 LIFE AND WORKS OF ANITA DESAI

Anita Desai was born in Mussorie on 24th June 1937, to a Bengali father and German mother. She began writing fiction at the age of seven and published small pieces in children's magazines. She was educated at Queen Mary's school first and at Miranda house, later at Delhi university, where she took her B.A. Degree in English literature in 1957.

Anita Desai got married to Ashwin Desai, she has four children. She has been living in various cities, Calcutta, Bombay, Chandigarh, Delhi and Poona. The life of people in these cities finds expression in her novels.

Anita Desai wrote her first novel Cry The Peacock in (1963) which was considered by the literary world to be a poetic piece of great lyric quality. Her other novels Voices in the City (1965) Bye Bye Blackbird (1971) Where Shall we go this summer.

20.3 STORY OUTLINE OF “WHERE SHALL WE GO THIS SUMMER”

Anita Desai's *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* describes the cruelty and callousness of urban life. It marks a return to the autonomous world of inner reality. When Sita is with child again she panicks at the thought of bringing a new. , She runs away to a small island to avoid the harsh reality. Her sudden capitulation comes as an anti-climax. Sita, a sensitive, emotional and middle-aged woman feels alienated from her husband and children. She undergoes acute mental agonies. She silently- suffers in isolation because of her sharp existentialist sensibility and explosive emotionality. The novel is a pointer to her angst and ennui of her anguished soul. Her character consists in her inwardness, introversion and the resultant psychic odyssey.

Sita tries to visualise the world of her dreams. But ultimately she intensifies her desire to recapture the experience and excitement in her. Therefore, she comes to a dilemma to decide as to where she should go that summer.

Sita in *Where Shall We Go this Summer ?* is over forty. She hangs between married life and her self-fulfilment. While she is awaiting the birth of her fifth child, her experiences of a house wife and mother as well accumulate

in her deep anguish. She feels no genuine happiness in her marital context. Her hopelessness rises and makes her insensitive, cruel and alien to her husband and children. Her insanity drives her back to preserve the sense of sanity by escaping from her routine life in a Bombay apartment to rush to Manori, an Island in the West-coast. Her immature longing torments her. Her bondage to Raman and children creates conditions those are responsible for the misfortunes. She is termed mad and she is entirely out of the common crowd of life. In plain words she tells her husband:

"What I am doing is trying to escape from the madness here, escape to a place where it might be possible to be sane again....,

Sita loses her grip on life and develops in mind uncertain and unrealistic attitude towards life. Though she rebels against the birth of the fifth child, she has certain longing in her heart which she misses entirely. She wants to protect her unborn child against the cruel atmosphere in which she is living. In a freak of madness she aims at abortion and flies to the Island:

In order to achieve the miracle of not giving birth. Wasn't this Manori, the Island of miracles? Her father had made it an Island of magic once, worked miracles of a kind. She has grown tired of the life of dullness and disappointment of her family. She, therefore, wants to seek her childhood as a place of her happiness again. This Island may provide her a refugee camp safe from her family life, away from the humdrum life of Bombay. By going there she tries to connect the changes, distortions and revelations between the present and the past in her middle age. Her longings or lust for the miracles associate her vision and she finds no answers to her deep anguish rather, she finds herself like a jelly fish stranded on the sand-bar slowly suffocating and unable to survive on the sands of life.

For a change in her present existence she desires shelter in the Island: She saw that Island illusion us a refuge, a protection. It would hold her baby safely unborn, my magic. Then there would be the seal, it would wash the frenzy out of her, drown it. Perhaps, the tides would lull the children too, into smother, softer beings.

The betrayals, treacheries, confusions and compromises lead her into intense suffering. Though the Island holds no magic now for her, the illusion tramples upon her. The companionship is now a myth of her motherhood. She attempts for a futile search for some purpose in life. Her anxiety, concern and pessimism produce emotional outbursts and she undergoes a search for an escape to be alive to her sensitivity. Her arrival at Manori has given her a new life, a new awareness, a new consciousness. She now realizes "what a farce marriage was, all human relationship.

Sita visualizes the world of her dreams and once again she intensifies her desire to recapture an experience, an excitement and an innocence. Her

instant decision as to where she would go that summer, and her decision to go back to the Island of Manori after twenty years in her journey in quest for her lost innocence. Not only Sita is longing in her heart to go to the Island but the Islanders are also waiting for twenty years looking for something. She is disappointed with them and they feel equally disappointed with her. There are impossible expectations on both sides.

The misunderstanding between Raman and Sita results into marital discord but Sita as an ideal wife tries to idealize the relationship between a husband and wife. She feels that a life of complete inwardness and subjective approach is not the way to make one's life happier. Though she has begun to drift away mentally, she indulges sometimes in introspection and sometimes in retrospection of her unhappy married life. She is, disgusted with her life and her alienation is inherent in her relationship with her father. Naturally she is unable to maintain conformity with the established norms of society. Though she tries to encounter it effectively, but she misses to communicate her reaction[^] against every incident. Thus, she is left like a stranger longing for the life of that primitive world.

We see her trying to adjust in the house of her husband's parents after marriage. There she feels like a square peg in a round hole. The sub-human atmosphere in the house makes her inward looking and places her in a suffocating existence. She fails to adopt herself to society. She moves in a small flat and lives alone with her husband and children. Her life there is hardly better, her privacy is disturbed, she finds her existence at stake, she struggles with the monotony of life. The novelist beautifully describes this monotonous moments of Sita as follows : ... and could not begin to comprehend her boredom. She herself looking on it, saw it stretched out so vast, so flat, so deep, that in fright she scrambled about it, searching for a few of these moments that proclaimed her still alive, not quite drowned and dead

The agonies and the chain of unhappy incidents in Sita's life makes her a strong character to refuse the dictates of society. It adds to the dimension of her existential character. She does not work on social principles but she desires to live like a saint, a magician and as the original inhabitants of Manori with Moses and Meriam. When Raman comes to take Menaka for admission to the Medical College, his arrival gives Sita some sort of satisfaction but at the same time she comes to realise once again the cold actualities of life. Though it is not a positive solution of her problem, yet she looks within herself and a sense of cowardish approach and escapism overpowers her. She feels that she had escaped from duties and responsibilities, from order and routine, from life and the city, to the unlivable island, she had refused to give birth to a child in a world not fit to receive the child. She had the imagination to offer it an alternative a life unlived, a life butchered. She had cried out her great "No" but now the time had come for her epitaph to be written.

Thus, we find that her withdrawal is indicative of a need for love, the free and unquestioning love. This kind of love transcends the self and makes no claims. It is this kind of relationship which she wants from Raman but she does not achieve the goal in her life. When Raman comes she wants to lay down her head and weep "My father's dead look after me". But she is told that he has come not for her but for children. At this stage also she has to accept the fact that she is a woman unloved.

