



I. H. Rizvi As Distinguished from Other Contemporary Poets of India

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ABSTRACT

Despite the fact that Dr. Rizvi has published nine massive books of poetry, he has remained outstanding in each collection of his poetry, which is flavoured with lyrical and romanticism while being grounded in classical rigour. It has elevated him to the pinnacle of modern Indian English poetry. It is undeniable that Dr. Iftikhar Hussain Rizvi is a prolific writer. He has earned a lofty standing in the kingdom of modern English poetry. His handwriting touches practically every aspect of existence. While his poetry is filled with romantic fantasies, he never fails to leave a message of reformation. The best poets are bottomless wells of deep sentiments. They are extraordinarily sensitive folks who loved and loathed, experienced travails of time and relished the fullness of existence. As a thirsty field requires plentiful torrents of rain, so do our shriveled souls dried with dull and carking anxieties require the invigorating and nourishing effect of the powerful hearts of the poets. Only poetry has the power to revitalize every aspect of man. Poetry, as a stimulating force, broadens our spiritual horizons and allows us to experience ourselves. A poet is not simply an observer, but also someone who wishes to change the fabric of society. Whatever he sees, experiences, and endures, he puts into words. It is certain that I.H. Rizvi's poetry communicates mankind's teachings, as well as a sense of awakening and sympathy for our fellow creatures, and instills the notion of global brotherhood among people. As a result, we can claim that Rizvi is a well-known and extensively published poet. He is a poet who sings lyrics of optimism and of human concern, love, subjectivism, and emotionality.

Keywords:

“I.H. Rizvi has emerged on the horizon of Indian English poetry as one the most resplendent poets of the Eighties by virtue of his originality, thematic variety and flawless craftsmanship”, says Prof. Satish Kumar. Although Dr. Rizvi has written nine monumental books of poetry, he has been superb in each collection of his poetry which is tinged with lyricism and romanticism tempered with classical discipline. It has placed him in a paramount place in modern Indian English poetry. It is undoubtedly clear fact that Dr. Iftikhar Hussain Rizvi is a prolific pen. He has composed more than nine collections of poetry. “Iftikhar Hussain Rizvi is one of the finest contemporary Indian English poets. Very few can pen down such mellifluous and imagistic poems as he has”, (Dubey 85) says B.K. Dubey. Giving a comparative picture, Dr. H.S. Bhatia says all about Rizvi, “Like A.K. Ramanujan and Krishna Srinivas, he is the cultural ambassador of India and like them; he rarely makes use of

irony or satire. He is less philosophical than Krishna Srinivas or R.K. Singh, or L.N. Mahapatra or Baldev Mirza. He is free from obscurity of Shiv Kumar and Jayantra Mahapatra.” (Dubey 87) He has attained a high place in the kingdom of modern English poetry. His penmanship covers almost all the subjects of life. Prof. Shailendra Narain Tripathi observes, “Sometimes ironical, sometimes satirical and always tense and turbulent is I.H. Rizvi, a poet without pretences but full of passions. He is honest, genuine and completely romantic.....Rizvi is a feeling poet, romance poet and a dream poet, who delights as he disturbs.” (George 90) As his poems are replete with fancies of love, he is nowhere lacking in leaving a message of reformation. A poet is not only an observer but also wants to alter the fabric of society. Whatever he sees, experiences, and suffers, he translates it into his poems. Dr. Rizvi occupies a unique place in the firmament of Indian English poetry. His poems are always heart-stirring, emotional, lucid, picturesque, romantic, subjective, descriptive and philosophical. The ideas of I. H. Rizvi sometimes appear to be similar to other contemporary poets of India. Dr. I. H. Rizvi has left no stone unturned in depicting the bare realities of life occurring in our everyday society. The aim of Dr. Rizvi’s poetry is also similar to the aims of other poets who have only one aim of plunging into the hearts of poetry lovers. True poetry is thus different in its aim for it is marked with the quality of desirelessness and satiety. It is only poetry that can teach us without directly preaching to us. It is helpful also in the pursuit of truth and in the cultivation of virtues. Verse serves to imprint an indelible impression on our minds, ideas and ideals that we cherish and love. Poetry will always be higher than prose and any other genera of literature for it has rhyme and rhythm to make it easier to memorize and remember the noble precepts and instructive aphorisms that shed light on our path in life. Each poetical composition of Dr. Rizvi is a jewel in itself with myriad colours of love. Before making a further study, one has to go through each book by Dr. Rizvi and analyze it microscopically.

