

POETRY : A UNIVERSAL FORM OF CONNECTING HEART



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Abstract:-Poetry, the earliest form of literature, is the most elevated and sublime art. Different persons have defined poetry in different ways. But the crux of all these definitions is that poetry gives person a voice to express a variety of things. Beyond the problems of food, disease etc. mankind is dependent on the quality of the mental life. It is the language in which man explores his own amazement. It is the necessary ingredient for the survival of mind, as breath is for body. Poetry is the invisible compass of mankind.

An age is known for the quality of poetry it has created. Ours is a world of modern scientific technologies which has made us like a machine. There is less time and space for poetry. Ancient rich cultures are losing their ground. At this stage of decadence, the propagation of the ancient branch of literature is a great necessity. As such, to cultivate a taste for poetry and save mankind, all kinds of attempts should be made to uphold poetry by popularizing, encouraging and giving it a chance.

Keywords:Poetry, Sublime Art, Compass, Decadence, Uphold.

INTRODUCTION

ORIGIN AND MEANING :

Poetry, derived from the Greek word 'poiesis', is the earliest form of literature. It is the most human, elevated and sublime art. It is as old as life itself and has been flowing to us since the primitive times. The world poet Rabindranath Tagore has said, “*As at the primitive stage of the earth there was only water, in the same way at the primitive stage of literature there was only the rhythmic flow of poetry.*” Poetry brings to human mind heavenly pleasure. Our Rishis have said :

*“Sansara bisha brikshasya, Dwai eba madhura phale.
Kavyamrita rasaswadah, Sangama sajjaneh saha.”*

It means that the ambrosia of Poetry and the company of Sadhu are the two sweet fruits of the poison tree, the world. Tasting the honeysweet charm of poetry, the lovers of poetry enjoy heavenly pleasure.

DEFINITIONS :

Critics have defined poetry in countless ways. Aristotle describes poetry as an art of 'imitation' whereas Sir Philip Sydney has highlighted the role of poetry in 'imitating reality and arousing delight'. Samuel Johnson is of the view that poetry is 'the art of uniting pleasure with truth by calling imagination to the help of reason'. While Shelley calls it 'expression of imagination', Carlyle has described it as 'a musical thought'. When Coleridge mentions it as 'anti-thesis of science', he points out towards its connotative and suggestive meanings. American poet Edgar Allan Poe shows it as 'the rhythmic creation of beauty'. Mathew Arnold has discussed the relevance of poetry in its realistic portrayal of life, in his study, when he calls it as 'criticism of life'. T. S. Eliot has tried to achieve 'impersonality in poetry' through 'aesthetic detachment' and the use of what he calls 'the objective correlative'.

ESSENCE OF POETRY :

The common element in all the definitions mentioned above has been the role of poetry in its synthetic and organic relationship with life of man in general. Poetry is the super distillation of human experience made to discover and create beauty in life. It is also the expressway to truth. Man is born with poetry, but it is generally suppressed by the ways of the world and the struggle to survive. Poetry is the language of human heart. It has the elements of emotion, imagination and music.

The emotions or feelings which inspire poetry are generally those of joy and sorrow, love and hatred, hope and despair, jealousy and anger. Poetry is the hope of settling calm in the midst of a turbulent storm, the courage of conviction when the world is against one's cause, the dance of the imagination when in the lap of nature, rapture at the point near the end of the road to the truth, and the beating of the heart when wrapped in loneliness. It is the product of human reason but not bound by it. Poetry is not only immortal in its charm and beauty but is also universal in its appeal. Our ancient religious and philosophical books---the Vedas, the Holy Bible, the Quran, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata etc. are all poetical compositions. The main reason, why these literary compositions are living till today, is their being written in excellent poetry and verse. Had they been expressed in prose, they might have died out one or two generations after their creation.

Poetry is capable of thrilling and inspiring people of all ages. Science and politics can be interesting only to a certain section of people. But, poetry is of general human interest by means of its subject-matter and mode of payment. The appeal of poetry is not limited to one class of people, nation or country. No other modern form of entertainment is able to give us the pleasure and inspiration that we enjoy in Shakespeare's "As You Like It" :

*“Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which finds tongues in trees
books in the running brooks
Sermons in stones and good in every thing.”*
or in Milton's "Paradise Lost"
*“What if war is lost, all is not lost,
The courage, the study of revenge*

*And the invincible will;
Mind in its own place and
Can turn Heaven into Hell
And Hell into Heaven.”*
or in other mighty minds of 'realm of gold'.