Emotion, instinct, feeling, reason occupy the central theme of all the novels of Anita Desai. The mystery remains unsolved. Sita comes from her maimed or incomplete family. Her mother has run away from her home leaving the children to the care of their father. She confesses her longing in life. She is an orphan either factually or emotionally.

20.4 THEMES OF "WHERE SHALL WE GO THIS SUMMER"

Where shall we Go This Summer? portrays the emotional and temperamental chasm between the pairs of lovers in the novel. The natural flow of affection between the lovers, is very often intact but more frequently it is blocked due to misunderstanding, lack of adequate forbearance and patience. The central theme in the novel is Sita's repugnance and disgust at the thought of the birth of her fifth child. She is an experienced keen eyed mature mother. She knows the joy of motherhood and is comparatively contented. But she is emotionally hurt in the recent years; her shock comes from modern town culture. The strain involved in the earlier childbirths was not felt but being hurt in several ways this time she is not prepared for the delivery of the child. She is afraid that different nurses and doctors will offer indignity to her person. The process of hospitalisation and the details of the procreative procedure are repugnant even in their mental picturing to Sita. Therefore she seeks to escape from this predicament. The theme of this novel is a very complex one but very delicately handled by the novelist.

Sita is of course affectionate to her husband, she has a deep concern for his problems, but she has an unquiet mind. Unable to compromise with her husband. She leaves for the Island Manor!. Once she leaves her husband she feels very sorry for having abandoned him. She thinks he will suffer without being able to look after their children properly. To quote her agonised speech: "His boys at home must have worried him, while he was at work in the factory¹ which was not without its problems either. He looked worn much older than his years. Nor could he stay here resting as she was doing. But Sita is often despondent and unhappy and fails to satisfy her husband by a show of natural affections, and emotional and affectionate reassurances, so frequently needed to make life pleasant, she regards the assurance as false. "It simply did not exist for her and should not make it exist. So she did not speak any words of love or reassurance to him.

Free flow of love and sympathy may make marital life heavenly but Anita Desai's ladies being born with higher sensibility fail to provide them.

This is the kind of emotional inadequacy existing between pairs of lovers in her books. There is no deliberate attempted element in their discord. The discords are the results of temperamental differences and there is an unconscious quality about them. Thematically Anita Desai makes a minute study of the under-current feelings between the husband and wife. Thus the husband is irritated by Sita's exaggerated concern about the welfare of the helpless eagle being attacked by crows. He rejoices in Sita's discomfiture at the outcome of the incident. "They've made a good job of your eagle", (said her husband coming out with her morning cup of tea. "Look at the feathers sticking out of that crow's beak, He laughed".

Because of this standing difference between the two Sita does not open her heart to her husband and maintains a certain reserve, which is the inherent seed of permanent discord of a subtle and minor type between the two. In circumstances, she desirous of complete surrender to her husband, on his visit to Manori keeps back her feelings. "She felt so weak, she wanted to lay down her head and weep, "My father's dead-look after me". She cleared her throat. "All right, she said hoarsely...". I "he natural flow of affections and necessity of affections is thus retarded. The deep psychological insight of human nature that Anita Desai possesses reminds one of the tradition of George Eliot. The novelist brings out this point all through the book and frequently refers to Sita's "Wanting and not being given. What she wanted" and refers to her face. "It was the face of a woman unloved a woman rejected". The theme of needs, of love rejected or not understood characterises most of her novels.

20.5 CHARECTER OF SITA

Desai's Where shall We Go This Summer? is essentially a study of the marital discord resulting from the conflict between two irreconcilable temperaments and two diametrically different view points represented by Sita and her husband Raman. Sita is a sensitive, emotional middle aged woman saddled with four children. She feels alienated from her husband and children and undergoes acute mental agonies silently in isolation solely because of her sharp existentialist sensibility and explosive emotionality. Though she is placed in comfortable circumstances. She feels utterly lonely at heart where ever she was, with her husband and his family or away from him. The very interrogative title of this novel Where shall We Co This Summer? is a pointer to the very angst and ennui of her anguished soul. Sita, is a highly introverted character and the very appeal of her character consists in her inwardness, introversion and the resultant psychic odyssey.

Disgusted with the sweaty hustle and bustle of humdrum life and tortured by the 'Paranoic' fear of her fifth undesired pregnancy and imminent parturition, Sita along with her tw children Menaka and Karan, leaves behind her husband in despair, runs away from Bombay and comes to Manori to achieve the miracle of not giving birth to her child. This is actually ascribable to her deep seated reverence for libe, and to her unwillingness to accept

violence. Moses the caretaker of the house takes them across the sea to the island house built by Sita's father. She discovers the house deserted for over twenty years. She feels highly disappointed to find her father's house in a sorry state.

Sita's alienation from her husband is inherent in her relationship with her mysterious father. Temperamentally they are poles apart. This temperamental schism between them is in fact nowhere more effectively communicated than in the little scene where they talk about the stranger they encountered on their way back from Ajanta and Ellora.

"He seemed so brave", she blurted when Raman asked her why she had once more brought up the subject of the high-kicking foreigner, months later. "Brave? Him?", Raman was honest amused. He was a fool - he didn't even know which side of the road to wait on. "Perhaps that was only innocence". Sita faltered, "and it made him seem more brave not knowing anything but going on nevertheless".

Sita's unconscious recognition of the irrationality of the stranger is illustrative of her own longing for a life of primitive reality as well as her alienation from her husband. After her marriage, Sita begins to live in the house of her husband's parents, she feels like a square peg in a round hole. She finds everyone disgusting and family life insufferable. They are incapable of introspection and have no inwardness and capacity for self examination which are the signs of an authentic existence. To challenge them, to shatter their complacency, and to shock them into a recognition of the reality, Sita behaves provocatively -she starts smoking and begins "to speak in sudden rushes of emotion, as though flinging darts at their smooth, unscarred faces".

Sita also alienates herself from society. The ayahs, cooks the nameless and forceless multitudes appear to her to be animals. She finds the majority of people living like animals. She says "They are nothing - nothing but appetite and sex. Only food, sex and money matter, Animals. My pet animals - or wild animals in the forest, yes. But these are neither - they are like pariahs you see in the streets, hanging about drains and dustbins, waiting to pounce and kill and eat".

Later on, Sita moves to a small flat where she lives alone with her husband and children. But even then she thinks the same way for the practical and matter-of-fact, people continue to intrude upon her privacy. She finds them absolutely unacceptable, and 'their vegetarian complacency and 'stolidity 'not only infuriate but also humiliate her'. "She took their insularity and complacency as well as the aggression and violence of others as affronts upon her own living nerves". The greatest threat to Sita's existence is boredom. Her husband engrossed in his business and the children were growing independent, she finds herself struggling in the grip of the monster

boredom. But tragically enough, her husband fails to comprehend how or why or with what she gets bored. Desai beautifully brings out Sita's boredom, "She herself looking on it saw it stretched out so vast, so flat, so deep, that in fright she scrambled about it, searching for a few of these moments that proclaimed" her still alive, not quite drowned and dead.

