

INDIAN ETHOS IN THE WRITINGS OF ARUN JOSHI

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ABSTRACT:

Indian writing in English is a relatively recent phenomenon as far as literature goes. Indian literature has its roots many centuries deep and strong, but writing in English is comparatively a new branch, which is just a few decades old. Yet, nothing short of success has been achieved with a handsome number of Indian writers having gained international acclaim whilst some are content to share a discreet place. When Indian writing in English was considered a venture, which only eccentric people indulged in. His novels delve deep into varied discourses of modernism, existentialism, along with the deep-rooted ethical choices a man has to make, avant-garde norms sneaking into post-mediumistic trend also, winning him huge critical appreciation in India. However, it has to be agreed upon that he was largely unknown in the West. He has five novels, namely. The Foreigner(1968). The Strange Case of Billy Biswas (1971). The Apprenticed (1974). The Last Labyrinth (1986) and The City and the River (1990) to his credit along with a collection of short stories The Survivor (1975). Journey can help us understand the seriousness and thematic unity of his books following a pattern of progress marking different landmarksto reach ultimate. Steeped in Indian Philosophy Joshi's novels are significant addition to literature imbued with essential messages of Indian heritage reflecting man's earnest efforts to meet Infinite.

Key words: Indian literature, post-mediumistic, spiritual, Indian, God, life, self.

INTRODUCTION:

The essence of Indian Philosophy lies in the dictum of AtamananVidvi (know thyself) which means that man must be conscious towardspurposefulness of his existence and to attain Moksha – a blissful state where all dualities of existence disappear and self merges withBrahman. According to Upanishads, Brahman is the root of the world and it is the reality of infinite unity of every existing being ofcosmos and it asserts itself in the form "I am". Atman is a part of Brahman which means self. Life in this world is considered as a bridgeover which one has to pass to reach the destination which can be considered as identification of Atman with Brahman. Exploration ofself and to know the real goal of human life is the primary concern of Indian Philosophy and writers from Vedic period to modern times.Although Arun Joshi wrote in the time when individuals were engrossed in dilemmas and inner contradictions but he stick to eternaethics of Indian authors, believing that an individual can attain salvation with an enlightened soul clearing all illusions and dualities,retaining

unattached and unbound state to witness Supreme Reality. Joshi's protagonists are Indian sages who focus on questions like "Who am I?"

The creative sensibility of Joshi had profound impact of Hindu Scriptures like The BhagavadGita, The Upanishads and Vedanta. Hindu tradition influenced him to the extent that he took the help of The Bhagavad-Gita to explain the evolution of soul and considered human life as a pilgrimage where man waits to become an instrument of God to reach ultimate reality of life. One turns mad in absence of such revelations and runs after desires which keep changing with requirements, environment and needs. A moment comes when one finds oneself at the verge of achieving at this point one finds the futility of it and ends up where one started. Myriad material quests of modern man can be witnessed around and mess up the life and turns it into a mysterious maze of matrix in absence of mysticism. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, "A hundred times man will hurt himself, a thousand times he will tumble, but in the end he will realize that he is God. We know that there is no progress in a straight line. Every soul moves, as it were, in a circle and will have to complete it. No one will be lost. We all are projected from one common center, which is God."

The Hindu scriptures describe many different ways to attain the state of liberation. Arun Joshi adopted three of them. Jnanayoga (knowledge of reality), Bhaktiyoga (adoration of Supreme) and Karmayoga (subjection to the will of the divine). These can be differentiated on the basis of emphasis on theoretical, emotional and practical purposes of human race and its dispositions. Human beings keep running after knowledge all life to become successful and turn a money minting machine, then humans aspire for love and fantasy to have fun and ecstasy and at last human beings act to undo all mistakes of life to evolve and transcend to become better.

When one keeps doing work without desiring any fruit and aspires for ultimate, at the end knowledge, love and action mingle together. Jnanayoga lifts man up from the narrow limits and helps him to surpass ego to contemplate on the universal principles of God. His desires get diverted and one starts indulging in spiritual activities abstaining from material mirage. Bhaktiyoga – a way of yoga which asks for total surrender and creating a bond of trust and love with Almighty. Karmayoga – it's a mandate for action. Arjuna refused to fight at the beginning of Gita and wanted retreat from world, even he could not escape from karma. The Samkhya also says humans are bound by karma and saved by jnana. Expression of the above discussed ways of life can be found in The Strange Case of Billy Biswas, The Apprentice and The Foreigner respectively.

