



SELF REALIZATION AND SUFISM IN THE POETRY OF S. L. PEERAN

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Abstract

S. L. Peeran is an important figure in the contemporary Indian English Poetry. He has surprised the poetry world during the last fifteen years by presenting eighteen noteworthy volumes of poetry. He writes on various themes which include: self realization, spiritual consciousness, nature, humanity, love for God, love for human, family relationship, hope, sympathy, corruption and current issues. Being a legal practitioner and a former Judge by profession his socio-political awareness is well reflected in his poems and as a result, his tone is moralistic, compassionate, consoling and solicitous. 'Love for human being' and 'Love for God' are the dominant themes of his poetry and almost in every collection he has presented these themes. Like Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Peeran also stressed on universal brotherhood and unity of mankind as the religion of world. One finds in his an assimilation of diverse religions and cultural ideals and notions that manifest his tolerant mind. In Sufism four consciousnesses have been recognized: Naf's-e Ammarah, Naf's-e Mutmaeena, Naf's-e Lawwamah and Naf's-e Radhia. Out of four my paper is highlighting mostly on Naf's-e Mutmaeena and Naf's-e Radhia out of Peeran's poetry.

This paper is a benign effort to present S.L.Peeran as a contemporary Sufi Poet.

Keywords: Spiritual Consciousness, Compassionate, Assimilation, Diverse Religion, Naf's-e Mutmaeena and Naf's-e Radhia

Peeran has a background of Sufism as he belongs to an illustrious family practicing the values of Sufism since centuries, he is initially imbibed in that culture and is the reason behind that and one could glance Sufism and spiritualism in his writing. Peeran's writings show how he is aware of his surroundings and spirituality is nothing without the skill of awareness and survival. Without these skills, the journey toward spirituality would be frustrating, incomplete, and mediocre at best. There were no substitute for these skills, no shortcut until these skills were perfected, any search into the spiritual realm would be fruitless and according to Peeran and his poetry one should learn to live everyday with intensity, rapture and adventure creating a fuller life, one with mere meaning than just the senseless rush of society. If it happens, one will start learning from wilderness to purity, will learn to listen the voice that could be heard within the heart and not with the ears, understand things that were beyond normal human comprehension. Slowly and effectively one could be led from the physical skills to more dynamic philosophy of life and nature. Here are some of the poems of Peeran which deal with Sufi perspective and Sufi way of life.

“Thy graceful looks, gentle manners, sweet melodious voice,
Even the powerful and the strong can easily subdue.
Unarmed thou art but disarmest the bravest!
Thy sweet smile melts stony hearts and benumbs the shameless,
It slays Guilt, reducing its armour to an ageing tile.
With sweet fragrance of flowers, it evokes a thousand yearnings - -

Amorous thoughts in mind, twinkle in eyes and love-songs on lips.
It lifts the lover above the pains and sufferings of life,
And raises his mind to lofty heights, soaring heavenward.”

Peeran has carved out a style for himself. His expressions are very simple but powerful. The usage of syntax and rhyme scheme creates an impact on the mind of the readers, though he does not

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follow any set pattern regarding rhyme scheme. So, naturally, he gives more importance to the content than the structural form while expressing his thought. About his style Barnard Jackson writes, "A delightful collection by a writer who combines sincerity with craftsmanship a fine command of English"

The poem "Graceful looks" is dipped in philosophical thought that led to the radical spurt in emerging notions with regard to faith divinity. His poetry is full of vision and shows that he who is chosen by God chooses the God; God is beyond religion. The poem also unfolds that the persona is a delicious mingling of unruffled soul with the esthetical being. In this context Sri Srinivasa Rangaswami has said about Peeran that "Poetry is not merely putting together some clever lines. It is, like falling in love, a serious and blissful proposition. And, Peeran's poetry is born out of the confrontation of his whole being with Reality"

Peeran is a poet who plays in the cradle of spiritualism and entertains the faith that the world undoubtedly be a second heaven if there is religious tolerance; he condemns factions and groups of all religion or classes. He advocates comradeship, companionship and fellowship among his fellow beings and enriches his poetry through his Sufi ideas and thoughts, which gives a new dimension to Indian English Writing.

S.L.Peeran is a true Sufi who sees world and its citizen as a whole being. He has experienced spiritual consciousness and perceives that each moment has its purpose that there is a natural unfolding beyond our desire and limited perception. This realization enables him to interact with life more joyously and much more successfully as he follows life's thread of unfolding, rather than our ego sense. This can lead to increased energy, reduced stress, an increasingly positive outlook, and possibility for great accomplishment, success, and joy in life.

Being a Sufi poet, Peeran's images mostly deal with human kindness and praise of God. In the poem 'All Round Welfare' poet Peeran has used various images like 'darga', 'temple', 'priest', 'Godman', 'Taliman', 'candle', 'diya', 'prasad' 'mannat', 'crows', 'monkeys', 'fishes', 'dog', 'rats' and 'beggars'. All images gives a complete picture of religious tolerance, as the images used are from different religious sect.

