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Dr. Santigopal Das

Asst. Professor, Buniadpur

Mahavidyalaya, Dakshin

Dinajpur, West Bengal, India

‘Radha’: A philosophical observation

Dr. Santigopal Das

Introduction

The ‘Modern short story’ is a new concept of modern era. ‘Short story’ is an important writing matter of twentieth and post -twentieth century poets. Though there are many changes in ‘modern short story’ from traditional Sanskrit literature, it acquires new subject matters, new styles but it originated from ancient Vedic literature. Story of Sanskrit literature is called ‘Katha’. This ‘Katha’ literature was originated and developed before Christian era. There is a collaboration of tradition and modernity in the different branches of twentieth and post twentieth century Sanskrit literature (Short story, *Khanda kavya*, *Upanyasa* etc.). We see in Rgveda ‘*Manu-matsyakatha*’, ‘*Bhekasukta*’, the story of Pani and Sarama, the story of a dog in Chhandagyopanisad, *Yajnavalkya –Maitreyi samvada* of Vrhadaranyokapanisad, the story of Yama and Naciketa in Kathopanisad, the story of a bird who gave golden eggs every day, the story of a clever jackal etc. We find in Mahabharata many fictions and narratives with main story. As example we can mention the story of King ‘Yayati’, the story of Nala and Damayanti, the story of Savitri and Satyavana, the story of Janamejaya, the story of Rudra and Vinata, story of sea churning of Gods and demons. These types of fables, parables or moral narratives are almost everywhere in Mahabharata. Ramayana and Purana are sources of tales and narratives. In this aspect, we can mention Jataka and Avadana literature of Buddhist, Kathanaka literature of Jain.

Vetala pancavimsati, Simhasanadvatrimika, Sukasaptati of Chintamani, Purusapariksa of Vidyapati, Pancatantra of Visnusarma, Hitopadesa of Narayanasarma, Prabandhakosa of Rajasekhara, Pravandhacintamani of Merutunga, Kathakautuka of Sridhara, Bhojpravandha of Vallala etc. are examples of tales and fables of traditional Sanskrit literature.

Today the short stories have a separate new trend. It differs from traditional Sanskrit story or tales and fables or its subject matter or style. Modern short stories are highly influenced by provincial language and literature. As result ‘short story’ took many words and idioms from there and accepted new thoughts, elements for writing. There are many discussions of social crisis and realistic life in modern short stories. Sometimes we find high philosophical thinking in allegory of the story. Some modern elements are like - community problems, environment pollution, women extortion, breaking of relation, terrorism, depreciation of humanity, dowry system, child marriage, child labor, philosophical thinking etc.

Though we are not well familiar with modern short story, there have huge collection. According to Dr. Rita Chattopaddhyaya, it’s above one thousands of stories. Approximately there are 700 short stories have after the age of independence. We can mention some names of short story writers, such as Sri Laxmana Sastri Tailang of Uttar Pradesh, Ramachandra Mishra of Vihar, Surendranath Deb, Siddheswar Chattopaddhyaya, Dipak Ghosa, Sitanath Acharya of Bengal etc. Short stories have enriched by these great poets.

Prof Tarapada Bhattacharya is a great short story writer among twentieth and twenty first century poets of Bengal. His great creations are ‘Gadadharavivahakatha’, ‘Saivali’, ‘Cauranaradasamvada’, ‘Maitreyi’, ‘Atha bhejalakatha’, ‘Radha’, ‘Iyam prthwi’, ‘Madanena krtam’, ‘Pattakasthika’, ‘Jivanatrsna’, ‘Tasmai namascauraya’, ‘Visamapyamrtam’ etc. There has no doubt that modern short stories were much enriched by Prof. Tarapada Bhattacharya’s writings. These twelve stories published from ‘Sanskrita sahitya parisad’ in 2004, by Prof. Manabendu Banerjee.

Correspondence

Dr. Santigopal Das

Asst. Professor, Buniadpur

Mahavidyalaya, Dakshin

Dinajpur, West Bengal, India

'Radha' is one of the mentionable short stories of poet Tarapada Bhattacharya among his 'Kathadvadasa'. The theme of 'Radha' is about love and conversation between Radha and Madhava of their married life. Here we did not find any problems of 20th century society. Though here we find simple married life, sweet conversations, offended state of mind and separation, poet does not sketch his story to present that. We find allegorical significance in the story. In every lines of the story poet very skillfully narrates sometimes deep philosophical thinking or sometimes other sides of human life. He represents his intelligence rather than emotion of heart. For this the story seems out of reach to the readers. So, towards the end of the story we feel no pain for the loss of Radha. Readers could not intimate with the tragic ending of the heroine. Because here also has deep allegory. The story also ends with an allegorical question.

