



## LIFE, VALUES AND CULTURE IN PASHUPATI JHA'S *CROSS AND CREATION*

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### ABSTRACT

*The poetry of Pashupati Jha offers a quality read with every new publication, that shows a perfect blend of tradition, culture, and modernity. He belongs to the school of thought that represents the values and ethics of India. His poetry comes out of his specific emotional response, and through language chosen and arranged for its meaning, sound, and rhythm. They make up for a vast subject as old as history, and even older, present everywhere, possibly in different forms of human behaviour itself. The present paper offers a firsthand note on certain features of his poetry, and the thoughts therein concerning his seminal work Cross and Creation.*

**Key Words :** *Indian Poetry in English, Human Values, Ethics, Tradition, Cross and Creation*

### INTRODUCTION

Pashupati Jha, an academician poet in contemporary Indian writing in English, always offers a quality read with every new publication, that shows a perfect blend of tradition, culture, and modernity. He belongs to the school of thought that represents the values and ethics of India. He believes in the power of poetry and understands that the songs of this earth inspire the poets to translate the saga of the land into the languages, tones, and tenors of their own. Poetry to him happens out of the emotions recollected in words, worthy of making a perfect congregation of life's series of events. When the poet finds, that 'everything recedes into

**DR. ALKA SINGH**

1 Page



oblivion' ('Poetry makes a lot to happen' 10), he starts listening to a piece of different music altogether' ('Poetry makes...' 10), and he finds through his poem a final call with immense power to create from the Muse of Poetry where he feels like, 'transformed into a different creature, who would take his readers into 'another world', where lies the essence of humankind.

His poetry comes out of his specific emotional response, and through language chosen and arranged for its meaning, sound, and rhythm. They make up for a vast subject as old as history, and even older, present everywhere, possibly in different forms of human behaviour itself. The present paper offers a firsthand note on certain features of his poetry, and the thoughts therein concerning his seminal work Cross and Creation. The series of thought in poetry is generally a mode of engaging the human mind on certain uncommon pedestals. This goes even for the reception of any poetic text. While appreciating poetry there surf a visible variation in reading as per the understanding of an individual reader and his/her concern(s) for different things and feel of the system of which a reader is a part. The discussions in the present paper offer the same by carving examples of Pashupati Jha's poetry ranging in its subject, tone, and effect. This paper is a feel regarding the poet's nevertheless familiar acquaintance with it; the idea of form in poetry; poetry as a mode of thought; and what little may be said in prose of the spirit of poetry.

Poetry, in maximum situations, invents the ways of using language. For Pashupati Jha, it seems like the only way of using language for fashionable thought(s) that belong only and only to an individual and poetry (ready to be shaped) in particular, it is yet to claim, arose at first in the form of some fancy or imagination that spells, and is recited to ensure a good harvest. It seems that truth prevails in the poet's hypothesis, it blurs a useful distinction: by the time there begins to be a separate class of objects called poems, which he recognizes as a tool, a device to give a magical thought which is capable of doing its business upon the human spirit; if not directly upon the natural world outside. Jha's poetry fits well with the definition of Mark Flanagan, who observes that "poetry is an imaginative awareness of experience expressed through meaning, sound, and rhythmic language choices to evoke an emotional response. Poetry has been known to employ meter and rhyme, but this is by no means necessary. Poetry is an ancient form that has gone through numerous drastic reinventions over time. The very nature of poetry as an authentic and individual mode of expression makes it nearly impossible to define. ('What is Poetry..' ?)

Formally, his poetry is recognizable by its greater ideas, as Ben Jonson says, poetry "speaketh somewhat above a mortal mouth," perhaps the characteristic most central to his poetry is his unwillingness to define, label, or nail down the things and events that are unpleasant to us. It is about peculiarly with him, like that someone who brings poetry to the ground to put up his

**DR. ALKA SINGH**

2 Page



signature for all time, in present, so that it will be a guiding past to future. It may be observed that the Pashupati Jha has been very thoughtful in choosing the words, and the way he doles out words to recite a poem. He has very carefully selected words for conciseness and clarity that imparts standard emotive qualities to his poetry. The poet, through innovation in both word choice and form, seemingly makes his poem significant.

The poetry of 'Jesus', 'stuck to a wooden plank' reminds us of 'unearned wounds' that grow with the human tradition to mingle past with the present. The 'individual talent' of the poet automatically inspires him to celebrate and question the past that always continues with the present. The poet suddenly realizes in 'That Rare Moment' his discourses on a 'beautiful face' (12), that 'speaks out from hair, cheeks, lips, eyes, and all other parts (12). His thoughts and emotions have got finally ripened to 'ooze out' (12) of his pen for which he in the past had been so impatient and silently waited to appear and take the shape of 'Cross and Creation.'

