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Indian Sensibility in the Writings of Arun Joshi

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Abstract: The present study intends to intensify Indian sensibility in the writings of Arun Joshi. Analysis of Arun Joshi's oeuvre as a spiritual journey can help us understand the seriousness and thematic unity of his books following a pattern of progress marking different landmarks to 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: spiritual, Indian, God, life, self.

The essence of Indian Philosophy lies in the dictum of *Atamanan Vidvi* (know thyself) which means that man must be conscious towards purposefulness of his existence and to attain *Moksha* – a blissful state where all dualities of existence disappear and self merges with *Brahman*. According to *Upanishads*, *Brahman* is the root of the world and it is the reality of infinite unity of every existing being of cosmos 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 bridge over which one has to pass to reach the destination which can be considered as identification of *Atman* with *Brahman*. Exploration of self 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 stuck to eternal ethics 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 focuses on questions like "Who am I?"

The creative sensibility of Joshi had profound impact of Hindu Scriptures like *The Bhagvadgita*, *The Upanishads* and *Vedanta*. Hindu tradition influenced him to the extent that he took the help of *The Bhagvadgita* 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 realise 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 centre, which is God."

The Hindu scriptures describe many different ways to attain the state of liberation. Arun Joshi adopted three of them. *Jnanayoga* (a 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.

"*Karmany eva dhikaras te,
m phalesu kadachana,
Ma karamaphalhetur bhur,
ma te sango stu akrmani.*

(To action alone hast thou a right and never at all to its fruits; let not the action be thy your motive; neither let there be in thee any attachment to action)

When one keeps doing work without desiring any fruit and aspire 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 got 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 (*bhulbhulaiya*) 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 *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 a spiritual 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 emotional sensitivity he keeps wandering from one end of globe to another without roots and relations. Horrifying experiences of life teach him great lessons that detachment doesn't mean inaction rather it delves in right action without attachment without desiring for fruit. He realizes that the unity of world lies in integrating self in tune with selfless love and work. A rare restlessness for spiritual union and rejuvenation can be seen in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*. Degenerated society fails to bind Billy with baseless bonds. His fight against hollow and shallow society turns him hostile and forced him to take extreme steps to chase the chaste. The psycho analysis of Ratan in *The Apprentice* can be done with the confessional monologue which itself is sufficient to reveal his plight and crisis of identity in the society lacking spiritual solace. A person whose life is full of compromises and deals finally decides to come out of deep dungeon and 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 thirst for property and pleasure turns him cynical and looses 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 His connections with human's choice. A fresh prospective on the major thematic concern of Joshi's fictional world is also provided which is the human quest for perfection and spiritual commitment. We get answers of all questions of spiritual concern i.e. renunciation which is 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 in us and with us. It can be called as the most joyful state of human existence. In the words of Swami Vivekananda: "At the beginning it was love for self, but the claims of little self-made love selfish; at the end came full blaze of light, when that self had 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. He was approaching God, he was throwing off all vain desires, of which he was full before. With desires vanished selfishness, and at the apex, 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 following a pattern of progress marking different landmarks to reach ultimate. Steeped in Indian Philosophy Joshi's novels are significant addition to literature imbibed with essential messages of Indian heritage reflecting man's earnest efforts to meet Infinite. In the spirit of Indianness several currents of his thoughts flow in the soil and all discharge the water into one 'river' whose flood shall make the "City of God."

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