

THE SILENT AND SUBTERRANEAN THEOLOGICAL STREAM IN INDIAN ENGLISH WRITINGS: A DISCOVERY OF THE PERENNIAL SPRING OF PERPETUAL KNOWLEDGE

Gurpreet Singh ¹, Dr Mahesh Kumar Arora ²

¹ Assistant Professor of English, SGGS College, Sector 26, Chandigarh

² Professor of English, SLIET, Longowal, Punjab

ABSTRACT

The great Indian philosophy has the answers, hidden in the layers of its abstractness, of modern man's predicaments. The blessed persons strive to explore the realms of spirit and realise the hidden inner divine light and their life is illumined with the radiance of divinity and filled with transcendental bliss. The knowledge of our rich cultural heritage, legends, mythology and philosophy makes us internally more mature. The contemporary man is facing the dilemma of loss of identity, and everywhere he perceives loneliness. In the ancient times, faith in God granted tranquillity to the majority of the public. However, with the advancement of technology, numerous people started losing devotion towards divinity. The disregard of holy living is offering the mindset of loneliness. The contemporary human being is finding him all alone in the crowd of strangers. The modern concepts of capitalism and consumerism have given the feelings of emptiness. The objective of human life is a search for true identity and overcome the negating thoughts of aloneness.

KEYWORDS: *Heritage, Legends, Mythology, Philosophy, Divinity and Transcendental Bliss*

CRITICAL ANALYSIS:

"Through narration, myths combine 'truth-telling' with 'story-telling' with the help of fantastic imagination." ¹ Harry M. Johnson states, "Most myths have to do with the origins – the origin of the gods, of the world, of culture, of certain features of nature; other myths are stories of exploits of the gods or miraculous events in the lives of religious leaders." ² According to Mircea Eliade: "Myth narrates a sacred history; it relates an event that took place in primordial time, the fabled time of the beginnings. In other words, a myth tells how through the deeds of supernatural beings, a reality came into existence." ³ "Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan have made substantial use of myths, legends and rituals." ⁴ According to Philip Rahv: "For the one essential function of myth stressed by all writers is that in merging past and present it releases us from the flux of temporality arresting change in the timeless, the permanent, the ever arresting change in the timeless..." ⁵

The use of myth in the Indian English works is noteworthy as it assists in observing the particular dilemma of the contemporary man in the bigger perception of a point in time. In the words of Dr Karan Singh: "We live in

an age of turmoil, tension and transition. The old is collapsing, and the new is struggling to be born. At such a juncture, we look into our spiritual and cultural heritage, not to go back, but for the light, inspiration and courage to go forward into the future with clarity and confidence." ⁶ According to Ashok Kumar Kundu: "Myths are not only fantastic stories but pragmatic embodiments of moral wisdom and primitive faith. They set exemplary patterns of behaviour and the scale of values and ideal goals." ⁷

Vedanta philosophy has its origin in the Vedas. The theory dates back to the Upanishads. In the words of Dr Karan Singh, "If we look upon the Vedas as the Himalayas, then the Upanishads can be likened to those great Himalayan peaks clothed in eternal snow and bathed in the glory of sunshine... The Upanishads are known as the Vedanta, the end of the Vedas, both because chronologically they come at the end of the Vedic collections, and also because they represent the high watermark of Vedic thought." ⁸

Vedanta usually means the Upanishads. "Vedanta Philosophy has three sources- Sruti (the Vedas and the Upanishads), Smrti (the Bhagavad Gita) and Nyaya (Brahma Sutra). These three are technically known as Prasthanatrayam. As the three sources of this philosophy have been interpreted in different ways by different commentators, so, different schools of Vedanta have developed." ⁹ Upanishads are the very ancient treasure of spiritual knowledge. "Traditionally there are believed to be 108 Upanishads, but Adi Shankaracharya, the great philosopher to whom we owe a great deal of our understanding of the Upanishads, commented upon eleven- the Isha, the Kena, the Kataha, the Prashana, the Mundaka, the Mandukya, the Taittiriya, the Aitaraiya, the Chhandogya, the Brihadaranyaka and the Shwetashwata." ¹⁰ Surendra Nath Dasgupta proclaims in his article, "The fundamental idea which runs through the early Upanishads is that underlying the exterior world of change there is an unchangeable reality which is identical with that which underlies the essence in man." ¹¹

The function of Vedanta is profound and divine for all human beings. It is relevant for a modern man undoubtedly, as "we find ourselves adrift on a turbulent ocean with no established landmarks between the vanished past and indeterminate future. There are of course new hopes and aspirations throughout the world. Vedanta is still a living, a continuing, and a dynamic flow." ¹² The great Indian philosophy has the answers, hidden in the layers of its abstractness, of modern man's predicaments. The blessed persons strive to explore the realms of spirit and realise the hidden inner divine light and their life is illumined with the radiance of divinity and filled with transcendental bliss. Today everyone is facing the dilemma of loss of identity, and everywhere he perceives loneliness. In the ancient times, faith in God granted tranquillity to the majority of the public. However, with the advancement of technology, numerous people started losing devotion towards divinity. The disregard of holy living is offering the mindset of loneliness. The contemporary human being is finding him all alone in the crowd of strangers. The modern concepts of capitalism and consumerism have given the feelings of emptiness. The objective of human life is a search for true identity and overcome the negating thoughts of aloneness.

