Research Paper Arts

Nissim Ezekiel, S Poetry as A Means of Self Expression

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ABSTRACT

Nissim EZEKIEL(1924-2004)Was An Intellectual Powerhouse In Indo Anglain Poetry Of The First Five Decades Of Post Independent Era.He Has Expressed Himself Frankly,Fearlessly And Thoroughly In His Poetry. It Can Be Acknowledge With Appreciation And Admiration That His Poetry Is The Medium Of Self Expression . Ezekiel's Versality Was Amazing. He Has Expressed His Views On Various Issues Of Human Life. Being A Jew ,He Has Identifies With India . He Never Felft Alienated. Ezekiel's Poetry Reveals His Philosophy Of Life Relationg To God And His Creation,His Concept Of Love,His Views Of Marriage And Married Life,His Attitude Towards Women,His Humour His Indianness In His Indian Vision And Indians Use Of English Language And Poetic Craftsmanship. His Contemporaries Have Eulogised Him As A Man And As A Poet. They Claim That His Death Has Left A Big Void In Indo Anglain Poetry.

KEYWORDS | Philosophy Of Life,God ,Religious,Principles Of Life, Secular Approach, The Human Universe.

Nissim Ezekiel Was An "Intellecutal Powerhouse"Described By Keki N. Daruwalla , Another Eminent Indo Anglain Poet Of This Era , On The Death Of This Leading Indo Anglain Poet Of The Post Independent On 09 January 2004. He Further Declared, "The Man's Versality:Was Amazing. His Death Leaves A Very Big Void".1

Infact Nissim Ezekiel Was The Pioneering Poet Of The First Five Decades Of Post Independent India In The Indo Anglain Poety. His Poetry Is Reality A Means Of Self Expression. He Reavels Himself Thoroughly In His Poetry. His Poems Highlight His Philosophy Of His Life, His Concept Of Love, His Views On Marriage And Married Life, His Attitude Towards Women, His Humour And His Poetic Craftsmanship.

Nissim Ezekiel's Poems Are The Embodiment Of His Views On God , On His Religious Bent Of Mind And On His Principles Of Life. About His Views On Man's Relationship With The Supreme Being And Man's Place In This World, Ezekiel Expresses Himself In This Way That A Man Can Know God Only When The Supreme Being Reveals To Him And That The Reality Is Unfathomable. These Views Are Embodied In The Sixth Hymn Form His Collection Of Poems Known As Hymns Of Darkness(1976). He Writes:

"Your Are Master
Neither Of Death Nor Of Life
Belief Will Not Save You
Nor Unbelief
All You Have
Is The Sense Of Reality
As It Yields Its Secrets
Slowly"2

According To Ezekiel, The Supreme Being Reveals Himself To Man Through Prophets Who Play The Role Of The Medium. Man Has To Make Efforts To Know The Reality As It Is Unfathomable. The Seeker Has To Make Efforts To Seek God.

Ezekiel Finds God's Creation Covered By Numerous Veils.Man Has To Uncover These Veils To Know This Universe. In His Poem Theological He States:

I Have Stripped Off A Hundred Veils
And Still These Are More
That Cover Your Creation
Why Are So Elusive?"3

Man Is Hidden Behind These Veils And It Is Not Easy To Remove The Veils And Know The Reality.

Nissim Ezekie Rejects Sectarian Approach And Adopts Secular Approach In Life As Enshrined In The Constitution Of India. One's Sect Is Immaterial If He Gets Civil Rights As A Citizen Of India.He Expresses This:

Salvation Belongth Unto The
Lord .It Is Not Through
One Or The Other Church.
Thy Blessing Is Upon
All The People On The Earth.4

God Accords Salvation To People Irrespective Of Their Sects. He Also Suggests That Man Can Become Spiritually Strong If He Describe Vices And Follies And Have Strong Will To Improve Himself.Thus His Poems Are Self Expressions Of His Spiritually, Secularism, Concept Of God And Mystery Of The Human Universe.

In This Connection G. Nageswara Rao Says,"The Basic Simplicities Of Living Throughout The Poetry Of Nissim Ezekiel Appears To Be His Deep Moral Need .The Only Possibility Is To Live In Sane Life In Accordance With The Basic Simplicities Of Human Nature: Truth,Simplicity, Honesty,Frankness,Friendship,-Tenderness,Love And Particularly To Build A Life With These."5

According To Nissim Ezekiel Man Has Follies Which He Cannot Get Rid Of And Cannot Acquire Virtues Which He Does Not Have. But Man Is Not Responsible For This State Of Affairs. It's God's Doing. So He Regards God,S Duty To Rescue Him.

