

Indian Sensibility in the Poetry of Shiv. K. Kumar

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Abstract: Shiv K Kumar was born in 1921 in Lahore. He made a mark as a novelist, short-story writer, poet, dramatist, critic and translator. He can be truly called a Postcolonial poet. Recipient of Sahitya Akademi and Padma Bhushan Award with various books of poetry, drama, short story and translation, Shiv K. Kumar gave an identity and a sense of direction to Indian English poetry in the Postcolonial period. His use of Indian mythology and the sense of history are wonderful and he uses them as themes and technique in his poetry. And it is in this aspect that his poetry conforms to the norms of Postcolonial literature. But the most attractive feature of his works is that it provides a different touch to Indian sensibility. Other than this, themes like East-West encounter, Indian background, national characteristics, contemporary reality and issues he takes all these as in his poetry which give the whole essence of Indian sensibility. This paper focuses on Indian sensibility in the select poems of Shiv K Kumar.

Key words: Postcolonial, Sensibility, identity, mythology

Introduction: Shiv. K Kumar, a prominent Post-Colonial Indian poet, who received Sahitya Akademi Award for his collection of poems entitled *Trap falls in the Sky*, has hands-on experience of exile since he himself was an immigrant once. The emergence of postmodern Indian English Writing is one of the most important part of Indian English Literature. And among them poetry became one of the best medium through which poets tried to show postmodern Indian sensibilities. Shiv K. Kumar can be truly said to embody the feature of Postmodernism in the last fifteen years of the twentieth century. He uses a unique style in his works to show current situation of contemporary society and tries to add a new taste which differentiate his poetry from other poets. He takes a mundance fact or incident and develops it to the point where requires a new meaning.

As an Indian English poet, Shiv K Kumar tries to come to terms with contemporary issues which are incorporated with Indian landscape. His dealing with national and transnational themes in his poetry clearly shows his open mind and sincere approach towards life. false notion, unfairness, hypocrisy, poverty, double-dealing, disappointment in married life, and disloyalty in life in the contemporary society- all we can see in his

poetry. He wanted to expose those who are answerable for the sufferings of layman because suffering in personal life and sufferings in the society at large make him sad.

Kumar's poems are true representatives with a distinct touch of Indian Sensibility. He tries to explore India in a new way with his image, perception and poetic genius. His poem *O Delhi* is a telling a story on Delhi with its past and present situation. He shows the trade, monotony of the city and at the same time he is pleased upon receiving the hospitality of Indian:

...Still I felt redeemed

to welcome indoors a fugitive from another land.

I savoured your hospitality. (O Delhi!)

Like many of the Indian poets of Postcolonial era, Kumar tries to write genuinely about the performances of rituals, superstitions prevailing in society. The way some of the people doing ritual without idea of its effect and consequences, he is against for this. He favours that institution and ritual which is not duplicitous in its shape. According to him a true and genuine religion is that which soothes the mind and the soul and gives moral sensibility. He is not against religion but the evils of religion.

Shiv K. Kumar's poetic techniques are touched with the West but the Western touch does not wipe out his Indian sensibility. The water of life runs in the Indian river with its western banks. Keki N. Daruwalla rightly says that Kumar's poetry "floats between ironic counterparts, and its tension comes from the Indian environment he writes in with an outlook moulded by years of living in the West" (Keki110).

It is the force of Kumar's poetic devices that makes even silent words speak louder. The words that lie in latent stage come to action. The use of interweaving of words makes a poem alive. A solitary word does nothing but when it comes in touch with other words, it contributes in the poetic journey. All the words are charged with the pen of the poet who makes them sing and dance on the white sheet. He releases words softly. "Don't cough out words. / Just let them out softly" (Losing My Way 55). Images and figures come, react, interact and then, fuse. This happens by virtue of his poetic technique which illumines poetry with insight.

Shiv K. Kumar paints his poetic landscape with the colours of reality. Poverty and disease have become synonym with the lower poor class of the Indian society. These poor people are devoid of bread, clothes and shelter. The poet talks of street children, who have not any identity because “Identity is for those who lullabied / in cradles, and fed on / honey and dreams” (Losing My Way 41). But, these street children are denied name, honey and dreams. They are simply “leftovers in the dustbin, discarded even by a ragpicker” (Losing My Way 41). They are found before the churches and temples stretching their hands for bread or alms but fail to have from the devotees who come for worship.

Shiv K. Kumar is not against religion but he is against the irrational, outdated and orthodox rituals that have embraced religion in the name of faith and belief. He is against shedding blood of animal in the name of sacrifice for the goddess. Kumar is considered one the most outstanding poets of Modern Indian English Literature, who has the credit to give the recognition, Modern Indian poets got in the world of English Literature. He is a versatile genius who combined in himself various aspects of a writer. He is a true poet whose poetry is a wonderful work of powerful feelings – of pains, agonies and hopes. In his poetry we can find a blend of lyrical and satirical element. He is very simple in his subject matter and treatment. The poet in a very beautiful way exhibits the emotional struggle of Indian city dwellers and villagers. This modern enigma we can see in his poem ‘A Subway Railway Station’, which is a superb piece of poetry, reveals the agony of a station master. Through the monologue of the stationmaster, he presents the sufferings of common man.

Thus, after a brief look of Shiv K. Kumar’s poems we can say that he is essentially a poet with marked poetic sensibility. The most important quality of his poetry is he takes up a simple incident or experience from the vast expanse of Indian and contemporary life and invests it with irony. His keen sense of observation and his imaginativeness make his poems both credible and interesting. Apart from applying new themes in his poetry, Kumar has contributed to the creation of new idioms (i.e. Indian English idioms) and that made him a successful Postcolonial Indian English poet. His poetry does not speak for any particular region or community, but it speaks for whole India, for whole world. Unlike other Indian poets writing in English who go on manufacturing verses with the only aim of increasing their quantitative output, Shiv K. Kumar writes only when he feels the impact of creative impulse so whatever he writes he does so carefully with the inborn instinct of creating it as perfect as possible

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