

Aurobindo: As a poet

Sri Aurobindo, the great mystical poet, is a class by himself. He is a freedom-fighter, a great saint and philosopher, and a prolific poet. His withdrawal from politics marks true flowering of his genius, because, it is at this time that the bulk of his work was written. His contribution to Indian philosophy is highly significant and is contained in the 'Life Divine', 'Synthesis of Yoga', 'Essay on Letters' and many other philosophical works. He had also written a history of poetry - 'Future Poetry'. In the field of poetry, his achievement is stupendous, since he had written epic, drama, long narrative poems and short lyrics.

The most significant feature of his poetry is its mysticism. He is first of all, a saint and the poet in him comes much later. Such poetry based on personal mystical experiences, is extremely difficult either to understand or to evaluate. Like Blake he makes use of symbols and allegory - which requires spiritual interpretation and knowledge of the poet's own philosophy. Even a short poem like 'Rose of God', unless one knows Aurobindo's philosophy is remembered merely as a poem written in rich and complex language. If one reads 'Draveshi' and Savitri's ~~predicament as the fatal day~~ with the actual stories in mind, all the richness and depth of its words will be lost. Thus, when Savitri's predicament as the fatal day is presented, we do not have merely the sufferings of an ordinary woman -

The mortal's lot became the immortal's share
Outcaste from her inborn felicity

Accepting life's obscure, terrestrial role
Hiding herself even from those she loved:

Aurobindo's diction is rich and elevated, in other words he makes use of the grand style. The style is suited to the subject matter of his poetry which is mystic experience and highly philosophical concepts. Such elevated themes require an equally elevated style -

they cannot be expressed in simple or conventional language.

It is not surprising, therefore, that 'Ruse of Lyad' should be written in rich and complex language, ~~and it prays for the divine glory to blossom~~ made the human heart.

Ruse of Lyad great wisdom flows
on the summits of being
Ruse of light, immaculate core
of the ultimate seeing!

In 'rasavadutta' Aurbindo takes the ancient story of udayan and rasavadutta. The theme of 'Redogali' is a tale of romantic love of ancient Syria. All these plays have as one common theme, the supreme importance of love in man's spiritual development and all show complete mastery of dramatic blank-verse. In 'Devachi' Aurbindo presents the story of Devachi and Purusa as given in the scriptures. 'Love and Death' tells the story of Pura and Piyandada, while 'Baji-Prahar' is a heroic poem.

Aurbindo has written many short lyrics and sonnets also. 'Songs of Hyattilla' contains many short poems. 'Transformation', 'Dream of Surreal Science', 'Gespore of the staircase' are some of his well known sonnets.

Parsi-Independence poets can not admire Aurbindo's poetry. They do not like either the language or the content of such works. But that does not detract from Aurbindo's greatness. Mission Ezekiel has remarked, 'In my opinion anyone who thinks highly of Aurbindo as a poet has no feeling for the English language.' Such a remark speaks volumes of Ezekiel's limitation. In the field of poetry his achievement is stupendous since he had written epic, drama, long narrative poems.

and short lyrics. He was a literary poet and
he gives account of the mystical vision in his
poetry.