Sita's life tormented by loneliness and boredom represents modern married woman's existentialist predicament to which others offer no solutions but Anita Desai offers a positive one in this novel. The agony and unhappiness in Sita's soul spring from her inability to flow with the general current of society. She uncompromisingly makes a strong stand and refuses to accept the cruel dictates of society to which the average people submit so uncomplainingly. Her anguished soul cries out. "He who refuses does not repeat should he be asked again. He would say No a gain .and yet that NO - the right No. crushes him for the rest of his life".

The conflict between Sita and her uninvolved children is brought to focus in the concluding part of the novel. Menaka and Karan both fail to adjust to the primitive life on Manori. They long to return to the highly sophisticated urban life in Bombay to which they are used. The sharp conflict between Sita and Menaka is depicted in the scene in which the former discusses with the latter about the poverty of science and opulence of art. Sita says, "Science can't be as satisfactory. It is all - all figures statistics, logic. Science is believing that two and two make four-pooh" And a little later continuing her argument, she says, "It leads you to a dead one. There are no deadends, now in Art. That is something spontaneous, Menaka, and alive and creative..." But Menaka dismisses the argument saying, that is all nonsense" This temperamental conflict between mother and daughter also remains unresolved in the novel.

On Menaka's invitation, Raman comes to Manor! to take Menaka and Karan back to Bombay. Menaka wants to apply for admission to the medical college. The children are excited to see their father. So Sita feels "That they were being disloyal to her, disloyal to the island and its wild nature". After his arrival and through her reluctant conversation with him she cannot escape from the cold actualities of life. She feels she was a coward, an escapist. She had escaped from duties and responsibilities from order and routine, from life and the city to as unlivable island. She has refused to give birth to a child in a world not fit to receive the child. She had the imagination to offer it an alternative - a life unlivd, a life bewitched, She had cried out her great "No, But now the time had come from her epitaph to be written". Sita intensely realizes that life must flow on, and she must have courage as Raman has, to flow on with life. She admits to herself what Raman has felt:

"Life must be continued, and all its business - Menaka's admission to medical college gained, wife led to hospital, new child safely brought forth, the

children reared, the factory seen to, a salary earned, a salary spent... alienation is due to the humedrum life. She is forced to live with Sita's husband and children in the busy city like Bombay.

The ending of the novel is positive. It is highly encouraging and life enchancing. Sita neither kills anyone nor commits suicide nor dies nor goes mad. She compromises with sita and becomes courageous enough to face life boldly with its ups and downs to take the rough with the smooth by connecting the inward with the outward, the prose with the passion, the individual with society.

Thus we see how the stress and strains of a family life affects Desai's protagonist sita who initially feels a sense of alienation, but finally resigns herself to accepting reality.

20.6 STYLE AND TECHNIQUE OF ANITA DESAI

Anita's Where shall we go this Summer? is also a study of marital discord. In this novel the husband is a successful businessman - practical, realistic, a matter of fact commonplace - having a rather pragmatic view about life. Sita wants to create the miracle of not giving birth to her fifth child in this violence torn world. She goes to the island of Manori where feels alienated.

Like many other literary artists Anita Desai is only analysing the absurdity of the situation in which man is situated, the gulf between man and the world he is living in. Desai is interested in the private rather than the outer world of the characters. For her, political, social, religious and moral ideas but an exploration and an inquiry. According to her "Writing is not an act of deliberation of reason or choice it is a matter of instinct silent and waiting" (Dalmia 5) Desai's characters are peculiar and eccentric rather than common. The minor and incidental characters are picked up by her from real life. The major characters are not from real life. "They are entirely imaginary or an amalgamation of several different characters" (Jain 1 4) .

Most of her female protagonists are sensitive and solitary to the point of being neurotic. Sita in Where Shall We go This Summer? belong to this category. Desai uses the technique of flashback and stream of consciousness in some of her novels.

Anita Desai has been left free to employ simply the language of the interior. Her preference for the inner world with the language of the interior is a reference to both form and subject. She was able to transcend the problem of tradition by developing her power of vision to guide her in her choice of form and subject. Her use of English as medium has always helped her to express clearly and naturally.

Anita Desai is a conscious craftsman and works for her effects with caution and care. She builds her plots and people and style so as to produce the effects she has in mind. It does not mean that the subconscious and

the unconscious are not brought into play. However her art is not without blemishes. There is also a solid basis of thought working in her writings. The most redeeming point of her mind and art is a process of growth, that has not heretofore been traced.

Mostly her characters in novel after novel are studies in inadequate love-relations. Men are as a rule worldly, pragmatic, rational, unemotional, devoted to work and business, undemanding and unresponsive to the dictates of the heart. Women are the human species, gifted with deeper emotional, artistic powers, romantic, passionate, demanding, confiding to their secret souls all their disappointments. Some extraordinary, legendary father figures get established in the textures of books, a sort of male-giants beside whom the protagonists are diminutive dwarfs. Most of them are impressive and unforgettable.

Anita Desai achieve a marvelous mastery over language. It is sensitive, highly responsive, tenuous, rich dynamic and suitable for all modes of thought and tension in the novel Cry the Peacock. It exudes with high-strung lyricism and poetry, Desai puts her powers and talents to test at the outset of her literary career and strives to create a rapport with the readers. The language uses the full gamut of Anita Desai's vocabulary which is often elevated and demonstrative of her capabilities. The subject - the showing of the working of a fevered and oversensitive psyche - is very ambitious and daring.

Anita Desai's works suffer from all the limitations and also strength of a pure novel in which all the literary constituents are subordinated to the needs of proportion and a harmonious artistic design. She cannot indulge in creation of comic situations her forte in characterisation is the delineation of female protagonists, mostly obsessional and psycho-pathic. In both plot and characterisation and also themes some patterns repeat themselves. Her characters lack variety and vividness. Her range of vision is constricted to the serious life spectacle. Humour and comedy are yet beyond her. In this field she is a complete contrast to the spirit of Jane Austen.

The focusing on the inside is replaced by concentration on external spectacle and action Where shall we Go this Summer? takes the readers to the wonderland of miracle and mystery. This is not a more escapist indulgence in dream and vision. There are situation on that arises in human life when one likes to transcend reality - where transcending fact becomes a downright necessity. Exploration of the possibilities to transcend reality and phenomenon is a mighty psychic effort and only proves how chained and tied man is.

Anita Desai by selecting characters from life and studying them with humanistic interest has enriched the readers knowledge and awareness of his culture, tradition and the modern circumstances. Her knowledge of psychology has helped, in her skilful study of the emotional life of her characters and their alienated circumstances, she has also tried to picturise the characters who are ever in search of new values. They find

themselves misfit in the traditional order and they try to create new values. These values are worth striving for according to them. But the waves of life bring them back to the traditional values. They accept the reality and they try to learn to live with the traditional values. Anita Desai has thus been successful in finding an abiding solution to the sufferings of mankind-not in escapism but in acceptance and a willingness to face things courageously.