Modern age is the age of complexities and it has no dearth of great poets and great poems that will stand the test of time and become a part of literary heritage of the world. Poetry, today, is being written on almost at any subject. The modern poets find inspiration from railway trains, tramcars, telephones, the snake charmer and things of common place interest. Modern poets have not accepted the theory of great subjects for poetic composition. The whole universe is the modern poet’s experience. He writes in themes of real life and also makes excursion in

the world of religion, mysticism and fairy land. We have a wide variety of poems such as 'The Song of Train' by John Davidson; 'Goods Train at Night' by Kenneth Ashley; as 'Charcoal Burner' by Edmond Gosse; 'Machine Guns' by Richard Aldington; 'Seekers' by Masfield and 'Listeners' by Walter De La Mare. Contemporary poetry is a province whose borders are difficult to fix and define. W.J. Long is right when he says, "Several hundred volumes of verse have lately been written by symbolists, imagists, impressionists, traditionalists and what not but among them all, there is none to hold for a day the rank of a national poet that Tennyson hold for half a life time." (Long 595) Dr. H.S. Bhatia remarks, "Among the contemporary poets, I.H. Rizvi is perhaps one of the chief depictees of social realities in all its forms and shades." In his poems, Rizvi appears to be similar lover when he says to his lover:

For years we have sailed in the sea
Of pure and silent sinlessness
And words have never been
Our main ally when needed most. (I. H. Rizvi, Unfading Blooms 1)

In the same manner, H.S. Bhatia sings:

For ages have we been together
Neither is old
Though our brittle frames
Betray the strokes of time. (Bhatia 40)

Alike D.H. Kabadi, he moans at the shattering of dream by a lover. D.H. Kabadi says to a lover:

One night
You erupted with a fiery flame
Vomiting volcanic flashes
Burning my hopes and charms

Leaving behind

Only my charred remainders. (Kabadi 3)

Dr. Rizvi is a conscious poet who eloquently speaks of the wrong and leaves a message to the society which, in present context, has gone to dogs. One can mark out Rizvi's laudable efforts to reconstruct the society. Poetry deepens our emotions and gives us a fuller and deeper life all around. Emotions are the central dynamo of human personage. It adds zest to life and drives us to action and adventure. Without stout emotions our life would be an unfertile land where intellectualism and swinish sensuality would remain only. The great poets are inexhaustible wells of deep feelings. They are extremely sensitive people who loved and hated, suffered travails of time and enjoyed the bounty of life. As a thirsty soil requires plentiful showers of rain, so do our shrunken souls charred with dull and carking cares require the accelerating and composting impact of the mighty hearts of the poets. Only poetry can rejuvenate every core of man. Poetry, the stimulating force widens our spiritual horizon and makes us feel ourselves. Great poetry not only lifts us from the daily grilling of common life but also provides us a vision to look beyond. It soars us on the seventh surface of imagination and realism. In this sense it is a stimulus tonic of mind and soul.