The poet is a part of the postcolonial setup. He could not let go of the turning fate of growing civilization into what we can now call a neo colonized world under the spur of cultural colonization in the guise of globalization. He could not allow to let it to go just unnoticed. The fate at the periphery is still fighting its survival. In the words of the poet it is, "waiting behind, to suffer the drunk/ virility of the Sahib and his son/when, late at night, they return./Next morning, with more stitches/ to her blouse, she mops everything/ away, except her misfortune./And somewhere, in the distance,/ Christ bleeds again, and again." ('Civilization: A Progress Report' 13)

The poet is happy to share his experiences when he could feel like reviving his poetry because of 'an untimely rain' that touched him to recite 'A Love Song' for his readers and gave it the late definition in the poem 'Love, the Latest Definition'. In the words of a poet: Love does not love that is stagnant;/it should be a free flow,/even if that of a gutter—/ at least there's a movement there,/along with frog, reptile and/ aborted fetus...

Our taste is complete/ cosmopolitan, free from the narrow/ confines of the country, caste, and creed;/ yet particular on one point/ of non-attachment— love and leave,/ both quite quickly, with no/ complaint attached to it./ For we're young, we're modern,/ the real harbinger of/ progress and growth. ('Love, the Latest Definition' 16)

The author similarly very emotionally and tersely expresses the place of all comfort, that is home, 'where one gets repairs/ and likes to return, again and again' ('Home is where...'19). But with time, the poet feels the pangs of sorrow that slowly has entered 'our home' to be better called 'squabbling home', 'where everyone largely lives alone'(20), in a 'Nuclear Family'. He seems to be a very serious observer and his words speak of his deep and

**DR. ALKA SINGH**

3 Page



mysterious experiences that perhaps he must have developed with the growing course of time with which he has tied his life and the life of his poetry on a multi-dimensional pattern and yet so fresh and new in the manners of portrayal. His poetry seems to come out of his 'Tapasya' which would spread its fragrance for 'years to eternity' and perhaps that is why he says, 'And, Phoenix-like, he was/ alive again, as if from/ rotten roots sprouts/ a new sapling.'(23).

In the contemporary phase of globalization and technology, where the world is moving at a greater pace, the study of poetry creates different vibes; both explicit and implicit. The study of poetry gives a cool respite to the rational minds, and also it keeps a beautiful association with different facets of life: identity, realization, discovery, survival, dislocation, family and social bonds, dreams, visions, imaginations, and revisions. In the current context, I feel quite appropriate to submit that there is not much difference in the formulation of technology and poetry because both of these originate with intuition and imaginative flashes.

Shaping human emotions in the form of poetry is not an easy task. It seems while giving his thoughts a shape, the poet has been all careful towards doing full justice in making a perfect blend of art and emotions – since his poetry offers a range of poems dealing with varied human emotions that naturally enriches an Indian's cultural experience. He has created some common strains of cognitive learning and personal expressions; each activity enforcing the other and automatically taking the shape of his poetry.

Pashupati Jha has planned the course of his action to his creation in an established manner rather than adopting different methodologies that stand obdurate demanding the reader's participation strenuously. I am sure, that reading these poems and responding to the questions given sometimes at the end of each poem, will stimulate an interest in offering repeated readings of Pashupati Jha's poetry and other issues related to the subject concerned and in their celebration in different manifestations of art and other literary forms.

The poet keeps a very sympathetic heart toward some of the building blocks that structure our society, for instance, Women, Family, Love, Beauty, Life, Death, etc. In his poem, 'An Indian Woman' (30), the poet takes upon a debate on the stereotyped image of an Indian Woman and finally gives it an ending where she appears as, 'a mirror/ to this ancient culture,/ where a woman is always worshipped.'(30). However, he, ultimately, is bemused to put up a winding-note and calls her 'Paradox, Thy Name Is Woman'(48), because even after grudging her fate 'for marrying that man...' (48), all the time she fervently prays to gods so that her man must outlive her and she should die 'a Suhagan'. Women are very important in Poet's life and that is why the poet celebrates her figure and role with emotions at par in her different forms and manifestation to satisfy him and oblige her through his emotional and beautiful poems.

**DR. ALKA SINGH**

4 Page



His poetry reaches the height of mellowness when he says, 'There is something seriously amiss/ ignorance is now no more a bliss,/ like the serpent, it is bound to hiss/ and drown all the wounded cries;/ who says, there are human ties!' ('A Godless Country' 58). Sometimes his poetry becomes a riddle wrapped in an enigma swathed in a cardigan sweater or something like that. It is not like normal poetry that dances to the tune of the reader's understanding and will shrink at every turn. It is artistically rendering words in such a way to evoke intense emotion.

The poet believes in the 'Creation' though after a troublesome 'Cross'. In his words, 'He staggered, stumbled and struggled; / finally balancing himself/ on himself, his roots and reserve.' (Creation II, 43). That is all a new resurrection of life when he was wishing for his death while writing his poetry, 'An Old Man's Wish', that 'leads to rebirth/ and re-experience—/ the endless cycle (63).

Reading the poems of Pashupati Jha is just feeling the soulful mirth of Indian culture, and human activities in the different forms of mannerisms and setups that we have.

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