20.7 ANITA DESAI AS A NOVELIST

Anita Desai is one of the most significant fiction writers today. She finds place in book-review, journals, interviews and seminars. In critical literature on Indian writing in English Anita Desai is seldom obliterated. It is a humble venture to analyse flashback, diary-entries, self-analysis, reminations, rumbling of dialogues and descriptions of -places and people, etc. Looking inward in her characters, Anita Desai also explores the intricate facts of human experience bearing upon the central experience of psychic tensions of characters. The further chapters aim to study, analyse and focus attention on her quest for self, *delineation* of inner crisis and encounter with nothing ness.

Anita Desai is a minstrel of the human heart, an artist shaping the contours of his inner world. She is concerned exclusively with the personal tragedy of individuals. Hardly interested in social conditions, political events and the mundane habital of the characters; she explores the interior layers of her character's mind and brings to the surface, by the suppression of non-essentials, various shades of human psyche. She brushes aside unimportant things on the part of the individual and gives us fleeting thoughts with razor-like sharp awareness of the futility of individual's existence. Thus, most of her characters are overcast by shadows and half-shadows, half-revealed and half-concealed.

Anita's chief concern is human relationship. Her central theme is the existential predicament of an individual which she projects through incompatible couples, very sensitive wives and ill-matched husbands. Anita Desai is a mute observer perceiving everything minutely and delicately. Whenever she creates a typical situation she gives it a perfect poetic treatment to every details. Though her characters are self-conscious of the realitve around them, they carry with them a sense of loneliness, alienation and pessimism. She deals with the dislocation of normal life, recklessness of behaviour and morbidity of temperament, maladjustments in family life of contradictions. Anita Desai dives deeply, darkly and silently; she tries to work out the inconsistencies and dichotomies of the virgin territories of modern life-style. She adds a new dimension turning inward into the realities of life and plunges into the deep-depths of the human psyche to score out its mysteries, turmoil and chaos inside the mind of her characters. It is imperative on our part to discuss her techniques of articulating such experiences of inner and outer realities. It seems that the, imagination of the novelist is horrified by emptiness of modern life, a sense of insecurity surrounds the milieu of her fiction as is the

case with Saul Bellow's or Margaret Atwood's. Since she spotlights the complexities of human nature, distortion of personality and an infinite variety of individuals, we have to search out reality of life in such individuals.

As she stands influenced by Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence and Faulkner, we have to discover the theories of art propounded by these writers and also by Anita Desai in the light of her characters in her novels *Cry*, *The Peacock* and *Where Shall We Go This Summer*. We also find in her writing an effort to discover, underline and convey the significance of things through imagery and symbols. Sometimes, she completes and sometimes she incompletes which she perceives. For truth and reality, the inner life and the outer life of the individual is anticipated in this chapter. Reference to this aspect of the novelist will be made in the light of the works of Dostoevsky, Henry James and Proust. It is because of the fact that artist like Anita Desai knows to select from the vast amount of material and presents it significantly as if she has the psycho-analytical approach to the problems of modern life. With the help of flashback technique and interior monologues Anita Desai captures the inner qualities of life in her fiction. Thus, a more interesting technique covering a large area is a subject matter of discussion.

Being a woman novelist she sides more intensely with the heroines of her novels, yet very honestly she studies the heroes too. She does not associate with any feminist movement as she makes it clear that her concern as an artist is with individual men and women. But she is chiefly interested in exploration of psychic depths of her characters.

Most of whom react against the absurdity of life or the existentialist problems. She concentrates on characters rather than social milieu. She never creates common characters but she gives extremity of despair to her characters who are basically existentialists. Symbolism is a device to give meaning and relevance to a work of art. It is associated with certain objects to symbolize incidents, characters, words and expression. Anita Desai is very much liberal in the use of symbols. She does so either consciously or unconsciously. In this way her use of symbols beautifies the narration of stories and provides life to the situation of character. And in few cases it compensates for other deficiencies in conversations.

20.8 LET US SUM UP

Anita Desai is more interested in the interior landscape of the mind than in social and political realities. In her fiction there is an effort to discover and then to underline and finally to convey the significant ones. Her protagonists are persons for whom aloneness alone is the treasure. Most of them are woman characters. They are all fragile introverts.

As Meenakshi points out, Anita Desai is a rare example of an Indo-Anglian writer who achieves that difficult task of bending the English language to her purpose without either a self conscious attempt of sounding Indian or

seeking the anonymous elegance of public school English, . She deals with humanistic themes. The theme that is dealt with by Anita Desai is search for values. Anita Desai's treatment of the emotional life of the characters ranks her among the foremost humanistic writers of the modern age.

20.9 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

Sketch the character of Sita?

Comment on Anita Desai as a novelist.

What are the themes of *Where shall we go this summer?*

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UNIT V

CRITICISM

LESSON - 21

ADIL JASUWALLA

THE NEW POETRY

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21.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The following article throws light on the the new poets and the charecteristic features of their poetry.

21.1 THE NEW POETRY

To deal with poetry written in English by Indians is to deal with a number of paradoxes. Firstly, if the writing of poetry implies a particular kind of sensitivity to language and willingness to tax and stretch the language, the best poetry in English has been written by Indian novels. No Indian poet writing in English has equalled the kind of verbal dexterity we find in Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* or G. V. Desani's *All about PL Hatterr*. Secondly, where one expects, to find political commitment in the poetry of a country as sorely in need of it as India, one finds none. The present generation of poets writing in' English are almost exclusively 'uncommitted' and at a distance from the political nature of their subjects which might cynically be measured in the amount of recent English and American poetry they have read.

Thirdly, though Indian poetry in English is supposed to have. Its roots in the 1820's it is reasonable to expect its earlier practitioners to have been

regarded with a familiar mixture of colonial condescension and drawing-room tact. Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1827-73), Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949), and Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) were doubtless rather fine people but wrote some atrocious verse. Finally, the paradox that in India English came into its own as a language capable of poetry only after Indians got rid of its original speakers. Indian poetry in English doesn't icriously begin to exist till after Independence.

Sri Aurobindo's Savitri, a poem on the relation of Spirit to Matter unwinding like an interminable sari through twelve books about 24000 lines is one vast onion of a poem. The layers gradually fall away to reveal nothing. A tradition wrongly called spiritual in India into which even the most intelligent writers slip from time to time. Its manifestations are a general vagueness of thought, an absolute faith in the mystical, and a blind reliance on the heart. The works of Sir Aurobindo are considered the high-water mark of such writing; when University students, attracted by his cosmic platitudes, abandon their work to try and equal his. It is a lure which even a writer as 'conscious' as Nissim Ezekiel has not avoided.