During the Indian Freedom Movement, poetry played a vital role. “Bande Mataram”, a patriotic song, written by Bankim Chandra had cast a magic spell on the Indians and filled them with patriotic feelings, Poetry is capable of leading man to the world of intuition and inspiration. It reflects the individual and collective sensibility of man towards the happenings in society. Poetry is a living organism. In other words, it is an organic whole. It cannot be created in isolation or vacuum. Wordsworth in the Preface to “Lyrical Ballads” has rightly remarked that “*the objects of the poet's thought are everywhere and that thought the eyes and the senses are, it is true, his favourite guides, yet he will follow wherever he can find an atmosphere of sensation is which to move his wings.*” The poet's prime objective is to sensitize the aesthetic sensibility of man. He is capable to invoke the creative sensibility of human beings. He has the power of seeing and feeling. He is empowered to express and interpret what he observes and feels in order to quicken our aesthetic response and to sharpen the horizon of love, sympathy, awe and sensation. As Coleridge says, poetry enables us in “*awakening the mind's attention to the lethargy of custom and creating to the loneliness and to the wonders of the world before us.*”

In the world of large scale urbanization and man's alienation from one another, the poets reveal power and cultivate the faculty of imagination. It is an expression of poetic sensibility not merely to beauty but truth as well. Keats has rightly made the synthesis of beauty and truth--- “*Beauty is truth and truth beauty*”. He also recognizes the spontaneity of poetic creation when he says poetry should come as leaves to a tree. Poetry invokes man to show sympathy and sensitivity to the complexities of modern life which is devoid of peace and tranquility. Mathew Arnold points out towards the plight of man with divided aims:

*“Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Aegaeon, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery.”*

In every new age, people have a new outlook and so poetry, which is after all, a product of human mind and heart, also change its scope, form and matter in course of time. The two essential attributes of poetic processes are poetic inspiration and grace. In the age of Pope, poetry was considered as a picture of human nature. It is because of this, Alexander Pope proclaimed that ‘*the proper study of mankind is man*’. In this age, the focus was on humanity in general. But in the romantic age the focus was on the individual man. In modern time, Eliot marvelously showed the predicament of modern man.

Thus, poetry has so many functions. Being an imaginative construct, it has much to do with glorification of beauty. It is the source of inspiration. It is the essence of life and gives meaning to our existence. It gives sustenance and solace to the troubled mind. It also provides an outlet to man who is deeply troubled with worldly fret and fever. Ours is a world of modern scientific technologies. It has made us work like a mechanic. All work and no play has made us restless and devoid of human feeling. In this respect, poetry becomes a savior and treasure of all those human values of love, affection, amity and tolerance. Thus, poetry is like “Gagar Me Sagar” (Ocean in the Vessel)

PRESENT STATUS :

Today, we live in a world of excessive competitions and homogenized culture. The menace of globalization has taken us to the world of indiscriminate consumerism and alarming state of selfishness and bestial state of affairs. It has narrowed down the immense possibilities of life to mere self-gratification at all cost, resulting into worst type of cruelty, killing, rape, corruption and communal violence. With the weakening of the family, rise of individualism, cut-throat economic competition, strengthening of materialism, enforced loneliness, gaining of chemically stimulated euphoria, inhuman pace of living, unbridled commercialism and the spread of nihilism, human life has been rendered desolate and barren. People may have gained the political and economic bill of rights but lost soul's inner bill of rights. People today are under the grip of new forms of arts and perverted models of entertainment. There is less space and time for poetry which inculcates the highest faculty of mind-imagination. Matthew Arnold writes- “*The grand power of poetry is the power of dealing with things so as to awaken in us a wonderfully full, new and*

intimate sense of them, and our relations with them”.

CONCLUSION :

The world today is a world of decadence. So, the ancient rich cultures are losing their ground, glory and glamour. Perversions are all around. The industrial-commercial era has squeezed out a good bit of poetry in human life. People are losing interest in poetry. It has become very difficult for the few lovers of poetry today to find any amiable atmosphere for themselves. They may study poetry for themselves but the modern society, which is utterly materialistic in its outlook, is not prepared to listen to them. Poetry or its study is not getting any wealth or luxury for the people of the day. The study or hearing of poetry has become wasting time and energy. Art, literature and poetry have gone out of fashion because they are incapable of giving any worldly value. The worldliness has crept so deep into our blood and nature that we are constrained to be again reminded of Wordsworth and feel that what he had said centuries before is too true even today.

*“The world is too much with us, late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our power”.*

At this stage of decadence, the propagation of the ancient branch of literature is a great necessity. The decline in culture values can be arrested if there is a revival of the interest in poetry and other forms of creativity, which makes us sensitive human beings. So, to cultivate a taste for poetry and save mankind from further cruelty, all kinds of attempts should be made to uphold it. It is our----the intellectuals' duty to spread the message of human feelings and to show sensitivity to the misery of man by writing poetry, encouraging it and capability, thereby giving poetry a chance.

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