Ezeliel,Poetry Reveals Him As A Poet Of Love. His Views On Love In His Poems Are Candid And Straight Forward.He Talks Of The Organs Of Human Body And The Lovers In His Poems Indulge In Carnal Pleasures, It Cannot Be Denied That Sometimes His Poems Appear To Be Pornographic.

The Lover In His Poems Is A Sensual Person Who Finds Physical Attraction Irresistible. The True Business Of Life Is Seeing And Touching The Woman,S Body. In His Poem "Possession" The Poet Expresses The Feelings Of A Lover Who Is Bent Upon Possessing His Beloved. Possession Is Necessary And Deprivation Is Desolation. He Delineates Situation In His Poems When Tempting Circumstances Make The Lover Violate Gentlemanly Manners And Love Self Control. This Is Revealed In His Poem "In The Queque". The Other Poems Nudes In A Certain Lady An Affair Testifies Views Of Frankness In Love.

Ezekiel,S Views Are Frankly And Fearlessly Recalled On Marriage And Married Life, He Believes That Marriage Promises Happiness To Both The Husband And Wife And Also The Par-

ents, He Writes Thus In His Poem "Marriage"

Lovers,When They Marry , Face
Eternity With Touching Grace
Complacment At Being Fated
Never To Be Separated".6

His Assertion On Faithful Companionship Between The Husband And His Wife Is Confirmed From His Poem "Night Of The Scorpion" When Wife Is Sting By The Scorpion And The Husband Take Care Of Her Devotedly,

My Father,Skeptic,Rationalist
Trying Every Curse And Blessing
Powder,Mixture ,Herbs And Hybrids,7

Marriage Relates The Husband And Wife To Each Other And To Work Together In This World. But Sometimes There Is No Sweetness Between Them As Ezekiel's Poem."Song To Be Shouted" Reveals. The Wife Charges Her Husband With Doing Nothing All Day And The Husband Believes That Wife Exists Merely To Shout At Him. This Is Revealed In The Opening Stanza Of The Above Cited Poem.

I Come Home In The Evening
And My Wife Shouts At Me
Did You Post That Letter?
Did You Make The Telephone Call?
Did You Pay That Bill?
What Do You Do All Day?8
And The Helpless Husband Replies:
Shout At Me , Women.
What Else Are Wives For?9

Ezekiel's Poetry Is An Embodiment Of Self –Expression, It Also Highlights His Concept Of Woman. It Is Confrimed That He Is A Poet Of Female Body, He Confesses That His Passion Poems Are Influenced By Sanskrit Love Poetry . In Fact He Has A Penchant For Describing The Sensuality Evoked By Her Body. In His Collection Of Poems "Nudes" (1978) These Are Women Characters Who Are Immoral And Are Fooling To Get Carnal Pleasures. These Are A Married Woman Who Is Sharing The Bed With A Stranger And Vindicated Herself On The Ground That Her Husband Has Also A Mistress, Ezekiel Writes:

"It Is Inconceivable
That He Is Not Sleeping With
Someone These Days.So Why
Should Not I Too Have My
Fling.10

Ezekiel Has Presented A Better Picture Of Mother. His Poem "Night Of The Scorpion" Confirms It. The Mother Suffers The Pain Of The Sting But Concludes,

"Thank God , The Scorpion Picked In Me
And Spared My Children".11

He Has Presented The Picture Of The Pretended Mother In The Poem "Jewish Wedding In Bombay", When The Mother Of The Bridge Sheds Tears Because This Is A Tradition Of This Kind At The Marriage Of The Daughter,Though In Fact, She Is Very Happy. The Poet Writes,

Her Mother Sheds Tear Or Two But Wasn,T Really Crying . It Was The Thing To Do So , So She Did It; Enjoying Every Moment,"12 Being A Jew ,Ezekiel Reveals His Indian Vision And Indian's In His Poetry. His View Of Indian's Life Is Bleak And Horrible. He Draws The Attention Of The Readers To The Miseries Of The People Who Encounter Poverty Who Bag, Who Sleep On The Pavements Of Windows Burning As Sati, And Frightened Virgins Who Fear Goons. In The Poem, India He Writes:

Always In The Sun,S Eyes
Here Among The Baggers,
Hawkers, Pavement Sleepers
Hutment Dwellers,Slums
Burnt Out Mothers, Frightened
Virgins
All In Noisy Silence
Suffering The Place And Time,13
According To Him, Indians Are Irrational And Superstitious.

