

# Theme of Nissim Ezekiel Poetry

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**Abstract – A new art of modern poetry begins after Independence. So many Indian poets like Dom Moraes, P. Lal, Nissim Ezekiel and Kamala Das laid the foundation of modern era of poetry. Among these writer Nissim Ezekiel called “the father of independence Indian verse in English. he establish himself as a towering figures of Indian English poetry . This paper described theme of Nissim Ezekiel poems like Indian identity, superstitions, Love and marital relationship in his poems.**

**Keywords: Marital Relations, technique, Indo-Anglian, Love, Poetic style**

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Nissim Ezekiel, an eminent Indo-Anglian Poet of the Past Independent Era, was like John Milton in his style of writing poems. In his longer Poems John Milton used Blank Verse and also mixed it with Rhymed lines. Nissim Ezekiel reflects this poetic style though it was not his intention to follow John Milton.

Ezekiel never accepted the theory of spontaneous writing. According to Chetan Karnani, “Few Indo – Anglian Poets have shown the ability to organize their experiences with words as competently as Ezekiel has done. Unlike other amateurs of Verse, he has shown a remarkable dedication to his art.”

Indian identity, Nissim Ezekiel poetry has theme or idea of ‘ Indianess’ . Most of poem deal with Indian social context and issues. His poetry explores the Indian rural life and ritual and customs.

Love: Love with extreme condor and openness in his poetry. Love has various categories but Ezekiel's poetry of the first phase is inspired by the love between a man and woman. Love gets recognition when the lovers are married. The poems dealing with nuptial love show how the life goes on.

Ezekiel believed that the best poets wait for words. He introduced the style of writing short sentences of one or two syllables and long sentences in his poems. His poems reveal decasyllabic lines, Octosyllabic lines, Hexasyllabic lines, Tetrasyllabic lines and monosyllabic lines. Nissim Ezekiel, an Intellectual Powerhouse with an amazing versatility, had a unique variety of style of writing his poems. His poems reveal a variety of style. Comparing him with British eminent poets, Ezekiel-stands with John Milton who wrote longer poems in Blank Verse and also mixed his poems with rhymed lines. In fact he followed Milton's Poetic Style but not intentionally. Ezekiel's Poems reveal the style of Free Verse and also sometimes

rhymed lines. Nissim Ezekiel believed in the expression of experiences by choosing the right word. In fact, he believed the poet has to wait for the right word and then to choose the word assiduously and only the right word can correctly express his meaning. It is not easy to find the right word. Thus the poet has to wait. In his poem “Poet, Lover and Birdwatcher”. He highlights his poetic style in this way:

*“The best poets wait for words*

*The hunt is not an exercise of will*

*But patient love relaxing on a hill*

*To note the movement of a timid wing*

*Until the one who knows that she is loved*

*No longer waits but risks surrendering*

*In this the poet finds his moral proved*

*Who never spoke before his spirit moved”. (Collected Poems. p. 52)*

“STYLE IS THE MAN” is a universally known statement. Nissim Ezekiel's style is incorporated in his Poetic Craftsmanship. In connection with his poetic style, Chetan Karnani highlights thus; “Few Indo – Anglian Poets have shown the ability to organize their experiences with words as competently as Ezekiel has done. Unlike other amateurs of Verse, he has shown a remarkable dedication to his art.” (Karnani120).

Before analyzing the technique of Ezekiel, it would be desirable to mention the observations of some portent critics on the technical aspect of his poetry. AdilJussawala is one of the pioneer critics on Ezekiel

as he says, "Ezekiel is perhaps the first Indian poet consistently to show Indian readers that craftsmanship is as important to a poem as its subject matter" (Jussawala 172). Ezekiel's style of writing poems is also conversational. It is evident from his poem "Song to Be Shouted Out" in the following conversation; the husband says:

*"I come home in the evening*

*and my wife shouts at me"*

*The wife's says:*

*"Did you post that letter?*

*Did you make the telephone call?*

*Did you pay that bill?*

*What do you do all day ?*

*The husband replies:*

*"Shout at me, woman!*

*What else are wives for?" (Collected Poems. p. 27)*

William Walsh also remarks about the technique of Ezekiel when he says that "Ezekiel poetry more than that of any other of these writers (Indian English poets) seem to be generated from within and have within it a natural capacity for development. It is intellectually complex, mobile emphasizing, fastidious in diction and austere in acceptance" (Karnani 184). Ezekiel rejects the supporters of spontaneous writing. He does not accept Williath.WoldsWdrth'S.156 etc theory of spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. He also rejects William Carlos William. In his poem "For William Carlos William", he states

*"I don't want*

*To write*

*Poetry like yours! (Collected Poems. p. 7)*

Repetition of words is another important characteristic of. Ezekiel's Poetic Style. He repeats words either to emphasis meaning or gives a new meaning to his ideas. In his poem, "And God Revealed", he repeats the words 'Love' and 'World'thus,

*"Yet we with wiser love can master love*

*And with the news we bring of other worlds*

*Enlarge the World of Love with Loye of World." (JSAL. p. 20)*

In his poem "Touching", he repeats the word 'Touch', giving different meanings like 'physical contact', 'feeling of happiness' as in the following lines;

*"You touch me \_\_\_\_\_ a way of feeling*

*I touch you \_\_\_\_\_ A way of feeling a way of understanding*

*We are touched.*

*By a film or book*

*We are touched*

*When a stranger is kind*

*How can we live?*

*Without touching and being touched? " (Collected Poems. p. 28)*

ALLITERATION is also highlighted in his style. In this poem "For SatishGujara", he writes,

*What does one do?*

*Whose loss And Liability*

*Looms as large as this? (JSAL p. 108)*

Ezekiel's poem contains Decasyllabic lines, Octosyllabic lines, Hexasyllabic lines and Tetrasyllabic lines. It is evident from the poems referred above and is also revealed in the poems "Night of the Scorpion", "Island" and "A Time to Change". Ezekiel rarely follows the grammatical rules of Punctuation. Mark of Punctuation Full Stop' suggests that the process of the poem has come to an end. But the poem remains open-ended when there is no punctuation mark. In connection with his Poetic Style, R.S. Pathak writes, "Most of Nissim Ezekiel's sentences are simple. He writes longer sentences by the time he composed poems contained in the "The Exact Name (1965)", then came a change in his style. The sentences of "Hymns-in Darkness (1976), are about 2/3 in length as compared to the "The Exact Name". In "Latter-Day- Psalms (1982), the sentences are shorter still. Most of the words used by the poet are Monosyllabic. Some Decasyllabic words have also been used regularly. The number of other words is negligible". (Pathak pp. 129-130) Ezekiel seems to be at home with words of one or two syllables. In fact he has shown his awareness of the crafts of poetry and his performance as a poet. His poetic Style is modern, restrained and conversational. He is outstanding in his poetic style.

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