21.2 POEMS OF NISSIM EZEKIEL

Nissim Ezekiel published his first book of poems, A Time to Change, in London in 1951. It contains his most passionate and forward-looking work. At the same time it states some of the themes which aim to occupy him in his later poems : the theme of failure, solitude, and necessary prayer; the difficulties of love and necessary sex.

A dozen unborn children wait

For love, to make them live,

A score of voices are repressed,

A hundred nightmares press upon his soul -

Tell us: Are you self-possessed?

Self-propelled upon a single track?

A fisherman of fish or men ?

Or making toys?

This theme, with variations, turns the mind To meditation, morning and afternoon.

The gentle close of day, the feminine

Caress of night before the body sleeps,

And time is only meditation,

Prayer and poetry, poetry and prayer . . .

Ezekiel is much concerned... with the interior life and its rewards, but not exclusively. He writes two main kinds of poems: those which are portraits, descriptions of people, and encounters with them which generally end in impasses of depressing Regularity; and those which deal directly with his subjective state at times of personal crisis.

The title poem in *A Time to Change* is of the second kind, a poet's resolution for greater simplicity in his own life. Though the poem is spoilt by an Eliotesque beginning Eliot's influence lies heavy on the few longer poems in the book it rises to an affirmation of simplicity that cannot be ignored:

The poet wishes to reduce life to two simplicities: domestic bliss and private meditation or prayer. In his later poems Ezekiel frankly admits the former as having been an illusion and records the blasting of that dream in some of his most honest verse. But the need for private meditation is strengthened. It is surprising how often the word 'prayer' occurs in the work of a poet whose approach to life, far from being religious, is one of a philosophical humanism. This humanism and the conscious rejection of all that is grand and mystical in the Indian religious tradition is beautifully stated in one of his best poems. 'A Poem of Dedication', in his second book. *Sixty Poems*: Yet the poet finds this human balance, like marital bliss more and more difficult to acquire. It is not acquired in sex. Nor in those long evenings with a visitor when the cigarette smoke turns out to be 'more substantial than our talk'. So the poet turns more and more into himself and to prayer. He has said a number of such prayers in verse. All appear to have been unanswered and are, perhaps, unanswerable for he does not pray once in his latest book, *The Exact Name*. Instead he turns to a more dangerous bed-fellow, Philosophy.

The Unfinished Man is perhaps the most perfect book of poems, written by an Indian in English though the perfection is of a deliberately limited order. The book contains ten poems and is the poetic record of the moral aches and pains of a modern Indian in one of its soon modern critics. Ezekiel uses no persona. His face is his own and in it we see his marriage collapse, his old gods fail and his own optimistic quest for simplicity get levelled to a monotony of a familiar landscape.

The unfinished man then, represents Ezekiel at his most honest and lyrical best. Compared to the loose horrors of our early Romantics it is even an important achievement, for Ezekiel is perhaps the first Indian poet consistently to show Indian readers that craftsmanship is as important to a poem as its subject matter. It would be a pity if the clean straightforward line he has used so successfully in the past were abandoned for the muddier metronomics of his latest work.

21.3 DOM MORRAES AS A PROLIFIC POET

The work of Dom Moraes, the best-known of Indians writing in English, can also be divided into the categories used for Ezekiel's poetry: poems describing encounters with people and those expressing a subjective state, but with a big difference. Moraes's people who are often angels, monsters, or mythical beasts are themselves projections of his subjective state.

In a poem entitled 'The Visitor', Ezekiel describes how, disturbed by a crow which cawed three times, he expects a visitor 'as befits the folk belief, 'an angel in disguise, perhaps or else temptation in unlikely shape' to test his promises and ruin his sleep. But when the visitor arrives, his hands are empty, his need 'only to kill a little time'. Badly let down, Ezekiel blames himself for not foreseeing 'outside the miracles of mind . . . ebb-flow of sex and the seasons', 'the ordinariness of most events'. But Moraes's visitor, in the poem of that name, is far from ordinary. Few of his visitors are. Unannounced and unasked for it goes on to record the visitor's 'dark language' through which, in a series of paradoxical confessions, he tries to reveal his identity, and it comes as no surprise that the visitor is really a projection of the poet's own loneliness and fear. Whereas Ezekiel's poems invariably have a social setting or move on easily recognizable points of social reference the "parly, the art lecture—the setting of Moraes's poems in the mind itself and their references are far more personal.

It is a curious mind, a Roman Catholic nursery where the most incompatible of visitors may put in an appearance angels 'with faces like clogs and lustrous eyes', 'royal lions', unicorns, "hunched malignant owls', warlocks and dwarfs. Again and again Moraes sees the world through the eyes of a haunted child, whose vision, deranged by shapes and fancies as it is, would only find death, in the ghostless clarity of Ezekiel's world. In a poem called 'Vivisection' an unrecognizable new beast, 'a glittering snowdrift, manned, with onyx eyes', is killed with the utmost casualness. Hamlet, in the shadow of an asylum, murders Ophelia and enjoys it. Santa Claus drops down the children who called his name and lifts 'his claws above them, holes for eyes'. And it is part of Moraes's appeal to our disorganized sensibility that he notes horror with irony as well as something of sensual pleasure.

But without irony his kind of dreamy subjectivism leads in straight into that romantic marsh where so many Indian poets before him have stuck. In spite of his greater skill in avoiding it his fore books still contain a fair amount of sloppy work. Along with the angels and warriors goes Patience Strong, suspect the trouble is partly Mr. Moraes's easy, effortless line The strength of being able to marry fluency to a sense of horror in his best poems 'Words to a Boy', 'The Island has become an empty act. The rhymes come pat and easy. The sentiments are glib. Moraes knows this. In his latest poems, not yet

collected in a book, he often abandons the gentle, smooth-flowing line for a more abrupt idiom. This is from 'Letter to My Mother'. The gain in form and intelligibility is self-evident. Though Dom Moraes is not yet thirty, his output has been prodigious. Awarded the Hawthornden Prize in 1958 for his first book of poems he has since published three more, a book of translations and a prose work. No other Indian has been able to match such an impressive body of work and he remains our most gifted poet. Moraes is one of the most prolific poets writing today.

21.4 R.PARTHASARATHY AS A POET

The strength of his poetry lies almost entirely in its visual juxtapositions and the startling image. His lines do not sing. He cultivates the deliberately prosaic style, an undertone of rhythm itself. So, at their best, his poems become memorable individual images themselves. But occasionally the prose ignites no metaphor, is almost purely descriptive. Flat passages also weaken his longest and most ambitious poem, 'An Unfinished Biography', a meditation in five parts on the poet approaching thirty, his past, and his travels abroad. Written during his year of linguistic studies in Leeds, 'An Unfinished Biography' is important in that it foreshadows the poet's future preoccupations with language and its roots, and hints, owing to his own cultural deracination, at a future silence. In exile, too, the poet gains new insight into his colonial identity and learns the despair of having been born too late to affect the lives of both the colonizers and the colonized; Both the themes of language, and colonial alienation come together in one of his latest poems 'An Epitaph for Francis Day', where the poet's sense of futility is reinforced on being back in India.