Poetry makes philosophy and ethics more fascinating and useful. It aims at portraying noble characters for our inspiration. Unlike prose it is not boring or monotonous and directs our kindnesses and dislikes into proper channels. The great nations of antiquity honoured their poets as wise teachers. The Persians of today regard their teachers as inspired prophets who can recite beautiful verses as readily as Christian priests can quote text from the Bible. Sometimes even create wars in the minds of the men and force them to think a while. The poetry is different in form and texture to prose. So its aims are also different to other genres of literature. D.C. Chambial says, "Poetry is poetry. It knows neither boundaries nor colours nor creeds nor age. A fine amalgam, yet austere. Its main concern is happiness of all. Poetry purports to strengthen in a sublime way the age old dream – a smiling tomorrow, full of love, laughter and amity." (D. Chambial 3) All his poetry is an effort of weeding out the evil thoughts, greed, lust, anger, hypocrisy, bad actions, temptation, corruption, callousness, devilish desires, and narrow egoistic feelings born out of ignorance and so on. He wants to make a unity and oneness in all the spheres – ethical, moral, educational, and scientific

because there is a disharmony among them. Dr. I.H. Rizvi, by his poems, directs us to imbibe the ideals of duty, devotion, discipline, love, generosity, righteousness and spirituality in life. He wants to make his readers realize that they are the sparks of the divinity. During the journey of life, man has to develop sacred thoughts and lead an ideal life. Likewise Dr. Rizvi is so afraid that he says:

No more delicious dreams, please

Not even dreams of roses

For roses will bring thoughts of thorns

No more dreams of love

For dreams of love will bring in hate. (I. H. Rizvi, Fettered Birds 41)

It is also worth noting that literature is the only channel in which the energy of an age discharges itself and poetry which is a 'Criticism' and 'Interpretation' of life is the most powerful weapon to glance the spirit and concept of life in different ages. Many poets of the world regard love as a realized perfection of all that is good and beautiful in the world and everything that has mingled in it of goodness, beauty and higher values of life reflected love partially. The splendour of love of lovers, every affection and virtue, any good action or the wisdom of philosophy, the creations of art and the truths differed by superstitious religion, all have been the sources of poetic inspiration which can only be generated through the fire of love. The prime business or the end of poetry is to reveal the eternal ideas summed up in love which shines like the sun of suns behind the many coloured and ever shifting veil of phenomena. In the ever changing world where each energy and material transforms into the other, the feeling of love remains the same but the concept of love changes according to the pulse and breath in which the literature is being written. Though the literature of different ages sink into the ocean of oblivion, yet the literature which is the outcome of love is never last and continues itself up to eternity. "Early English (Anglo Saxon Period) poetry is full of Teutonic love of battle, boastfulness, pride and glory and blood thirstiness and the poet is never more inspired than describing a sword, a battle sea for the terrors of the sea," says W.R. Goodman. (W.R. 34) In rummaging through the pages of memory of his mother, the skilled portrayal of Shiv K. Kumar is worth quoting:

What's that yellow flame?
That moves from door to door
Peeping through the chinks
Of my heavy draperies?
Now that my son has grown
Into our elm
I may go out
To meet the stranger. (Shiv 6)

Dr. Rizvi also remembers his mother:

As I see her no more I gather
The shattered pieces of her memory
And place them on her bed and watch:
She becomes a living picture again. (I. H. Rizvi, Fettered Birds 27)

In the poem 'Mother', Dr. Rizvi recollects his mother and says:

I look for my mother in vain
For death has taken her away
To far distant unknown land
Though a mile away she lies buried. (I. H. Rizvi, Fettered Birds 27)

Alike Syed Ameeruddin, Rizvi admits the might of memories. He says:

I still remember the whisper of the storm
You brought of our tender love times. (Amiruddin 29)

Both the poets are sick for the memories. Rizvi also feels the same in relation to the memories:

Like vultures, hounds and ghosts of fear

Like flies and fish and cloud

You must enjoy your nocturnal prey. (I. H. Rizvi, Love Never Dies 10)

In his love poems, he is no less in expression than P. Lal and no less a lover in his words. In 'The Bee's Love', Prof. P. Lal says:

Love like a flower

Has roots that reach

Beyond fragrance beyond power

Of loving speech. (Lal 18)

In the same manner, Dr. Rizvi glorifies love in a beautiful way:

Love's endless stream

Glides like a dream

Like a pageant of mist

Its shows adrift. (I. H. Rizvi, Love Never Dies 5)