Content of the story

Orphan girl Radha got married to Madhava. The story begins and runs with humorous conversation about newly married couple Radha and Madhava. There we find allegoric significance in the conversation. There also has philosophical thinking in the same. In course of events they reached in Vrindavana and there they expressed their view about life. One day in Vrindavana when they were on the beech of Yamuna, suddenly terrible rain and storm started. For this furious situation Radha and Madhava separated from each other. Madhava shouted Radha's name again and again, he got no answer. Searching Radha for some times he came home thinking Radha may be at home. But seeing empty house he again wanted to search her again, but he could not went out for the heavy natural disaster. In the home he shouted like a helpless creature in a cage. When the rain became to fall shortly again he went to find Radha. He could not find Radha and he came back. When neighbor asked for Radha he replied, Radha has leave him. Left off by Radha, Madhava came back. The poet ended the story with a question – was Madhava came back to Mathurapuri?

Discussion

In the discussion of the story we see poet displays a completely new type of subject matter. Normal married life between man and woman, their normal conversations and tragic ending made the story different one. The story has reached high by skillfulness of the poet. Main characters Radha and Madhava became extraordinary as they discussed the various philosophical views of life. Almost in every line poet sketches an allegorical significance. In the beginning of the story we find after the marriage ceremony Lalita asked Visakha – 'कुत्र रूपमधिकं पश्यसि? वरे कन्यायां वा? - That means – where is much beauty in bride or in the bridegroom? In answer Visakha says – 'कुत्र विद्या नितरां विद्यते? नवीने उत नवीनायाम्? (Kathadvadasa, p.42) - that is 'where has more education in young man or in young woman?' In answer of the question has an allegory. Knowledge never does any difference between man and woman. Any person may be educated. Similarly beauty has laid in both. This is impossible to justify the beauty of one. That is they both are beautiful. Again the word 'Rupa' used in philosophy to mean the 'shape'. So, we can take this that the bride and bridegroom are in the right shape. There has no abnormality.

Again, when Radha becomes furious Madhava sais – 'का शंका, जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युरिति जानन्नेव रामायणं चकार वाल्मीकिः। प्रातः प्राप्सामि भूमिरिति विज्ञाय एव निशिथे हसति शेफालिका.'¹ We wonders that how beautifully the

poet expresses a harsh reality of life in an allegorical way. 'जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युरिति' - that is one will die who has born. But thinking of that tragic end one should not waste his life. To go forward is life. Giving the example of 'Sefalika' flowers poet said 'Sefalika' blossoms in night and stays in trees happily. Though the flower knows in the morning she will be separate from the tree and will die. When Radha wonders hearing this, Madhava sais – 'अत एव सा सुन्दरी' - that is so she is beautiful. Radha replies with wonder- 'दुःखेन रूपमाहितम्'. In answer Madhava sais – 'एवम् । त्वमपि सुन्दरी'. In the answer of Madhava we find an allegory. Though Sefalika has pain, she sacrifices her beauty. So, 'you have the same, go forward and surrender yourself to me.'

In the conversation we see the unity and separation of Radha-Krishna. Poet expresses his deep realization of life in these words. That displays his high thinking for life. Through the speech of Radha poet expresses – 'संगमविरहविकल्पे वरमिह विरहो न संगमस्तस्याः' - that means separation is best between separation and union. As 'संगे सेव यदेका, त्रिभुवनमपि तन्मयं विरहे' - in the union one gets only one, in separation one gets other in the entire world. Madhava replies – 'अपूर्वं भणितम् यो मिलनमभिलषति, स जडे चित्तं निवेशयति, अल्पमेव वाञ्छति। भूमानं न विजानाति।' - who wants to be unite he satisfied with the little, he could not know the completeness. In separation love gets completeness.