Both these dilemmas, the colonial and the linguistic, the feeling of being born between two worlds, have turned Parthasarathy to the study of Sanskrit and his mother tongue Tamil. Sarojini Naidu gave up writing in English, though probably for other reason, more than fifty years ago. Young poets, bilingually accomplished, also stop writing in English continue writing in both English and the mother tongue. Some of the best work in English has been done by such bilingual writers as Arun Kolathkar. Dilip Chitre, and Kamala Das. P. Lal, on the other hand, a founder of Calcutta's Writers Workshop which encourages Indian writing in English very successfully to translating from the Sanskrit, Adil Jussawalla is confident that the next ten years of poetry written in English will see a deal of translated and bilingual work.

As the bulk of translations grow, so does work originally in English. The best book of English-language poems published in India in 1966 is Gieve Patel's Poems. This is an important work in that it contains the poems by an Indian to be committed to a recognizably human reality. The preoccupations in the poems are neither aesthetic nor philosophical but truly human. A doctor by profession, Patel sees his subjects with a sharp but rather helpless compassion.

Parthasarathy's, Gieve Patel's use of language is spare and unambitious, the poems progressing in a series of verse sentences which make little use of cadence, rhyme, or melody.

21.5 KAMALADAS AS A PROMISING POET

Kamala Das is another extremely promising poet. But though? he has written much that is honest and good the total effect of her book of poems, *Summer in Calcutta* (1965), is one of depressing monotony. She writes almost exclusively of love, sex, and loneliness in the tone of an insistent confession. The value of the confessional is that by exposing those dark areas which are normally concealed, it might touch some of the deepest points the reader's own subconscious and so uncover what is worth uncovering. Some of Kamala Das's confessions do just that but the confession may also be part of an elaborate private therapy, a literary drug used to make the poet, little concern to the reader and about as interesting as a hypochondriac complaints. This she herself acknowledges; knowing why her early work, before the 'tiresomeness' set in, is brilliantly fresh, energetic and alive. One of her best poems, 'An Introduction', grows from an expression of her poetic isolation in India caused by her writing in English to the cry of the more universal isolation of 'woman who seeks love'. The urgent, straining rhythm, the rushed inevitability of the poem as though written in fever, are typical of Miss Das's best work. Her manner is nothing if not obsessional.

21.6 THE LITERARY SKILLS OF LAWRENCE BANTLEMAN

Lawrence Bantleman published his first book of poems, in 1962 just before he was twenty. It remains his most fascinating book though he has since published two others, *Man's fall* and *Woman's fall-out* (1964) and *Kanchenjunga*, a longish poem (1966). The merit of *Graffiti* is that all the poems in it are bright, underivative and musical to an extent previously rare in Indian poetry they are the products of a voice which is both confident and flexible. Though sharing Dom Moraes's Catholic background Bantleman does not allow himself the luxury of being haunted. Instead, he chooses 'to be agape at the immensity of the world through the peeled eye and the pain this causes him is far more worldly and personal than Moraes's. He is anxious to discard all the restrictive paraphernalia of religion, and when a touch of it hurts by way of inheritance he hates it. After the skill and delicacy of *Graffiti*, the second book is a distinct let-down. Here the poet's constant juggling with words cracks through whole poems and breaks them. And even the whole pieces seem to be the left-over chips and shavings of a disastrously experimental workshop. It is only in a couple of mood poems that an earlier assurance returns.

It isn't possible in this essay to do justice to such a long poem as Bantleman's *Kanchenjunga*, except to say that it consists of a number of meditations on love using the sea and *Kanchenjunga*, the mountain, as two opposite and irreconcilable poles which come together only in a final wishful levelling of the world. The most impossible love is possible in that action, the

poet seems to say, without making it clear whether such a levelling would also mean the poet's death or not. The last section of the poem seems to say it would. But if so, when is love known to be requited? Surely not after death? Again the poet seems to say 'Yes'. The poem is falsely optimistic and even absurd. If love is not requited in life surely the wait and search for love is one's only attestable reality. That is the subjugation of love through hate, murder, work, religion. The Romanticism of a perfect fulfillment after death is surely in attestable and as such incapable of making sense to anyone who is not a child, a devout Catholic, or a devout Hindu—all of which Mr. Bantleman is not.

Still, Kanchenjunga is an impressive poem. It is informed by a general sense of loneliness and despair stated in a music which the best—tense, deep, and urgent. Bitter weather in a bitter India has made a number of young poets go underground or leave the country. In this context Adil Jusuwalla desires to deal with a few more poets like A.K. Ramanujam and Arvind Krishna Mehrotra. In Jusuwalla's poems, mostly written abroad, he has tried to show the effect of living in lands. He can neither leave nor does love properly belong to, and despite the occasional certitudes of poetry. He is not at all sure where both his own work and the poetry he has described will lead.

21.7 LET US SUM UP

Adil Jusuwalla thus critically comments on some other prominent poets of the recent times. This essay indeed reveals his great scholarship.

21.8 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

What are the comments of Adil Jusuwalla on "The New Poetry"?

Write an essay on the views of Adil Jusuwalla on the poems of Nissim Ezekiel?

Consider Dom Moraes as a Prolific Poet.

21.9 REFERENCES

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LESSON - 22

DAVID MCCUTCHION

MUST INDIAN POETRY IN ENGLISH ALWAYS FOLLOW ENGLAND

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22.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

By going through this lesson you can understand all things about David Mccutcheon and his significant works.

22.1 INTRODUCTION

A person who picks his way through a poem with the aid of a dictionary may *by an effort of imagination* reach a closer understanding of a poetic experience than a person reading in translation, but he will not have the experience itself.

As competence grows, the time will come when a poem may be experienced immediately in a foreign language, but the question still remains: to what extent is that experience the same as that of readers born and brought up in the language?

22.2 CONTRAST OF LITERARY TRADITION

The poet protests that his critics have seen what he never intended, different critics declare a poem good or bad according to their own reaction, poetry is acclaimed by one generation and rejected by the next. In spite of this diversity we may postulate a working uniformity of response from a roughly definable body of people sensitive to poetry and well-versed in the tradition within a

single culture. What may be called fashionable academic taste extends now to a wide body of Waders conditioned by Third Programmes and intellectual Magazines. The question is: to what extent may outsiders join that group, and to what extent may a sufficiently large kody of outsiders with different responses constitute an alternative valid group?

The contrast of literary traditions is small compared with the fact of reading in a foreign language. All words have an aura of associations not strictly transferable from one language to another. For instance, what is click in one language may not be so in another. Depending on familiarity, when most Englishmen read French, they partly accept the words in French and partly translate them into English. But even where the French words are accepted, their associations remain predominantly English to someone with a background of reading and experience predominantly English.