According to him, man is born in society, he is bred in society; he is shaped well or ill by the subtle influence of society. In this way man cannot remain aloof from the surroundings. Especially in today's world, where hatred and rivalry predominate, where selfishness and materialism lead to violence, where perverse social behaviour and immorality are on the rise, where children are abused and elders are not respected or cared for, and where solidarity, brotherhood, and humanitarianism are becoming distant dreams. Every individual has a duty to perform for a man cannot keep quite in such cruelties of society. Each man can effort for peace which looks like a cry for a moon, a mirage or an El Dorado. Despite all the fears of war, 'butchers, dagger aiming at the beat' or 'a tiger's leaping burst at the hand of tongueless deer', 'the world is still nursing its wounds', 'the fragrance is sailing', 'melodies are ringing', 'morning is smiling' and 'evening is glowing'. The social consciousness of Dr. I.H. Rizvi becomes more poignant and satirical when he pictures the indifference of man towards his fellow being:

Dead bodies lying on road squares

Crave for funeral rites

People look and move away. (I. H. Rizvi, Clouds In Cages 30)

Or when he says:

Blood flows like water

In drains filled with terrorism

And fed by slaughter. (I. H. Rizvi, Fettered Birds 61)

Before the development of society, the development of self is more important. Giving the pathetic scenes of abject poverty and hypocrisy, cruelty and acts of ignorance, Rizvi wishes to awaken a sense of compassion, love, divinity, devotion, dedication and enlightenment. Being an opponent of falsehood and thoughtlessness, Dr. Rizvi wants to purify the inner consciousness of man so that he may be a true embodiment of love. He is not only against the violence of action but also the violence of words and he desists us from causing pain to any living being. Men today are prey to many troubles because their visions are diverted towards petty objects. It is the duty of human being to abide by the laws of creator to avoid doom because all human beings are equal and alike. The noble human traits that should be nurtured include sacrifice, love, compassion, forbearance, and righteousness. The animal traits are feeding jealousy, hatred, ego, and rage. Unlike Dr. Rizvi, Dr. O.P. Bhatnagar also moans the freedom and advancement of the nation in depicting the lot of a poor man:

So many years in sun and rain

Has our freedom grown?

But for dawn in villages

I'm the same

Oppressed, ill treated

Humiliated and strange. (Bhatnagar, The Audible Landscape 13)

Both the poets feel themselves drowned in the flood of tears and pain. Dr. Bhatnagar says.

Floods of tears are enough

God need not thorn us with move. (Bhatnagar, Feeling Fossils 13)

And Dr. Rizvi with more intensity of pain, says:

Tears leave no impact on the barbarous,

The eyes need shed tears of blood now

To touch the callous hearts of stone. (I. H. Rizvi, Fettered Birds 31)

The philosophy of Dr. Rizvi's poetry is love, nothing but love which has undying significance. Dr. Rizvi exposes the ironies, rampant evils, chaos of the modern society which is leading the man on the dark and unspiritual path. Dr. Satish Kumar remarks, "Rizvi is perturbed by the evils of his time, disturbed in feelings by things around him and he aims at showing mankind its ugly face, hidden in the mask of modernity in the mirror of harsh reality. The civilized society suffers from the cancer of bankruptcy, both intellectual and spiritual." (Kumar 29) Another towering poet Dr. D.C. Chambial admits the immortality of love:

"You and I

Shall forever be

All, all alone

Swinging up and down

The bulging hills

The low lying vales

Full of hyacinths." (D. D. Chambial 138)

As it is admittedly known that a poet is the singer of his time and who cannot help himself in narrating the facts and fables of his age. Dr. Rizvi is no exception to it also. Dr. Krishna Srinivas affirms it, "A poet cannot stay out of restlessness of his time. He has to rouse the masses to action and show them righteous path. As Eliot asserted, a poet is the custodian of

his people's tradition and keep it clean and pure." (I. H. Rizvi, Unfading Blooms) Dr. Rizvi also feels love as the light in the darkness of the dreadful world:

My love is light – an undying soul
When darkness on earth throngs,
When all men for love's light groan,
And none can find his goal
When end life's all sweet songs,
Will twinkle my love's star alone. (I. H. Rizvi, Love Never Dies 35)

