

Unearthing Indian Values and Ethos in the Poetry of Keki N. Daruwala

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Abstract – Keki N. Daruwala is one of the leading contemporary Indian poets who write in English. Daruwala did all his rising up in India so it is normal for him to portray Indic scenes and people of this nation. Daruwala's poetry, similar to the poetry of his equally talented contemporaries is nothing if not Indian. An Indian poet has to have the recognizably Indian elements in him if he is any good. An Indian poet can be an expatriate and can write about isolation and footlessness, but even then, in his imaginative reflection of experience, he will remain essentially Indian. Daruwala is neither an expatriate nor is an alienated from Indian life and therefore discovering the „Indian“ element in him is emphasizing the obvious. His poetry is permeated with various aspects of Indian sensuality. His poetry is vivid bright and picturesque view of the colourful landscape of Northern India. Daruwala Was awarded Sahitya Academy Award, 1984.

With the publication of his first book, as now, in 1970, Daruwala established itself as a title to be reckoned with in Indian poetry. Senior Indian poet and literary critic Nissim Ezekiel applauded his work as "reliable evidence not only of the poetic talent, but also of literary creativity, perseverance, intellectual strength and social consciousness". Over a period of nine books and more than three decades of poetry, Daruwala has come a long way, both formally and thematically. However, it retains some strong characteristics: an ironic attitude to memories multi-layered, contradictory realities of Native Indian life, a anxiety with diverse cultural, historic and mythic landscapes, a terse, vigorous and tensile style, flexible imagism, continuous narrative drive, an capability to see between metrical patterns and free verse, and a capacity to combine an epic canvas with a miniaturist's eye for detail.

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Daruwalla's poetry is permeated with various aspects of Indian sensibility. His poetry is distinguished by a bright and picturesque view of the colourful landscapes of the North India. The background is often bordered by his instantaneous surroundings-by a Ganga, a Ghaghra, a Chambal valley, a Tarai, a Varansi, a Haridwar, a Rishikesh and a Badrinath. To reference:

The journey to Badrinath is difficult;
Along the valley of the burning sun;
On flinty bridle-paths which centuries have trod
In penance and anonymous dust,
The caravan of pain proceeds towards the gods
Stony eyes turn northward towards stone
And the grey austerity in the stance of hills;
The snow hush under granite skies
And the wind biting like a dentist's drill,

Whipping the mist into a horizon.

(Apparition in April, p.22)

With this background, it is associated with legends and myths drawn from ancient times. Freely uses words that might not point to the ritual and religious aspects of Hinduism, such as mantra, "gayatri", "pind-dan", "panchtirtha", "ashram", "ardhakumbh" etc. The purification rituals extend to his poetry to tradition,. Rituals, cleansing, strengthening his poems the tradition of mythological, symbolic, and even spiritual dimension.

Daruwalla's third book, Crossing of Rivers uses it river drawings in many ways. Social, religious and cultural. The elements of the river are made alive with vivid and living poems. Ganga is the main metaphor in this book. "Boat-Ride along Ganga", the first poem Crossing of Rivers, brings back the idea in the sense that here the world is visible from on the river and not the other way around. Poet, riding up the river an evening boat, part of the river:

Slowly the ghat-amphitheatre unfolds

Like a diseased nocturnal flower in a dream
 That opens its petals only at dusk.
 Palm-leaf parasols sprouting like freak-mushrooms
 Brood over platforms that are empty.
 (Crossing of Rivers, p.11)

Without looking at sacred thoughts, he had never he is free from Indian hypocrisy especially those related in Hindu culture. He considers the Hindu holy city Varanasi as a world of despair filled with pitfalls chased there physically disability is highlighted and public concerns are set aside. "Waterfront" begins with confusion as she realizes that, even though you know the sewage is flowing into the river, the river is considered sacred. Unlike a large number of Indians poets in English, Daruwalla never expressed feelings in the show controversy in Indian life. In the poem, he tells that A woman with epilepsy is taken to the mazar where a believing man will heal him because, it is believed that he the disease is a supernatural consequence. The woman's husband is advised to take him to a mosque in Banaras:

His hand came up to his tarter beard
 in archaic salute.
 Take her to the mosque AT Banaras, he said,
 On the night preceding
 The first Friday of the month.
 Insha Allah! She shall be cured.
 (Under Orion, p.19)

These aspects are typically Indian. Such things are a part of Indian life. Not only in villages, but in cities and even educated persons sometimes believe in such things.

Daruwalla, as a insightful and bright poet, is aware of a number of disagreements, which the Indian society has. A major ingredient in the poetry of Daruwalla is the influential social criticism. The middle Ages, a long poem in A Summer of Tigers, bring to light disturbing scenes in Indian life. The poem begins with a reference to the blinding of some prisoners by policemen in Bhagalpur.

A police officer is a symbol of the rule of law, a symbol that may lose much of its lustre in modern India. However, violence is not confined to policemen only. There are groups of people who kill others, often helpless people, in the name of caste. While depicting the contradictions in Indian life, Daruwalla is never sentimental. He gives a realistic portrayal of

Indian life. He is deeply rooted in the actuality of living in contemporary India. Daruwalla has frequently written about the hunger and misery of the people in India. Daruwalla stands out amongst English poets for bringing to poetry a variety of understanding generally outside the ambit of poets. His experience as a police officer has clearly helped him. He has vibrantly and minutely portrayed the present-day Indian socio-political world with touches of irony and sarcasm. He interpreted the evils of communal tensions, riots, exploitation, greed, criminalization of politics. Dowry etc. he brings alive the world of riot and curfew, sirens, warrants, men nabbed at night, lathi blows on cowering bodies, soda bottles and acid bulbs waiting on the roof tops, press communiqués. Daruwalla is deeply anguished at the institutionalized corruption in free India finds expression in Hunger-74, Monologue in the Chambal Valley, Hawk, Food and Words, and Words and Foods. Economic inequality, injustice, and exploitation breed more robberies and robbers. Politics has become a way of making money. Criminals, politicians, and officials create unholy nexus. Not many English poets have this ability to present direct human grief and absence of emotions.

Single-handedly along with the contemporary indo-English poets, Daruwalla plays a "documentary" function in striving to project the bleak actuality of India landscape-an abode that is at once generative and regenerative of the Indian sensibility.

A prominent feature of Daruwalla's poetry is its ability clearly materialise its notions, to smack a ingenious tension linking image and statement. His poetry has the narrative force and sweep to paint, for instance, a vast portrait of post Independence India as "a landscape without purpose":

In conclusion, Daruwalla's poetry is associated with "Indianism". He has taken on the theme of various Indian subjects, legends and folklore, and contemporary Indian situations. His poetry is true and kind because he is deeply rooted in the reality of life in India today. He has located an attempt to create a new visual language to give clearly defined personalities a status in their poetry. Therefore, he wrote his poems in conventional and English lyrical diction, and instead writes "an energetic Indian in English. This sentiment is also reflected in the use of traditional Indian symbols and images.

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