



JAWAHARLAL NEHRU AS A LITERARY LUMINARY WITH PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY AND PRACTICAL ORIENTATION IN THOUGHT AND TEMPERAMENT: AN APPRAISAL

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ABSTRACT

This article projects Nehru as a literary luminary with professional integrity and practical orientation in thought and temperament, along with he is the product of both East and West, he make the world through an immaculate expression of his outer active life and deep emotions, soaring imagination, limitless urges and boundless humanity with an artist's vision. His writings create a great impact on the society, in which he presents a picture both of himself and the nation and with the deft and meticulous handling of an artist he merges the two into one. His words have an evocative power being charged with ardent humanism.

Key Words: Artistic Vision, Historical Facts, Political Background, Scientific Growth, Freedom.

INTRODUCTION

Commenting on Jawaharlal Nehru by C.D. Narasimhaiah, that

“Jawaharlal is not a politician who gives a literary bias to his writing but an intellectual whom the times which are out of joint have drawn into the vortex of politics” (Preface 6)

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Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the foremost thinkers and graced with a poetic temperament, futuristic vision, artistic visionary, literary sensibility coupled with keen aesthetic and intellectual perception. Nehru was ‘a writer par excellence’ and he has ensured him a perpetual place in Indian English literature. Nehru’s place as a writer and thinker is highly appreciable, predominant role as a politician both before and after Independence. As a prominent writer in Indo-English prose, Nehru used English flawlessly and naturally he attributes the skill of an English man. The words of Mulk Raj Anand are worth quoting here:

“There are many strands in the temperament, character and intellectual caliber of Nehru derived from India and Europe, which make his personality rather more like a rich tapestry than like home ‘spun fabric which many of his more-simple followers imagine him to be. As the weaver of the tapestry happens to be Jawaharlal himself, and the bobbins are moved from one colour to the other inside him, the onlookers can only admire the cloth and make wild guesses about the inner links in the confusion from which the synthesis of Asia and Europe is arrived at in his being so that any objective knowledge about the cross-currents of events and ideas through which he has become what he is today is extremely difficult” (P 250)

As a writer, he produced the artistic emotions through an immaculate expression of his outer active life and deep emotions, soaring imagination, limitless urges and boundless humanity, that too, with an artist’s vision in what he writes and speaks beautifully expounding his views on the purposefulness of Art. Nehru was endowed with the vision of an artist. Prof. C.D.Narasimhaiah rightly observes thus:

“For, his economics, his politics, his religion and philosophy, all seem to issue forth from a vision of life which is essentially that of an artist and his speeches, writings and actions are all suffused with imagination which makes a dry twig bloom in his hands. He is perhaps the only statesman of the world today who has expressed so satisfactorily the emotional

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intensity of our troubled generation...” (P 8)

The fact is that Nehru got devastating recognition as a politician and internationalist, he was furnished with rich poetic, literary and artistic sensibility, which all got nourished and strengthened through reading of the literary compositions of such notable writers like Sir. Walter Scott, William Thackeray, Lewis Carroll, Charles Dickens, H.G.Wells, Robert Browning, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Oscar Wilde, Robert Frost and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Besides, Nehru was attracted towards socialism, Fabian socialism, Marxism, Capitalism and Colonialism, Vortex of Indian politics, Gandhism and Civil Disobedience. Commenting on the amalgamation of various influences on Nehru, K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar observes:

“And Jawaharlal has also acknowledged that these two, the saintly leader and the epicurean father, as also the poet, Gurudev Tagore, have exerted the greatest influence on his life. Marx and Leni, too, came into his life, and Jawaharlal’s eyes turned longingly towards Moscow. Thus, “post-war Moscow” collided with “Pre-war Harrow” and in the middle twenties Jawaharlal emerged as a national leader of infinite Possibilities and striking qualities” (P 298).

Nehru’s circumstance brought him into politics rather than his personal urge. He met the Mahatma for the first time in 1916 and found his life-mission. The Mahatma’s influence on Nehru grew stronger and stronger for it was “Gandhiji who had intoxicated him with the potency of an elixir” (Kumar 4). He was also an outstanding writer because his three classics are *Glimpses of World History*, a story of man for the young and growing people in India and also all over the world. *An Autobiography*, has depicts the quest of an individual for freedom, but as an insight into the making of the new mind of making new India and *The Discovery of India* dealt India’s national personality to lead the nation. These three works reflect the power and luminosity of Jawaharlal Nehru’s mind, the eloquence of his language and the radiance of his spirit and taken up as essential reading for anyone whose wishes to understand the ideas and personalities that have shaped India.

Nehru loved to speak and write about his nation, but his ultimate thought was ‘freedom’. While writing the letter to his daughter, Indira Gandhi, when he was at prison, denied to provide him books for reference, his mind was too full of making the Indian history. In those letters to his daughter, he had some virtue and they brought a fresh outlook and aroused a feeling of concern for all people and interest in the world. He had developed the habit of

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making notes of the books which he had read. Nehru's passionate commitment to the reading makes him a promotable writer. He was a luminous man and his writings reflected the radiance of his spirit. Nehru's keen observation, sense of humour, range of reading, feeling for poetry, being the mark of an educated mind. Nehru is rather attracted towards the modern definitions of religion which describes the inner development of the individual and the evolution of his consciousness by following thinkers like John Dewey, the American, and Rolland, the French.