Swami Dayatmananda says, "We feel lonely because we are ignorant of our true nature. No matter how fulfilling our life might be social, intellectually or morally, our heart yearns for the divine. This yearning we feel

is deep, real and it comes from the depths of ourselves. Spiritual loneliness is a deep void within us, a hollowness that cannot be filled with anything other than spirituality." ¹³ Paul Tillich has rightly observed: "Language... has created the word 'loneliness' to express the pain of being alone. And it has created the word 'solitude' to express the glory of being alone." ¹⁴

The important Vedantic idea is the incredible visualisation of the whole human civilisation as a comprehensive family unit. This idea traverses all hurdles of caste or faith, of speech or ethnic group, or gender or the public class, all fences that segregate human beings are surpassed in the notion of culture-amalgamation. Religion, race or nationality are significant but "Global consciousness accepts, on the one hand, the multiplicity of our cultural heritage and on the other hand the underlying unity of the entire human race. This Vedantic concept is, in fact, the post-modern idea of pluralism. This pluralism has to be the basis for the Inter-faith movement that is developing in the world." ¹⁵ Therefore, Vedanta is incredibly an influential testimonial of the Interfaith viewpoint as the Mundaka Upanishad affirms, "As rivers in their flowing reach their destination in the ocean and there cast off their names and forms, so do those who have achieved divine realisation transcend all differences and realise the Great Being." ¹⁶

It is stated in The Bhagwad Gita that spirit is perpetual and the demise is like a change of attire. He who exists in all beings and who regulates all people from within them is the only immortal. There is no assortment in the actual sense. It is due to our unawareness of the Ultimate Reality that this diversity is apparent. This ignorance is artificial acquaintance or Avidya, and the world of the array is an illusion or Maya. Dr Radhakrishnan has described Maya as the name of the separating power, finite theory, which quantifies the incalculable and constructs appearance in the amorphous. This Maya is the feature of the fundamental actuality; neither alike nor unlike the ultimate truth.

Sankara's instance of serpent and rope is well known to reveal the character of manifestation and certainty. This assorted creation is a mistake of opinion; the rectification of this miscalculation means the change of conscience. The rope materialises as a snake due to counterfeit comprehension, and when the delusion is ended, one is competent to identify the integrity. Sankara does not counteract the creation. He states that when one attains the understanding of the exact nature of one's organism, the entire design of the cosmos is re-interpreted.

Subsequently, many scholars were not pleased with Sankara's elucidation and clarification of Vedanta philosophy. The famous among them are Ramanuja and Madhva. The primary divergence between the analysis of Ramanuja and Sankara is that while Sankara believes that there is nothing excluding Braham and on the realisation of real awareness Atman and Braham are one. Ramanuja accepts that there is an essential distinction between the Jiva (self) and Braham. Jiva and The World are parts of Braham; they jointly form the organisation of Braham but are dissimilar from Braham. Dr Radhakrishnan informs in his "Indian Philosophy" that according to Ramanuja: "In the released condition the souls will have all the perfection of the supreme except in two points, but it has no power over the creative movements of the world, which belong exclusively to Braham." ¹⁷

He further advocates that in Ramanuja's viewpoint enormous credence is positioned on the belief of peccadillo and man's accountability for it. Ramanuja's qualified non-dualism holds that Braham is evident Himself in Jiva and the material world. Jiva is the entity; the self also called atman - the soul. According to his philosophy, Braham does not lack characteristics (nirguna). Braham and its celestial forces are apathetic. The relation amid them is that of totality to the component. The world being a part of Braham is not different from Braham, the earlier being is like the authority and the second like that in which the rule inheres.

At the instant, the crisis crops up, why does Jiva endure destitution? Ramanuja's vision is that the hardships of living are due to his past karmas (actions). God is always gracious (Kripalu). Liberation from karmas, the deliverance of the soul is not feasible merely by his unaccompanied karmas. It is achievable only with the assistance of God. God showers his forgiveness upon those who yield their identity to the determination of God. It is the Bhakti Yoga. It is the conduit of love, which is not an annihilation of personality but fairly a unification of our spirit with the force of the providence.