These questions are of supreme importance, for every great poet is using words with an acute awareness of all the ways in which they have been used before, of all the contextual nuances they bring with them, the periods or milieux they evoke.

It is essentially to the sentiments and not to the language that students respond: thus when the sentiments are commonplace or not exalted as in the case of Dryden or Pope, there is little appreciation of the skill with words. Very few Indian students like Swift, although he writes magnificent prose.

The failure to respond to his language could also be connected with a failure to thrill to its strong speech rhythms and earthiness as opposed to literary qualities.

The fact that Indian writing in" English at the more competent levels is so similar to contemporary writing in England is the result of a determined effort at imitation, frequently assisted by more or less prolonged stays in England itself.

22.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

The development of English in India is complicated by two extraordinary factors, which take it beyond imitation!

(1) the widespread use of English outside school and universe as educational and inter-state medium by people who normal speak another language, so that in the process it acquire something of the rhythms, intonations, vocabulary and even syntax of the other language;

(2) A tradition of writing creatively in English. The English writer in India likely to associate himself with small pockets in an alien setting, but he can hardly resist the overwhelming pressure of the metropolitan norms diffused by radio and publishing houses—not to-mention the prestige of this norm as it is likely to affect him, when he visits the Oxbridge fountainhead itself.

22.4 THE CATEGORIES OF INDIAN POETRY

If any Indian were determined not to give way to these metropolitan pressures, and to write-solely from within the Indian milieu, we might expect a quite different kind of poetry. But is that possible? Theory can prove anything: it is best to look for actual examples.

Indian poetry in English falls into three broad categories: (1) incompetent—the stumbling attempts of those who have not mastered the language and probably could not write poetry in any language; (2) competent expression in contemporary modes—it may be as good as the general run in England or America or included to experiment but experiment (?), and well below of the best with one or two exceptions; all the same is scope for originality and freshness arising from the personality as in the case of Kamala Das, if not from the fusion; and (3) poetry which is odd without necessarily incompetent. It is this last category which may provide a genuinely Indian expression.

Examples are few, for most Indian poets in English aspire to show how competent they are, and though occasionally goaded by jibes of not being 'creative' into some daring coinage or turn of phrase, this usually draws attention to itself in a self-conscious way. All the more interest therefore attaches to such a volume as *The Captive* by Shankar Mokashi-Punekar, which is odd all the way through, and provides ample material from which to judge the possibility, implications, and probable form of an

Indian English of poetry, which willfully denies conventional

English poetic norms, and the English associations or nuances

of words. The first reading of the captive gives the impression of category (into respective) *The Captive*, my immediate impression was

of category (1): incompetence;

I saw a crane in a slimy pond f Like a milkwhite angel brooding sit.
Impromptu I sighed, My pretty blonde.

Oh that never I had uttered it I But subsequent conversation and correspondence with Dr. Mokashi revealed to me that his English (in prose) can be as competent as anybody's, and the quirkiness of *The Captive* is the outcome of a deliberate policy. In an article on 'Yeats' Rebellion against 'British English and its Lesson to India' Dr. Mokashi condemns the pressure of 'ah'en norms' supported by 'scholarly readership with the traditions of conservatism'¹ and declares war on the British Council, King's English, Oxford and the like. He is for 'Homeric song', Merry England, and Donne's 'extravagant fancy'. In another article he attacks the heritage of Fowler—Vallins and the Keep English Pure school: 'This purist affliction is nowhere to be seen with greater

malignancy than in India, where English is sought to be made an obsession more than a tool.' Demonstrates effectively how Vallins' principles would condemn Keats and many other English poet or prose scythe Why, mixed metaphors are the very stuff of poetry. If a creative writer starts to worry about split infinitives and ellipsis he is likely to put his pen down for ever.

22.5 THE LITERARY COMPETENCE OF SHANKER MOKASHI

The predominant effect of this poetry is certainly odd. Words and phrases are set down independent of traditional and fashionable compulsions, so that they seem to be dictated solely by the immediate meaning, the exigencies of rhyme, or the intoxication of sound. Dr. Mokashi ignores tone and associations - his words retain the neutral quality of their dictionary existence. When for instance he writes of the

Foreknowledge of the chain of interlinks

That takes the spook of the act to heaven's brinks,

there seems no reason why the quaint 'spook' should be preferred to 'ghost', for 'spook' has comic overtones which seem out of place here. He is equally unconcerned that 'brinks' is a peculiar plural, presumably only to rhyme with 'links' or take the word 'sup' in the following passage:

We have but half-faded flowers we last had eaten from

Made anxious by the thought of our loss

We will ourselves drunk on this insufficient sup

And dream ourselves back to the sea...

Sup is archaic, but does not seem to work here as such; similarly 'made anxious' is not strong enough in normal usage to support the intensity of the thought expressed here. It is an accumulation of such slight inconsistencies between established expectations and Mokashi's usage that creates the general effect of oddity. His words either do not flow in normal-sounding phrases, or else the established phrases come out whole as if from a phrase book.

The keen heart gets hard like the stone in almond skin.

Leaving sweet gaps between for work to home.

Food creates its feeder: itch its poetic gnome:

Why not virtue's incipience in so sweet a sin?

the words seem deliberately chosen, each for itself or for rhyme; the rhythm is halting, except where disconcertingly.

Here is an established echo rounds it off ('so sweet a sin'). The same effect again:

You chose dead word's heady dope;
On the open sun of faith you hurled defiance
And chose intellectual twilight's seedy grope.

These two short extracts are typical of one aspect of Mokashi's style, which eschews normal rhythms and packs the maximum of meaning which is often accumulative rather than varied into every adjective and noun. Dr. Mokashi is equally cavalier about normal word order, and does not shrink from the most awkward inversions: This curb, his own Milton very well scanned. He hints at the one which to him was banned.... Affirming his right to use what words and phrases he likes irrespective of their associations Dr. Mokashi is not worried about clichés or worn-out phrases: in the same sentence of a poem he can write 'our sole natural inheritance' followed by 'out of sheer necessity'. In the same poem he refers to self-pity as 'the hall-mark of every romantic,

In Mokashi's poetry the tritest expression may suddenly arise amidst effective metaphor:

The silverfish bite inside the brain,
The feet of mice in the back-lane
He learnt to live with and outgrew
To nibble at intellect's purest blue;
He sang of both, so bold, so true.

If Mokashi intends an evocation of children's tales of Knight and Sea Captains by his 'bold' and 'true', I can only stall that the effect does not work that way; it seems rather the Mokashi simply means what the words say.

Dr. Mokashi refuses to be bound by the nuances and associations of Englishman's English. He vindicates the Indian English right to say 'backside of the house' however much the Englishman may snigger. Fearlessly, Dr. Mokashi appropriates the words 'bloke' or 'blonde', ignoring their slang associations. But can these words be separated from the speakers who normally use them? or from the idiomatic phrases funny bloke in which they normally occur? Woe betide an Englishman who tries to swear in French-his accent, intonation, idiom, even his armby French if he is to succeed.