The concept of maya also had a great impact on Arun Joshi. His hero's life and its moves are not less than the maze or a sort of labyrinth from where it is tough to find a way out. The delusive characters of The Last Labyrinth can be called Joshi's world of maya. The last novel of Arun Joshi's The City and the River gives reflection of maya with the help of myths of Sristi and Pralaya. It suggests man's surrender to Divine Will as the ultimate solution.

The protagonists of Joshi are product of modern time, problems of contemporary world confront them, surrendering to problems wasn't a choice for heroes rather they faced life boldly and ended it up to transcend. Even we can find a pattern of evolution and transformation in the writings to tell

how they turned inward for light to know true enlightenment which comes from within. All of them reach aspiritual oasis via haunted hunts of life like real heroes.

The Foreigner delineates a self - engrossed person who lacks a system of values and in absence of spiritual anchors and emotionalsensitivity he keeps wandering from one end of globe to another without roots and relations. Horrifying experiences of life teach himgreat lessons that detachment doesn't mean inaction rather it delves in right action without attachment without desiring for fruit. Herealizes that the unity of world lies in integrating self in tune with selfless love and work. A rare restlessness for spiritual union andrejuvenation can be seen in The Strange Case of Billy Biswas. Degenerated society fails to bind Billy with baseless bonds. His fightagainst hollow and shallow society turns him hostile and forced him to take extreme steps to chase the chaste. The psycho analysis ofRatan in The Apprentice can be done with the confessional monologue which itself is sufficient to reveal his plight and crisis of identityin the society lacking spiritual solace. A person whose life is full of compromises and deals finally decides to come out of deep dungeonand chooses to do adore adorable by indulging in Bhagatiyoga.

A spiritual quest of deeper level exploring the reality of life is depicted in The Last Labyrinth of Joshi. Som's insatiable thrust forproperty and pleasure turns him cynical and loses his hold on head and he finds himself unable to discriminate between reel and real.He can be called upon as a modern Hamlet lost in maya. Joshi's last novel The City and the River explores the mystery of God and Hisconnections with human's choice. A fresh prospective on the major thematic concern of Joshi's fictional world is also provided whichis the human quest for perfection and spiritual commitment. We get answers of all questions of spiritual concern i.e. renunciation whichis the very basis of life. It is also revealed when we kill 'self' and accepts the reality of God who is our real self who is always with inus and with us. It can be called as the most joyful state of human existence. In the words of Swami Vivekananda: "At the beginning itwas love for self, but the claims of little self-made love selfish; at the end came full blaze of light, when that selfhad become the Infinite.That God at first who was a being somewhere, became resolved, as it were into Infinite Love. Man himself was also transformed. Hewas approaching God, he was throwing off all vain desires, of which he was full before. With desires vanished selfishness, and at theapex, he found that Love, Lover and Beloved were one."Analysis of Arun Joshi's oeuvre as a spiritual journey can help us understand the seriousness and thematic unity of his books followinga pattern of progress marking different landmarks to reach ultimate. Steeped in Indian Philosophy Joshi's novels are significant additionto literature imbibed with essential messages of Indian heritage reflecting man's earnest efforts to meet Infinite. In the spirit of Indiannessseveral currents of his thoughts flow in the soil and all discharge the water into one'river" whose flood shall make the "City of God."

Conclusion:

Joshi's novels reflect the rise of postcolonial, neocolonial problems and the lionization of diaspora writing with its radical restructuring of social relations that distinguishes the modem epoch from everything that comes before. The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries found the new genre, the novel in its experimental stage and its form was an odyssey from historical romances to realistic

ones. It was in the postcolonial period that novels revealed introspective concern of the individual, taking the form of psychological and psychoanalytical fiction seemingly appropriating theories of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and Jacques Lacan. Indian English scribes started turning away from the past focusing their attention on contemporary issues. The Indian English novels of the early 1900's disclose how historical forces mold the individual. Remarkable novelists of that period were Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, to whose credit the Indian English novels stood on a solid ground and achieved self-identity.

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