



Role of Curse in Kalidasa's Play The Vikramorvashiyam

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ABSTRACT

Literature is a kind of shining planet with different genres like poetry, novel, short story, essay, pamphlet, drama etc. Drama is a display of emotions, a representation of relationships and the portrayal of the different phases of human life. It sketches different personalities and represents a wide variety of emotions through the different elements which reflect the impact of creation in reader's mind. The study of the forms of curses comprises a significant proportion of the study of both folk religion and folklore. In Indian culture, the Sage or Rishi is believed to have the power to bless and curse. Examples include the curse placed by Rishi Bhrigu on king Nahusha. In this research paper, researcher probes into the most significant role of Curse in a well-known play The Vikramorvashiyam, by Kalidasa, the legendary literary figure in Sanskrit literature. This research paper focuses on how a curse takes place and reflects in the life of protagonists throughout the play.

Keywords : Curse, Struggle, Adversity, Disguised Blessing, Heaven –Earth blending

Human life is a full package of different shades of all colors, having a great mixture of emotions and experiences. Literature provides all shades of emotions and experiences to the readers through its different genres like poetry, novel, short story, essay, pamphlet, drama etc. Drama is a very well-known form of ancient Indian literature. A well-known proverb says about drama as: No Conflict, No Drama. Any literary art shines better in the light of struggle. Maha Kavi Kalidasa is an excellent author in depicting love in union and love in separation through the journey of struggle towards enchantment.

A well known Scottish writer is right in his saying,

The battle of life is, in most cases, fought uphill; and to win it without a struggle were perhaps to win it without honor. If there were no difficulties there would be no success; if there were nothing to struggle for, there would be nothing to be achieved (Samuel Smiles)

Kalidasa is one of the literary geniuses of our country. His dramas, poems are unparalleled and bring forth the scenes in front of the eyes while going on reading. Having no formal education, he was one of the Navratnas, nine gems or the most accomplished men of their times at the court of Chandragupta Vikramaditya. The romance of Pururavas and Urvashi, which Kalidasa has dramatized in The Vikramorvashiyam, is one of the most ancient and popular stories. One can find it recorded in the form of dialogue in The Rigveda, which is regarded as the oldest literary monument.

The love story of Pururavas and Urvashi is found different in almost all versions from the most ancient to modern. Similarly, the story of curse to Urvashi differs in each adaptation. The story of Pururavas and Urvashi is given in a detailed, though crude, form in various Puranas such as Bhagavata, Vishnu Purana, and Padma Purana. The story runs as follows: -- Urvashi was cursed by Gods Mitra and Varuna to leave heaven and become the consort of a mortal.

In The Matsyapurana, we find a version which was the one that evidently appealed most to Kalidasa. It is stated in it that Dharma, Artha, and Kama once appeared before Pururavas and asked him to state who was the highest. He awarded the palm to Dharma. Artha thereupon pronounced a curse on him that he should fan through avarice. Kama cursed him and said that he should become separated from his bride Ur-

vashi and wander in the forest of Kumara in the slopes of the Gandhamadana mountain in a mood of distraction at his separation from his beloved bride. Pururavas had already rescued Urvashi from the demon Kesi and won her heart. One day when Urvashi was personating Lakshmi in the sage Bharata's drama in heaven describing Lakshmisvayamvara (self-choosing of her lord), she was so engrossed with the thought of her lover that she forgot her part. Bharata cursed her. She was then restored to Pururavas and bore him eight sons Ayus, Dhritayu, Aswayu Dhanayu, Dhritiman, Vasu, Divijata, and Satayu.

The story of curse as narrated in The Brihatkatha is slightly different. Urvashi and Pururavas fell in love with each other in heaven. Once while Rambha danced in heaven the king laughed at an error made by her. Tumburu, the teacher of the art of dance in heaven, cursed him to be separated from Urvashi. The king then propitiated God Vishnu at Badarikasrama and regained Urvashi.

According to M.R. Kale's book, The Vikramorvashiyam of Kalidasa, the story of curse is revealed by two disciples of sage Bharata in act three. How Urvashi is cursed is not performed on the stage but readers can easily visualize the dialogues between two disciples of sage Bharata.

Second: Urvashi, playing the part of Lakshmi, was asked by Menaka who acted the part of Varuni-"Friend, here are assembled the principal persons in three worlds, and the guardians of the quarters, along with Kesava; on whom are affections fixed? (Kale 137).

Further she described;

Second: Then the words "On Pururavas" escaped her lips, when she ought to have said "On Purushottama" (Kale 139).

First: The senses conform themselves to what is to follow. Was not the preceptor angry with her? (Kale 139).

Second: The preceptor's curse was thus -- "Since you have transgressed my instruction, you will lose your position in heaven." But, after the performance was over, the great India said to her, as she stood with her head hung down through shame, - "I must now do a service to the royal sage, to whom you are attached, and who is my helper in battles. So, agree-

able to your love, wait upon Pururavas until he sees an offspring from you." (Kale 139).

This whole episode of first curse occurred in the third act. Urvashi again confronted with a second curse in forth act. She got angry with the king because he gazed for a long time at the daughter of demi-god, by the name Udayavati, who was sporting on the sandy bank of the Ganges by raising hillocks of sand. The second curse in this play is exposed by Chित्रलेखा;

Then, not accepting the apology of her husband, with her mind infatuated by the curse of the preceptor, and forgetting the rule laid down by the deity, she entered the forest sacred to kumara, which ought to be avoided by women. And just after her entrance she was transformed into a creeper standing on the border-ground of the forest (Kale 186).

The play is ruled by two curses. Kalidasa has used the element of curse as a sweet weapon to precede the love throughout the play. In the middle of five acts Kalidasa has dexterously entered the curse by sage Bharata through conversation without appearing him on the stage in third act and the second curse of deity is mouthed by Chित्रलेखा in the forth act. Both the curses are placed on Urvashi, but these curses affected almost all the major characters.

To conclude this paper, it is pointed out that the foremost theme of love is developed on the mainstay of curse. The first curse of sage Bharata to Urvashi caused a long separa-

tion between a mother and a son, but at the same time it is proved fruitful to a lovelorn couple. Urvashi and Pururavas could enjoy their love in union. Thus, the adversity of curse is converted into a divine blessing. Here curse played an important role in uniting two lovers. It is said that the intense love is indeed intolerable. Both the lovers are separated again by the curse of deity to Urvashi. Invisible Urvashi, in the role of a creeper, could see how the king was roaming in the forest, asking every animate or inanimate object to give him some tidings of his beloved. She realized the tremendous love of the king for her. Doubts and anger are converted into crave for love. The second curse is more like disguised blessings than misfortune. Heavenly nymph is fallen from heaven to earth in by the role of first curse whereas earthly queen happily united to the king and her son and again this happy bonding shifted to the heaven.

Curse and blessing are two different words having completely different meanings. One causes fall of fate whereas another fortifies to the foremost fortune. Kalidasa, in the play The Vikramorvashiyam empowers the role of curses in a way that curses give the impression of unseen blessings by sage Bharata and Deity. Though these heavenly and divine characters are not shown in the play, but impact of their curses be reminiscent their presence

The falling-rising mode is a pleasant blend of earth and heaven. The element of curse seems at the centre in such an amazing segment of union-separation and reunion.

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