The Poet Regards The Percentage In India As The Time Of Decay And Degeneration .It Is The Age In Which The Ungodly Are As Mighty As The Godly, His View Is Embodied In The Following Lines.

The Godly Are In The Same Condition
No More Like The Chaff
Which The Wind Driveth Away
Than The Ungodly"14

And The Sinners Are So Clever That They Disguise Themselves And Join The Congregation Of The Righteous.

On Corruption In India Ezekiel Expresses Himself Thus:

"I Am Corrupted By The World
I Must Infect The World With My Corruption
To Such Life From Life
Leaving You And Me Corrupted,"15

In Criticizing The Judicial System In The Coutry, Ezekiel Comments That Justice Delayed Is Justice Denied.He Gives The Examples Of The Under Trial Prisoner Who Is Unable To Pay For His Bail. So He Remains In Jail For The Crime He Committed Five Or Ten Years Ago. He Expresses This In The Poem 'Under Trial Prisoner'.

"Thousands Like Him
Who Did Something Wrong
Five Years Ago Or May Be Ten
They Didn,T Know When
They Were Offered Ball
But Didn,T Have Money
So They Live In Jail,"16

Very Frankly And Fearlessly Ezekiel Ridicules The Indian View Of English For Their Inadequate Proficiency In This Language. He Highlights The Practice Of Using The Present Progressive Tense Instead Of Present Indefinite Tense Which Grammatically Needed And Often Translate The Native Expression Into English Without Paying Any Head To Rules Of English Grammer.His Poem'the Patriot 'Testifies It.

I Am Standing For Peace An Non Violence
Why World Is Fighting,Fighting
Why All People Of World
Are Not Following Mahatma Gandhi
I Am Simply Not Understanding ,"17

Ezekiel Does Not Regard Himself An Alienated Person In India And Asserts That He Is An Indian And Loves India. He Writes,"I Am Not A Hindu And My Background Makes Me A Natural Outsider.Circumstances And Decisions Relate Me To India. In Other Countries ,I Am A Foreigner. In India, I Am An Indian,India Is Simply My Evironment . I Have Not Withdrawn From India."19

Nissim Ezekiel Does Not Lack In The Expression Of Humour In His Poetry. It Is Evident In His Poems "Jewish Wedding In Bombay". He Arouses Humour When The Wife Quarrels With The Husband For Having Taken Her Virginity And The Husband's Desire To Return It If He Knows How To Do That. He Says,

"During Our First Serious Marriage Quarrel She Said Why Did You Take My Virginity From Me? I Would Gladly Have Returned It But Not Of The Books I Had Read Instructed Me How"20

Ezekiel Has Remarkable Poetic Craftmanship He Reveals His Ability To Organize His Views And Experience In Words Competently. He Is Singularly Aware Of The Craft Of His Poetry And His Performance As A Poet. In An Article, " A Conversation With Nissim Ezekiel " With Dr.S. K. Khera, On 23 January 1998, Ezekiel Explained His Poetic Craft. The Poem Is Concerned With An Episode While Poetry Is A Flow. From Which A Poem Results. Poetry Is Concerned With The Reasons Behind The Incidents And The Manner In Which The Incidents Occured. He Quoted From His Poem Entitled "Poetry".

A Poem Is An Episode Completed
In An Hour Or So, But Poetry
Is Something More.It Is The Why
The How ,The What ,The Flow
From Which The Poem Comes
In Which The Savage And The Singular
The Gentle ,Familiar
Are All Dissolved,The Residue
Is What You Read As A Poem, The Rest
Flows And Is Poetry."21

Poetry Is Elusive But To Write A Poem Is Comparatively Easy. He Believes That The Right Word For Expression Is Not Easy To Find And The Poet Has To Wait For It . It Is Confirmed From His Poem,"Poet, Lover And Bridewatcher"He State:

"The Best Poets Wait For Words"

Ezekiel Does Not Accept The View That The Poet Should Write Spontaneously. He Cannot Digest The Principle Of Spontaneous Writing Of The Romantic Poets.

Ezekiel,S Style Is Colloquial. It Is Conversational,Restrained And Modern.Repetition Of Words/Lines Is An Integral Part Of His Writing. His Careful Choice Of Words Results In Frequent Use Of Alliteration. The Language In His Poems Is Not Different From The Language Of Prose. He Believes In The Use Of Contemporary Indian As Good Poetry Is The Result Of A Language Which Is Alive. Undoubtedly He Has Shown Remarkable Diction To His Art.

Linda Hess Comments On His Poetic Craftsmanship Thus: "He Has Emerged As Most Outstanding In Craftsmanship, Maturity Range And Depth Of Sensibility."22

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