



SAROJINI NAIDU—A GREAT INDIAN POETESS

SHOWKAT HUSSAIN DAR

Ph D Scholar

Department of English

Mewar University Rajasthan

INDIA

ABSTRACT

Besides being a politician, Sarojini Naidu was an activist, freedom lover, politician and above all a poetess. She is known to us as the “Nightingale of India”. She was the first woman Governor of an Indian state after freedom. Her collection of poems earned her a permanent literary place in Indian English poetry. Sarojini’s first published first book was a collection of poems, called “Golden Threshold”. Thereafter, she also published two other collections called “The Bird of Time”, and “The Broken Wings”, both of which attracted readers across the globe. Apart from her role and contribution to the Indian freedom struggle, Sarojini is also respected for her contribution in the field of Indian poetry. She got inspiration from nature as well as traditional values of India.

INTRODUCTION

“One day when I was eleven, I was sighing over a sum in Algebra; it would not come to right; but instead a whole poem came to me suddenly; I wrote it down and from that day my poetic career began,” writes Sarojini Naidu. One of the outstanding women of her generation, Sarojini Naidu is famously called the “Nightingale of India.” Besides being a freedom-fighter, she was a born poet. As is clearly mentioned in the outset lines, Naidu wrote poetry from the very early age. Though death, misery and sorrow are part and parcel of her poems, yet Naidu’s poetry is free from dirt and squalor of the world. The techniques of paradox, exaggeration and satire are not in much abundance in her poetry. She is known for metrical felicity. She is one of the best love-poets of India. Love is an important theme of her poetry. She wrote on various themes such as nationalism, patriotism, mysticism, nature and so on. Sarojini Naidu in her poems sings like a bird. Like Shelley, She wrote number of lyrical poems. She is a singer of Indian glory; she sings India’s present, fauna and flora. Naidu’s poetry is remarkable for its ease and spontaneity. Melody, intensity of emotion, subjectivity, brevity, and condensed thoughts are the hallmarks of lyrical poetry. She has deftly delineated

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these subjects in her poetry. Like Keats and Shelley, she is not only a lover of nature but also of melancholy and gloom. She was not a rebel but a true patriot.

Coleridge loved nature for its own sake. Wordsworth is one of the world's greatest loving, penetrative and thoughtful poets of nature. They both observed nature minutely. Although, Sarojini cannot be called Wordsworthian in her attitude to nature, yet she loved nature from the bottom of her heart. Her poetry frankly talks about nature. It is from the nature she had collected images. Her images about nature are sensuous, rich, luxuriant, impassioned and profuse.

Sarojini Naidu before getting married to Naidu family lived nearly Coromendal Coast, in Bay of Bengal. She was very familiar with fishermen families. It was there she composed a poem called "Coromendal Fishers." The poet shows us in this poem the experience of fishermen; how they risk their lives in order to catch a fish and go to the sea early in the morning. She tells us these fishermen have developed close affinity with the nature. She calls them the 'sons of sea.' Sarojini's true love for nature is conspicuous in the following lines from "Coromendal Fishers":

*The Sea is our mother. The cloud is our brother.
And Waves are comrades of all.*

In the next few lines, she describes the serene natural beauty of surroundings where these fishermen live: "Sweet is the shade of the coconut glad...And sweet are the sands."

The poem was written during India's freedom struggle. As true patriot, Sarojini asks her country men to leave the homes and land and come to the sea. In other words, we all must unite and raise the voice against the Britshers. Her sense of patriotism is at its best, when she says:

*Come, let us gather our nets from the shore and set our catamarans free,
To capture the leaping wealth of the tide, for we are the kings of the sea!*

Sarojini Naidu has given poetic and picturesque expression not only to Indian temples, festivals, singers and wandering pilgrims but also to it's of love of solitude, spiritual strivings and the mystical leanings. In "To A Buddha Seated on Lotus" she expresses her and that of the race of man who is at the chain of sorrows which one after another prevails in life. The poet asks Buddha, who is seated at the lotus throne to unravel the secret mystic rapture, peace unknown to the world which characterizes his life. She calls Buddha unchangeable and perfect for he has attained eternal peace. He is a symbol of peace and tranquility. In other words, he is free from human life—which is toil, noisy, full of sorrows and ever-changing.



This is a typical religious Hindu poem. For example, Sarojini asks Buddha how to attain Nirvana, which is the ultimate aim of Hindus. She writes:

*How shall we reach the great, unknown
Nirvana of thy Lotus-throne?*

“The Flute Player of Brindaban” is another extraordinary poem from the pen of Sarojini Naidu. This is a fine love lyric. According to the poet, a true love is born out of true minds. In a true love the identification of a lover and beloved becomes one. It is the lover and beloved which gives an organic unity to love. It is again a typical traditional Hindu poem in which an individual yearns to unite with the infinite.

The themes and background of her all major poems were purely Indian and she depicted the festivals, occupations and life of the Indians. Lyricism, symbolism, imagery and mysticism, are the remarkable qualities of her poetry. There is a strong note of patriotism in her poetry. Apart from poetry, she also wrote articles and essays (to various newspapers and journals) on her political beliefs and social issues like women empowerment. Sarojini is considered one of the finest nature poets of India. Like Shelley, She wrote number of lyrical poems

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