Nehru's attitude to life was essentially scientific but the temper of science is one of disinterestedness, ceaseless activity, search for truth and above all concern for humanism in the presence of the mystic world. Nehru had a fair acquaintance with the work of the scientists and philosophers. Even after he had become the Prime Minister, he continued his early interest in science and the work of scientists like Einstein who was directly in charge of scientific research in India to promote which he helped to found several prestigious research Institutes throughout the country and bring young scientists together. About the problems of individual and social life, Nehru said that there should be an adjustment of the relations between individuals and groups. The problem-solving method of observation and precise knowledge, deliberate reasoning, and based in the methods of science, must be followed. His multitudinous interests are revealed in his speeches, essays and press statements published in eleven volumes of the selected works. About his multifaceted personality and multitudinous interests, Dr. Rajendra Prasad comments:

"Jawaharlal is a man of culture in the widest and best sense of the expression. He is a man with ideas born of study of books and widespread contact with man, Indian and foreign. His emotional nature and his innate independence of thought have helped him in developing a style of expression which is direct and captivating. He is a gifted writer wielding the pen as an artist" (Foreword, PP vi-vii)

He is a literary artist with rich poetic imagination. He presents an artist's vision related to his life. Expounding his views on the purposefulness of art, he writes:

"Art, if it does not spring up from the strength of the nation, is lifeless art. If it has no connection with problems and reality of life, it is useless and dead like the pictures of woman in Ajanta caves" (P 7).

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Nehru artistically deals with the theme of the origin and development of human history. K.M. Pannikar rightly comments:

“Glimpses of World History is an attempt to get the perspective right. There is no attempt in it to deprecate the achievements of Europe on the heritage of Greece or Rome. But it lays emphasis equally on the contributions of Persians, Arabs, Indians and Chinese and of the great non-Christian religions, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism put the evolution of Mankind in a world perspective” (P 31).

Nehru’s speeches filled with ample literary qualities as effective and proves him a eloquent orator. His academic and public addresses reveal his idealism, maturity of outlook and international understanding. Commenting on the literary significant of his speeches, K.R.S. Iyengar comments:

“... he could speak as man to man, as a place of humanity to all humanity, each word sending forth creepers of understanding and sympathy. Each accent instinct with fellow feeling and un possessive love... But always he could throw out words charged with purpose, words that have since gone into general currency” (P 310).

The Discovery of India abounds in literary graces in which he expounds the facts and history bounds exotic vision of a literary artist. Nehru as a historian shows remarkable and penetrating observation of history, exceptional poetic sensibility and consummate stylistic excellence in describing the achievements of great artists like Leonardo, Michaelangelo and Raphael; and the eminent poets like Dante, Wordsworth, and Petrarch. **The Discovery of India** is a highly poetic and artistic and literary creation in which precision, economy, clarity and simplicity, subtle poetic touches and musical flow of language do beautifully characterize its style. Describing India, Nehru writes:

“She is myth and an idea, a dream and a vision and yet very real and present and pervasive. There are terrifying glimpses of dark corridors

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*which seem to lead back to primeval might,
but also there is the fullness and the warmth
of the day about her. Shameful and repellent
She is occasionally perverse and obstinate,
sometimes even a little hysteric, this lady
with a past”.*

Nehru’s ‘An Autobiography’ one of the greatest autobiographies in the world. It is a great book in which he picturize both of himself and the nation and with an divine artistic vision. It is both subjective and objective, personal and impersonal, lyrical and epical, real and imaginative. His style abounds in poetic graces and suggestiveness. His words have an evocative power being charged with ardent humanism. This is evidently brought out in the following passage;

*“The distant mountains seem easy of access and
climbing the top beckons, but as one approaches,
difficulties appear and the higher one, goes
the more laborious becomes the journey and the
summit recedes into the clouds. Yet the climbing
is worth the effort and has its joy and satisfaction.
Perhaps it is the struggle that gives value to life
and not the ultimate result” (An Autobiography 597).*

It consists of greatest ideas and opinions on a wide variety of subjects – religion, secularism, national unity, sex, socialism, peace and non-violence, humanism and international outlook.

In the modern age the great thinkers and philosophers like Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi and many others tried their best to reform the evils in the nation. One such reformer-statesman is Jawaharlal Nehru who will remain immortal in Indian history for his glorious fight in the attainment of India’s freedom. The modern Indian mind is practical and pragmatic, ethical and social, altruistic and humanitarian. Truly said that “Humanity is its God and social service is its religion”.

To conclude, Shelley uses symbols to represent his revolutionary and mystical ideas. Through these concrete symbols, he times to express his abstract ideas.



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