We see in later part of the story the image of true love has shown in the speeches of Radha. Radha said – 'मिलनेन देहपिण्डो लभ्यते यः क्लान्तिमावहति । विरहे आत्मा लभ्यते, यस्य क्लमो नास्ति, क्षयो नास्ति, वार्धक्यं नास्ति' - in union one gets other physically. And it brings tiredness soon, in the period of separation lover gets his love spiritually. He feels his love in everywhere, which has no loss, ageing or tiredness.

Again Madhava says of physical union for spiritual unity. As there has no example spiritual unity beside physical union. Spirit the support of body. So, to unite spiritually it needs to unite physically. Madhava explains – 'येन आत्मना मिलनस्य गोस्वं गायसि तस्यैव मन्दिरमिदं देहम्..... तदेव मिलनं पूर्णं यदा आत्मना आत्मनो, देहेन च देहस्य अद्वैतं जातम्।' When unites one physically and spiritually both, union becomes complete.

One day seeing a crow to make home on a tree Madhava tells Radha that her time is also coming – 'तवापि वारः समयाति.' We find an allegory in these words – Crow makes home to give eggs, Radha's time is also coming to give child. Again bringing the example of Radha-Krishna Radha says there has no any description of Radha's child. Again Radha says – 'यो ऽसौ कृष्णः स एव माधवः.' He is Krishna who is Madhava. Madhava replied – 'गोरोऽस्मि भोः' - He is fair. In answer Radha tells – 'कलो नाम अन्तः कृष्णं वहिर्गौरमिति'.¹ We find in this statement an allegory and sense of reality about life of writer. In 'Dwapara age' Krishna was black; in kali age outer image of Krishna is white and black inside. And in kali age man is rather complex minded. They always carry a false image in the outer side – 'मधु तिष्ठति जिह्वाग्रे हृदये तु हलाहलम्'.

In this question of Radha we find deep philosophical thinking – 'किं कर्मैव जीवनं चालयति उत भाग्यम्?' - Which controls man's life work or fortune? Madhava replied – 'अव्यक्तमेतत्' - that is not clear. Madhava also said – though in 'Upanisad' there have speeches of peace, Life is a mystery. As life is Brahman, why there has binding? Because there has no lack of eternal knowledge – 'यदि जीवो ब्रह्मेव कथं तस्य वन्धः? न हि नित्यज्ञानस्य कदाचिदपि अज्ञानं घटते.' If man is Brahman he will be free from everything, why

they are in binding? If Brahman is eternal, soul should be eternal as it is the part of 'Paramatman'.

Again, when Madhava asked Radha what she has cooked? Radha told – 'रन्धने द्रौपदीं स्मर' - in this reply we see an allegory. As Draupadi married 'pancapandava', she cooked 'pancavyanjanas'.

When Radha asking for apology, Madhava says will forgiveness bring her to him? In reply Radha says - 'निकटे किम्? स एव सूर्यं दूरादपि उद्भासयति.' We find an allegory here. As Sun stays far, gives light to all. Similarly if Madhava forgives Radha he will never deprive from her love.

At the end of story we see the story ends with a question – 'ननु तदेव मथुरापुरी?' - Here also has an allegory. Madhava was left off by Radha. In this stage we may imagine, here poet wanted to remember us the story of Radha-Krishna. Where Sri Krishna leaved Radha in Vrindavana and went to Mathurapuri and we get no mention that he came back to Vrindavana. So, left off by Radha where Madhava will go to Mathurapuri or in some other place?

Though poet gifted us a well and high thinking short story, reader may failure in ascertaining the directions. If reader wants to understand the theme of the story, he should be very conscious from the beginning. In every line we see the uses of allegory. Removing this reader has to go forward. Excessive use of allegory made this story little artificial.

Secondly, we find poet's keen view and expertness and high philosophical thinking in uses of allegory. But the subject matter of the story seems little poor. After marriage in normal married life poet brings the example of the story of Radha-Krishna and he explains about the glory of separation and remarked spiritual love get completeness in separation. At the end we see for spiritual unity Radha chooses separation. She leaves Madhava. Though above explanation is necessary for the story, their ultimate ending seems unexpected. If Radha's view was for spiritual love, why she married? Or, Radha realizes that after marriage? Such type of high philosophical thinking seems quite impossible for simple girl Radha as we get no mention of her strong background or knowledge. Beside that dramatic conversation in story is a special feature of poet Tarapada Bhattacharya. We feel this through the conversation of the story.

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