Baldev Mirza, a heart stirring poet, remembers his love, sings in a beautiful way:

When I think of you
Fairies of my thoughts
Get lost on the way
And knocks at every door
Perhaps in search of you. (Mirza 8)

Sailing alike an ordinary human, being with an inordinate capacity of penning poetry, Dr. Rizvi wishes to draw a crystal clear image whatever he portrays in his heart and soul to his readers to catch the impalpable idea of love towards one and all. M. Nazir Ali aptly feels that the poems of Rizvi are simple but not simplistic, moral but not moralizing, they express emotion without being lachrymose. He deserves all praise for bringing out his volumes. And when Rizvi reminiscences:

I've felt you smiling in flowers,
Peeping through hazy clouds,
Riding the melody of birds
Soiling in streams of my feelings
In rhythm of my voice and in flow

Of my e'er pain-dipped pen. (D. I. Rizvi 83)

It becomes almost impossible to measure who is more heart-stirring. Rizvi is, no doubt, a poet par-excellence. Jan Oskar Hansen remarks about the poetry of Dr. Rizvi, "Sad words, deep words, words of love and hope, but never bitter and hateful words. (Hansen) Dr. Rizvi is also a poet who does not write for his sake only but for the sake of the masses to rouse the current of thoughts. He is a true idealist who pictures the society as it is and leaves a spark of thoughts in the minds of the readers. There is no any aspect of life left by the contemporary Indo Anglian poets on which they have not reflected and scribbled their pen. A Para in terms of social issues written by R.K. Singh gives a hint of contemporary poet's trends that they consider the state of those who are socially excluded but are not exiled and consider a variety of issues with life, including perversion, corruption, degeneration, morbidity, privation, insecurity, terrors of bloodshed, pain and agony of senseless killings and death, feelings of helplessness, awareness of political and social turpitude, mockery of idealism, values, and morality, tendency to manoeuvre the truth, game of convenience, and exploitation of the weak and the disadvantaged. Another famous poet and reviewer Patricia Prime summarises the whole work of Dr. Rizvi and says, "Throughout the whole range of Rizvi's work, we are provided with a range of technique and feeling concrete detail and witty insight." (Prime) Poetry's rhythm, which is one of nature's greatest secrets, delights us and provides us with enduring pleasure. Spencer refers to this as "the rule of rhythm," and it governs how our hearts beat and how we breathe. Since rhythm is a force that increases life and preserves race, it seems to give us exquisite and unfathomable joy. Rhythm is important to poetry, dance, and all three. These artistic arts are tied to one another because of rhythm. Poetry increases life's delight. Through its music, it makes us happy, amuses us, and makes us glad.

In a galaxy of poets like D.C. Chambial, Baldev Mirza, Syed Ameeruddin, O.P. Bhatnagar and many others, the excellence of Rizvi's poetry twinkles alone. Dr. Mahashweta quoting from the foreword of *Gathering Broken Glasses*, says, "Rizvi is deeper than Ezekiel, less frank than Kamla Das, simpler and more touching than Shiv K. Kumar or Jayant Mahapatra, as soul-stirring as Baldev Mirza, H.S. Bhatia or D.C. Chambial, as socially conscious as Keki N. Daruwalla, R.K. Singh, Ezekiel, O.P. Bhatnagar and H.S. Bhatia and as Indian as any other Indian English poets." (George 118)

It is undoubtedly acknowledged that the poetry of I.H. Rizvi imparts the teachings of humanity and a sense of awakening and feeling for our fellow beings and infuses the idea of universal brotherhood among humanity. Therefore, we can say that Rizvi is widely published and renowned poet. He is a poet of human concern, love, subjectivism, emotionality and he sings the songs of hope. Dr. R.K. Singh emphasizing the study of Rizvi's literature, says, "As a growing major voice of the 1980s, Rizvi's poetry deserves serious study by scholars of contemporary Indian English Writing." (Singh)

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