

SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE POETRY OF IFTIKHAR

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Abstract

Dr I.H. Rizvi is an outstanding name in history of Indian English Literature. A bilingual poet, writer, reviewer, translator, sports-lover, sports commentator, broadcaster, editor and a teacher by profession, Rizvi widely considered to be at the heart of the new poetry, has made outstanding achievements. He has published eleven books of poems. He is a biography of A.B.I. (U.S.A) and I.B.C. (.U.K), and adviser to A.B.I. North Carolina, U.S.A.; Member of international Poets Academy, Air Sports Commentator, Winner of Michael Madhusadan Academy Award and Second Prize Winner of an International Poetry Contest, Brazil 1987, and Hon.D.Litt (U.S.A). He also writes ghazals in Urdu published in 'Daman-e-Gul', 'EkBoondSada' and 'Aah-e-NeemShab.'

Professor (Dr.) Syed Ameeruddin, a renowned Indian English poet says, " Rizvi's poetry has variety and he has covered all aspects of life in his poetry. Only a genius and a born poet can do this. What distinguishes his poetry is his humanity, keen perception, minute observation and frank confessional note. His language is sweet, simple and sensational. He is already a name to reckon with in the field of world poetry. He is a noble soul and a genius in his own and his sincere services to the cause of poetry are laudable." Rizvi has composed about 1000 poems in English and 800 poems in Urdu. Some of his poems have been translated into other languages of the world and published in anthologies, journals and magazines of International repute.

But his real worth is yet to be fully established. His due place is still not given to him.

My research aims to give Rizvi his due recognition in Indian English Literature.

i. Introduction

Like most urban poets, Rizvi is concerned with the problems of society, people's mentality, human relationship, man and his environment and lack of love. His is not the voice of man but of one who is looking for community in a metropolitan setting. Rizvi is aware of today's society where, "streams of reason have dried up and do not feed our minds." One of his themes is also of love. He not only describes personal love but also the love of a man for his lady and the universal love operating in every human activity.

Rizvi is a poet of society and political consciousness. The poet bemoans the loss of human values by saying that, "he has built temples, churches, mosques, gurudwaras and other places of worship for prayers and congregations, donations from known and unknown persons have freely flowed for building them / Man in back pursuits perhaps donate more than honest persons, saintly men and it's a mystery that they profit most."

Like other leading poets, I.H. Rizvi has his own style and language. He is very fond of similes and metaphors. Similes drawn from nature are really very striking. His poems have the ring of Urdu metaphor. The questions asked from withered garlands are really thought- provoking:

"O garlands of withered flowers/ floating at a silkworm pace/ along in a mournful garb; / Why don't you speak?"

He is always committed to precision; despite the use of cliché expressions and trite phrases like 'dizzy height', 'fair sex', 'broken dreams', 'soft melody', 'perfect union',

'hushed tones', 'airy nothing', ',beauteous hues', 'wistful eyes', 'love-lore youth', 'warm embrace' etc.) Use of archaic words ('hath', 'doth', 'ere', 'oft', 'wert', 'adieu', 'morn', 'eve', 'wither', 'babe' etc.) ellipses or dashes leaving the readers hanging as in 'The Gobbler', 'The Queen', 'Stones', 'Gun Powder', 'The Boatman' etc., he remains extremely readable, rich and stimulating.

ii. Contribution to English poetry

There is more technical aspect of Rizvi's poetry writing. He is good haiku writer too. Some of his haikus are very pithy as well as condensed. One very haiku is like a poem. Very few of us know that he is a top graded haiku writer also. Some haikus are there not only in 'Wounded Roses Sing' but also in 'Snowflakes of Dreams' as well as in 'Gathering Broken Glasses.'

Rizvi uses the language of day-to-day life and is clear-cut in his expression. It expresses a new delight in the simplicity of theme, intense feeling and expression and in the worship of nature. In spite of free verse in his poetry, his poems are rich in rhythmic beauty. Rizvi is very fond of eight syllable line. The most important quality of his poetry is that he gives concrete object an abstract form & vice-versa. This quality is not found even in great poets like Keats and Shelley. He avoids harsh sounding words. His language flows like the flow of stream. He is a lover of coining phrases and epithets. In his poetry, unaccented syllable is followed by accented syllable that is rarely found in modern poetry.

iii. His strengths

Rizvi uses poetry as a means to outgrow "all cares of the earth." His wide range of concern and rhythm of thought make the fabric of his communication "glow with passion, agony and almost always contemporary significance". May be as a poet, he still rails against his situation, he has the hope and satisfaction, "I have not lived and

loved in vain", "If Wordsworth thought of poetry in terms of a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" and "emotion recollected in tranquility". Dr. Rizvi affirms that "If poetry does not spring from the depth of feelings and does not appeal to heart, it is not poetry at all."

No doubt, Iftikhar Husain Rizvi has emerged as a significant name among the poets of today. He is a rising star in the firmament of Indian English poetry. His real worth is yet to be fully known. The purpose of my study is to establish Dr. I.H. Rizvi as a poet as an Indian English poet par excellence. The study will be based on Rizvi's collection of poems published so far along with a personal interview, which I intend to arrange with poet himself.

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