According to Ramanuja, the celestial elegance releases Jiva, following his deliverance from the burden of the world of wits. This kindness of God may be required by the inventiveness of the personage's identity, or it may be the arrangement of God. Vedanta recognises the certainty of Braham and Atman. All schools of Vedanta may be Sankara's non-dualism, Ramanuja's qualified non-dualism and Madhva's dualism; all acknowledge the veracity of Braham and Atman. They hold opposing views merely in the perception of the temperament of their rapport with each other. According to Dr S. Radhakrishnan, Ramanuja's philosophy on the influence of the Shruti admits that the limited materialises from the unlimited. Moreover, the distinct spirit is liberated to perform according to its determination. He embraces the outlook that if a soul becomes unsuccessful to identify its reliance on divinity, divinity facilitates it to comprehend the reality by the mechanism of karmas, which impose chastisement on the spirit thus taking it back to its aberrant attempts.

The intention of the formation of this globe is Lila of the heavens. It is protrusion of celestial determination, the appearance of Braham. To continue dedicated to this heavenly motivation, and operate consequently is Bhakti Yoga. Bhakti is adoration, dedication and perseverance towards God. This commitment and worship bring emancipation from the repression of real wishes (vishays). The same worldwide quintessence permeates through all the formation, and the material world is a projection of Braham. The spirit through Brahamgyaan (Divine knowledge) can practice the authentic character of the soul's subsistence. This gyaan is the immediate comprehension of immeasurable, and what emerges to be detached life is a mere shadow of the truth. Sankara's and Ramanuja's viewpoints disagree in this respect that while Sankara does not acknowledge any truth excluding Braham, Ramanuja embraces the outlook that the individual spirit, while a form of the absolute is existent, inimitable, perpetual, gifted with astuteness and self-consciousnesses, ageless and indiscernible. Ramanuja's principle of qualified non-dualism is thus capable of conquering many complexities faced by Sankara.

The Gita's philosophy propounds that there are two stages of full and high human life. One is Abhyudaya, and the other is Nihisreyasa. Abhyudaya is the material improvement, but this is not only wealth, but it is also the sharing of growth and well-being of others in the society, which can only be accomplished through truthful unbreakable labour. When one achieves material prosperity, one is not entirely pleased. Sensory objects cannot give full contentment. After the realisation of one need, we wish for a new thing. Even after conquering all, this world can proffer, one suffers blankness in one's mind. Then one can achieve spiritual independence with the aid of Nihisreyasa. The persistent utilisation of commodities cannot escort to gratification.

Vedanta has classified all human functions mainly into the four purusarthas. Purusartha means that which is sought after by persons. These are - dharma, artha, kama and moksa. Dharma is the right deed. It is the knowledge of principles. It should be given the highest significance. It is the primary purusartha, but in actual life, kama appears primarily. The kama is sensory happiness, and artha is capital. From a toddler to a grown-up person, all search for sensory fulfilment. To please these sensory cravings, one necessitates riches, i.e., artha. All activities of human life are intended for generating resources (artha) for the pleasure of visual wishes. According to the Vedanta philosophy, the ultimate value should be given to dharma. When we upset the ladder of ethics, the equilibrium of life is troubled, and when one recognises the worth of dharma, there is fresh arousing in his character, and he progresses towards the transcendental bliss that is ananda. Then life becomes impartial and tranquil. This coolness of mentality makes one appropriate to reflect upon moksa, i.e., liberty from all connections. Everybody must struggle with full zeal for this ideal state. The first three purusarthas - dharma, artha and kama all going simultaneously.

The sage, who has recognised his correct temperament, the enlightened spirit, who is liberated from all preferences, aversions and is an ideal balance with the human race. Such an individual performs like an ordinary citizen of the world but his proceedings do not fasten him, and he gets higher state exceeding desires. The moh (cravings) of worldly affairs attaches a person to the world. A Karma Yogi offers his every deliberation and endeavour to God; the effect is the renaissance of his awareness. The sense of duality is exterminated. Therefore, the resignation of identity is not ineffectual in any way. This results in the transcendence of the essence and the character is amalgamated with the Supreme. The recognition of an autonomous certainty as the origin of the cosmos, spirit, and nature united with Sankara's Brahm and variously added uniqueness of different construes of Vedanta notion are acquiescent in the beliefs of the Gita.

