

B.A. Third Year

NISSIM EZEKIEL AS A POET

INTRODUCTION: Nissim Ezekiel is a great Indo-Anglican poet. Versatility is the outstanding characteristic of his poetry. The Indian contemporary scene, modern urban life, human relationship, love and sex and spiritual values are the major themes of his poetry. He has experimented endlessly with form and craft. Flawless craftsmanship makes his poetry unique.

AS A POET OF INDIAN URBAN LIFE: Ezekiel is a poet of city life. In his poem we find the description of Bombay. It is symbol of any modern city. Through this symbol the poet has presented the ugliness, dirt, wickedness, inhumanity and squalor of life. According to him the city reduces human personality to a zero. In 'In Morning Walk' the poet says: Barbaric city, sick with slums, Deprived of seasons, blessed with rains Its hawkers, beggars, iron lunged Processions led by frantic drums.

LOVE AND SEX: Love and sex occupy prominent place in Ezekiel's poetry. In fact, Ezekiel is a poet of body. The celebration of flesh, breakdown of married life and sensuality and lust are recurring motives in his poetry. His poems entitled 'Description', 'Motives', 'Nudes' and 'The Couple' offer some spicy pictures of sexual relationship. In 'Motives' the poet says: My motives are sexual, aesthetic and friendly in that order, adding up to bed with you.

INDIANNESS: Ezekiel is a foreigner whose ancestors had migrated to India. As a poet he has observed and experienced much more of Indian life. Thus the acceptance of Indian reality is an important characteristic of his poetry. His poetry portrays the social aspect of India with a humanistic strain. But the fact of the matter is that Ezekiel rebelled against the Indian way of life. He has ridiculed the Indian modes of behaviour and the Indian way of speaking the English language. Thus his poems show more of anti- Indianness than Indianness. In short, the poet's relationship with India is love hate relationship.

AS A POET OF RELATIONSHIP: Ezekiel has centred his attention on marital, family and human relationship. As a sharp observer of marital life the poet says that husbands and wives should try to create harmony for a successful marital life. Some of his poems deal with domestic life. In these poems the poet draws memorable pictures of his parents and children. There is a confessional note also in them.

ALIENATION AND SEARCH FOR IDENTITY: The theme of alienation is central to Ezekiel's poetry. In some of his poems we find an emphatic expression to his social and cultural alienation. Once he says about himself: A mugging Jew among the wolves They told me that I had killed the Christ.

Apart from this, as a poet Ezekiel tries to explore his identity. In many of his poems he concentrates on self- analysis and introspection. His 'Case Study' is a fine example of it. Thus self- exploration and search for identity are the major themes of Ezekiel's poetry.

PHILOSOPHICAL AND RELIGIOUS POETRY:Ezekiel's poetry shows his philosophical and religious bent of mind. He always stresses the need of commitment, sincerity and integrity. His attitude to religion is rational, logical, secular and humanistic. He believes in the religion of love and charity.

POETIC STYLE: Ezekiel is great craftsman. He has a rich sense of humour and wit. To attack on absurdities and follies of life, he takes help of irony. He shows keen sense of form and structure. Words are chosen and used carefully. He frequently uses the colloquial English. His conversational tone is interesting. Ezekiel's symbols and images are evocative.

CONCLUSION: Thus Ezekiel is a versatile poet. He has prepared grand path for the new poets. He has made a valuable contribution to stylistic felicities in Indo- Anglican poetry.

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