Dr. Mokashi appears at times to care little for nuances of expression, the aura that words bring with them, elsewhere he exploits them cunningly, as in the following use of 'wont':

'Did someone come asking for me?'

Task

As is my wont. ' No one did ',

Comes the wonted reply.

No one comes.

This is entitled ' The Present Indefinite', and is inspired in technique from Wallace Stevens, who had a wonderful sense of the comic and curious overtones of words. Mokashi is obviously caught in a dilemma: he cannot really deny the overtones and colourings of words, but he can neither rely on being in tune with English sensitivity, nor on a significant or consistent enough Indian sensitivity to which he can appeal in his audience.

Taking the question of rhyme and rhythm, Indians are at a great disadvantage trying to imitate English norms here, for their own poetry is unstressed, and the rhythms of their own languages are quite different from those of English-even the rhythms and intonation of Anglo-Indian English are different from those of normal English: So are those of Welsh and English poetic rhythms are notoriously difficult there is no question of counting, as in syllabic (e.g. French) verse: you have to feel the Tightness of the beat, and few dare risk the extraordinary flexibility and virtuosity of a Yeats. It is not surprising therefore that most Indian poets in English are cautious, posing either a conversational free verse like Kamala Das or a more or less regular metre as found in Nissim Ezekiel, mokashi much influenced by Yeats, plunges in after the ster.

The mystic wolf got on the rational bitch

Three had pups in a litter;

of which

The first-come danced like a centaur breaking up The arctic snows of maiden's untrod lap.

This seems to me a successful marriage of rhythm and meaning, but the ice is thin. Elsewhere it cracks:

I am your fate; I may not let you slip.

I must break your heart with a plunge of my lip.

Here the rhythm, instead of controlling, only accentuates the comic effect of sentiment and choice of words; and the rhyme too is disastrous. The idea is all right, but Mokashi has of find a sufficient number of people attuned to the language in the way he is, for its expression here not to be found comic. He often seems unaware of the trivialising effect of rhyme: 'I am my mask, by my desire-bask.'

Dr. Mokashi would claim that his verses do not sound awkward to him, that all poets are actually contrivers,' fitting in' rhymes and striking images, that the Englishman's or over-anglicized Indian's objection is partial, and does imply to the kind of poetry that he is trying to write.

He proposes an Indian poetry in English based on Indian Sensibilities, rhythms and cultural conditioning. Filled, with this zeal he drops definite articles inverts as he pleases and distorts syntax.

Mokashi is trying to prove that good poetry is also possible in that mode, and in fact his work contains felicities that no prejudice could resist: e.g. of silent walls: ' Their whitewashed fingers on their plastered lips '. ' The Crane-Killer ' may shock us by its apparent clumsiness, but it is a poem of startling originality, and not always so clumsy either: Who may wait and watch for worms When waves reflect one's cloud-white breast? The poems oscillate in an extraordinary manner between rich invention and banality, flowing phrases and awkward jerks.

He is essentially a ratiocinative, intellectual poet, much giver-to lecturing and moralising, which is not to everybody's taste. And as a poet of ideas rather than concrete physical experience, he does not visualize or sense his images physically: ' Since the Dark it was that wrote the Orphic life-line On day's Apollonian palm '. The abstract and the concrete are frequently mixed up in a way bewildering for the empirical mind. Although I cannot fully share the enthusiasm of Sir Herbert Read in his short preface to *The Captive*, it is significant that he has credited Mokashi with ' a felicity that any English poet might envy.

22.6 A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ADIL JASSUWALLA AND SHANKER MOKASHI

In a comparative study of a bomb-site by Adil Jassuswalla and experience by Shanker Mokashi one finds that there is no such sophisticated control in Mokashi's poem it seems to overstate and jerk along clumsily, the closing exhortation sounds trite. Yet I think the first is more conventional and more quickly exhausted than the second. On closer attention, Mokashi's may be the more challenging the less immediately assimilable: the ' shallow pouch ' of satiation, the ' sedate glow' of shame these images suggest a more original mind at closer grips with a personal anxiety. At least Mokashi makes it seem worthwhile to pay less attention to conventionalities of expression when judging Indian poetry in English.

The key question of this whole discussion remains: how many poets are likely to write in a consciously Indian style, and who will be their audience? While metropolitan prestige is so strong, and England or America so accessible, all the more gifted students and speakers of English are likely to enter the second competent and anglicized category. And all those for whom English remains secondary, will write in their mother-tongue. Indeed there are those who object strongly to the very attempt to write in English to the neglect of the mother culture. The poetry of Dr. Mokashi represents the kind of poetry we might expect from someone who has never lived in England, nor in particularly English circles in India, and whose English is a scholar's acquisition. But there is another kind of Indian Poetry in English, the possibility of which must also be considered.

22.7 CRITICAL COMMENT ON LAWRENCE BANTLEMAN

Lawrence Bantleman's first books of poems entitled, *Graffiti*, presented certain idiosyncracies of style which might be considered Indian. Only in one poem, 'The Hearse-Driver's Account' does Bantleman consciously attempt to imitate Anglo-Indian slang. In the fourth issue of *Writers Workshop Miscellany*, Deb Kumar Das, not himself an Anglo-Indian, attempted a story in Anglo-Indian slang, which may not be authentic but give some idea of the possibilities of putting this slang to literary use, like West Indian English.

Bantleman never went to college, and has a background working with a commercial firm and in journalism, which might be expected to set him apart from the anglicized college lecturers who constitute the general run of Indian poets in English. But the un-English idiosyncracies of certain poems in his first volume have all but disappeared in the second. There are still significantly Indian elements in his style, they would have to be analysed by subtler methods than previously used in this essay. This development in Bantleman exemplifies the pressure of normative English on Indian writers in English. Or rather: the determination to avoid Indian things for Bantleman's style remains eccentric. He twists syntax, plays tricks with words - but these are the tricks one might equally expect from an English poet, under the influence of modern experimentalism and the Metaphysicals:

On nothing, love, this letter comes,

As nothing is not good enough

But nothing, when I write as such

A letter short or letter much

Or alphabetic nothing crumbs.

one may suppose that Dr. Mokashi's fierce pleas for creative freedom are not so much for the freedom to write in a specifically Indian way, as for the

freedom modern English poets enjoy, and that the more he can master normative rhythms the more he will.

22.8 LET US SUM UP

According to David McCutcheon, the chances then for the emergence of an Indian poetry in English as aberrant as Mokashi's seem slight: metropolitan prestige, lack of audience, lack of alternative norms and pressure of the mother-tongue all are against it.

22.9 LESSON END ACTIVITIES

1. What are the comments of David McCutcheon on the literary competence of Shanker Mokashi?
2. Attempt a comparative study on Adil Jasswalla and Shanker Mokashi?
3. Where are the views of David McCutcheon on Indian Poetry?

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