There is an economy
Subsisting, surviving
Around a darga, a temple
A priest, a Godman

"All emanating from an idea
That God is all embracing
Caring to devotee, who offer
Submission on the alter
of love, seek blessings
By sharing both sorrows
And joys by giving
And such as taking
Each for all, all for each
Bless and be blessed."

By presenting all these images, Peeran wants to say that Almighty takes care of his devotees in one way or the other. Here the doctrine of Sufism, Naf's-e Mutmaeena is very well explained , satisfied self, realized self or conscious self and gave a definition to Modern Sufism that it is more necessary as we have lots of materialistic attachment which has mushroomed our mind. So these plastic



attachments is like devil giving us plenty of desire, so what Sufism is trying to say is fulfil your Karma by living a pure life as God desires, whatever you want to become you become one but you should not banish pure path. As near a temple or darga, many hawkers sell their goods, which add to their economy thus becomes a source for their livelihood.

Another poem 'Man Arafa Naf Sahu' is a poem expressing Sufism. As a religious and pious man, the poet expresses his meticulously designed the exterior and interior of man with harmony and precision. The more one reflects on God, one is tempted to utter more praises to God. The whole poem in itself is an image of complete submission to the will of God.

“More we reflect on oneself and on
Allah the more praises is uttered
By tongue and breath”

In the poem "What is Khulus?" the poet has presented the picture of a humble man. He points out the virtue of humbleness, proving the dictum "humbleness is godliness" "Humility" is praiseworthy and according to all Holy Scriptures God is Merciful to the humble. A humble person is adorned with simplicity, softness, gentleness, and kindness. His speech is 'honeyed tongue' and 'he is gentle to the core'.

“He walks, with softness, his speech
Is honeyed tongue. He has no
Roughness. He is gentle to the core.
He is forgiving and does not mind
Taunts, criticism and humiliations”

In another poem 'Attain Piety' the poet has presented a way of leading a pious life and how to attain it, he has also cited various examples of historical figures, who have metamorphosed their life after a turmoil, and served humanity, thereafter, every historical figure referred is in itself an image

“Remember Ashoka shunning with Kalinga war
Siddharth attained Moksha and detachment
Mohammad united mankind with brotherhood
Gandhi achieved truth by struggle.”

Ashoka the brave king, who earlier believed in bloodshed and victory lead a spiritual life after the Kalinga war. This war was a turning point in his life because in this war he realised that war is nothing but hollowsham and only bring futile glory. Siddharth attained Moksha only after the detachment from his family and then he came to be known as Mahatma Buddha. Prophet Mohammad (PBHU) was born to enlighten the world and unite men with men. Gandhi achieved truth and freedom by fighting against all odds and violence. The poet by mentioning all these figures wants to convey that it is not too late for a man to attain piety, only one needs to repent his earlier deeds and lead a life of 'ahimsa' and 'truth'. This pious life of 'ahimsa' and truth will lead to solutions that are the state of being saved from sins.

To sum up, I would like to say that the poet Peeran is dexterous in his use of images. Common, ordinary and insignificant objects become powerful images with the master stroke of the literary artist and making them apt in their context. Dr Masood Ul Hasan has also recognised Peeran in one of his articles -“Peeran enjoys the distinction of being the only Indo-Anglian Poet consistently producing Sufic verse of considerable merit. His work promises to retain its freshness and appeal



for many years to come.” His spiritual consciousness is reflected through the images and allusions in his poetry he sometime tend to be didactic in his approach as he ask one to attain piety by-

Repent and turn a new leaf again
Vow to lead a life of Ahimsa and Truth
Sacrifice and live in humility
Piety is a sure way to attain salvation

Peeran beliefs in Sufism and Spirituality and this belief makes him a poet of faith and hope, a poet with a healing touch and a reminder to man of his duty towards himself, life, world, faith and his poetry is all about human being and all embracing shades of life. Patricia Prime in her review remark that “Peeran’s deep meditations and self-knowledge are evidence of his ongoing spirituality and longing for peace and tranquillity in the world”.

He was ever willing to lend his shoulder
To every dejected lover to weep
He was the answer to a myriad fervent hopes
A hollowed path that leads to prayer.

He was ever willing to lend his shoulder
To carry the bier to its resting place
He was both a devotee and a pilgrim
To pass through the concourse to prayer.

To conclude my paper I would like to quote Dr. Krishna Srinivas- "Peeran has gained many distinctions and he is the right man to regain what all we have lost.” Peeran has contributed his comprehensive work on Sufism; which shows various aspect of spiritualism and poetry he is like an indomitable character who is led through the path of their destined goal by God.

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