According to Vedanta philosophy, the liberty from despotism is Mukti. This subjugation occurs due to man's discontented wishes; it results in nativity and regeneration. Through Self-Knowledge, emancipation from the succession of origin and reincarnation can be achieved. The Vedanta advocates a choice of alleyways to this consequence. These are the route of affection (Bhakti Yoga), the path of charitable deeds (Karma Yoga), and the course of comprehension (Jnana Yoga). All the ways are illustrated in facades in the Gita, and these corridors are harmonising. Nevertheless, one cannot trample these conduits on his own. The divine scriptures stipulate the inexorableness of Guru to instigate one on the path of self-recognition. After attaining personal consciousness,

one may select to escort a dynamic living in the world in a spirit of indifference. To lead a lively existence does not imply participation in the world like unaware male and females of the world. It connotes that one prefers the course of deeds devoid of every yearning. Such a human being does not pay any heed to any denigration of the world. He is gifted with a fanatical inequitable authority, which helps in discovering the right character of the possessions. In Gita's communiqué, Lord Krishna puts the accent on good deeds. Here, he expresses Karma Yoga in length. According to Swami Tapsyananda, "All Vedanta is a quest for discovering the unity of all existence in the nondual Sat-Chit-Ananda." ¹⁸

Several Indian English writers have considered the value of inquisition into the nature of Atman. "In his non-fictional work – The Meaning of India, Rao has elaborated on crucial issues about the essential nature of Indian metaphysics. Bringing together the cardinal principles of practising religions of India and the basic tenets of philosophy and ethics, Rao sought to redefine faith and belief in the context of contemporary thought." ¹⁹ Raja Rao has entwined various myths and legends in the novel and has transformed it into the perpetual combat between the forces of the good and the evil. The narrator blends the real and mythical elements so inventively that the novel turns out to be a "glorious myth as profound as a shastra, and as prolific as a Purana, yet in its brevity and verbal economy, it excels in capturing the excessive critical imagination." ²⁰

The great Indian authors Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan have managed to maintain the mythical and philosophical elements in their works, which have undeniably enhanced the worth of Indian literary traditions. The mythical technique of both writers Rao and Narayan is cohesive and effective, and they make the readers perceive the visible contemporary images with a transparent apparition. "Myths lend new meaning to the contemporary events; actually, they fill the ontological gap between the events and the meaning. Life, then, at any rate, significant life, was in ancient times the reconstitution of the myth in flesh and blood; it referred and appealed to the myth; only through it, through reference to the past, could it make itself meaningful and significant. The myth is the legitimisation of life, only through and in it does life find self-awareness, sanction and conservation." ²¹ Creatively employing different myths and by identifying similarities between the contemporary and antique, Raja Rao has accomplished in conveying the principle of the spiritual expedition for surpassing the normal levels to attain the transcendental bliss. If we determine the author's achievement in conveying the subject matter of the novels, it is observed that mythical references have positively enhanced the magnificence of his works. At the same time, "By employing various myths as a creative mode and by perceiving parallels between the contemporaneity and antiquity, Raja Rao has succeeded only in capturing and conveying the theme of the metaphysical quest for self-transcendence." ²²

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Rajesh K. Pallan, *Myths and Symbols in Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan* (Jalandhar: ABS Publications, 1994), p. 185.
2. Harry M. Johnson, *Sociology: A Systematic Introduction* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1980), p. 405.
3. Eliade Mircea, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1959), p. 5-6.

4. Rajesh K. Pallan, *Myths and Symbols in Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan* (Jalandhar: ABS Publications, 1994), p. 186.
5. Phillip Rahv, "The Myth and the Powerhouse", as cited in John B. Vickery, *Myth and Literature Contemporary Theory and Practice* (USA: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), p. III.
6. Karan Singh, *Vedanta* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2001), p. 5.
7. Ashok Kumar Kundu, *Vedanta and Myth: A Study of R.K. Narayan's Novels* (Jaipur: Book Enclave, 2009), p. 27.
8. Karan Singh, *Vedanta* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2001), p. 8.
9. Nirod Baran Chakraborty, *A Dictionary of Advaita Vedanta* (Kolkata: The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 2003), p. 1.
10. Karan Singh, *Vedanta* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2001), p. 8-9.
11. Surendranath Das Gupta, *Hindu Mysticism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarasi Dass, 1935), p. 45.
12. Karan Singh, *Vedanta* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2001), p. 5-6.
13. Swami Dayatmananda, *Vedanta Magazine* (UK: Ramakrishna Vedanta Center, Sept. 2009 to Jan. 2010) http://estudantedavedanta.net/alone_not_lonely.pdf
14. https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/41343.Paul_Tillich
15. Karan Singh, *Vedanta* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2001), p. 22-23.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
17. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1958), p. 145.
18. Swami Tapasyananda, *Bhakti School of Vedanta* (Mylapore: Sri Rama Krishna Math, 1990), p. 36.
19. Medha Sachdev, *Raja Rao's Novels: Indian Philosophy Fictionalized* (Delhi: Indian Publishers' Distributors, 2005), p. 31.
20. John B. Alphonso Karkala, *Perspectives on Raja Rao*, ed. K.K. Sharma (Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1980), p.82.
21. Rajesh K. Pallan, *Myths and Symbols in Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan* (Jalandhar: ABS Publications, 1994), p. 21.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 61.