



URMILA AS A PROMINENT CHARACTER IN MAITHILISHARAN GUPT'S 'SAKET'

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ABSTRACT

Maithilisharan Gupt (1886-1964), the national poet of India, wrote the Hindi literary work, 'Saket' in 1931. 'Saket' is a remarkable piece of poetry that is related to the great religious epic- 'Ramayana'. It centres on the characters of Ramayana. It is written in 12 cantos but its ninth canto especially depicts the character of Urmila, the wife of Lakshman (the second son of King Dashrath of Ayodhya). In literal meaning, 'Saket' means Ayodhya city. Gupt's 'Saket' narrates the events of Ramayana from Lakshman's view point. It is written in dwipaada style (verses of two lines each). The work is magnificent for its use of imagery and exploration of emotions of some characters who were not given a sufficient space in the main narrative work of Ramayana. It expands a different experience to Ram's Tale. The present paper reflects on Urmila's character as how much it is useful in fulfilment of her husband's promise for his brother's (Ram) service.

Key Words- Saket, Exploration, Dwipadda, Narrative, Magnificent.

INTRODUCTION

Urmila's character in Valmiki's 'Ramayana' and Tulsidas's 'Ramcharitmanas' is known only as the wife of Lakshman. But 'Saket' portrays Urmila as an important character in 'Ramayana' without whose sacrifice Lakshman could not fulfil his duty for Ram and Sita.

Gupt uplifts Urmila's character by giving voice to Urmila's emotions. He deals with the Ramayana's characters as human beings not as Gods or ideal characters who have the effect of their emotions and circumstances on their physical existence.

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Urmila is such a character who passes through a fourteen years phase of separation from her husband. 'Saket' s ninth canto deals with Urmila's different reactions in this period of separation. Different psychic thoughts and reactions have been presented by Gupt to describe the pitiful condition of Urmila. He describes her condition as a human-being as a result of parting with her husband. The illustrations that have been extracted from 'Saket' put a deep impression on the readers. They feel very close with tearful Urmila. When she separates from her husband, she says:-

कहा उर्मिला ने 'हे मन
तू प्रिय पथ का विघ्न न बन

She though desires to get the company of her husband but does not want to be an obstruction in his path of duty for his brother. But when she feels troubled with the separation, her eyes are fill with tears but the poet writes for her tears :-

पहले आँखों में थे, मानस मे कूद मग्न अब वे थे,
छिटें वहीं उड़े थे, बड़े-बड़े अश्रु वे कब थे ।”

(The poet describes that that just as bubbles of water fall in the pool, in the same way, tears are falling down in her heart, why should we make Urmila weak by giving her tears as the name of tears. They are just as the bubbles of water.

In 'Saket', her sacrifice gets higher position than Sita. Gupt compares the characters of Sita and Urmila and writes:-

सीता ने अपना भाग लिया
पर इसने वह भी त्याग दिया”

(The poet wants to say that Sita was at least with her husband but Urmila suffered for her husband's duty. In 'Saket' even Ram praises to Urmila—

तूने तो सहचारिणी के भी ऊपर
धर्मस्थापना किया भाग्यशालिनी इस भू पर ।”

When Laxman goes with Ram and Sita in the forest, she hides her inner feelings of desire and consoles herself by saying:-

आज स्वार्थ है त्याग भरा
हे अनुराग विराग भरा
तू विकार से पूर्ण न हो
शोकभार से पूर्ण न हो ।”

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But she is full of tears because of separation. Her husband's memory is now only the basis of her life. She says:-

मुख कांति पड़ी पीली-पीली
ओंखें अशान्त नीली-नीली।
क्या हाय यही वृहश काया,
या उसकी शेष सूक्ष्म काया” ।

Her physical condition is deteriorating day by day. The glow on her face has got lessen.

‘वेदने, तू भी भली बनी
पाई मैंने आज तुझी में अपनी चाह घनी।

She says:-

हाय सब कुछ गया । आशा न गई ।”

In her miserable condition, there are no selfish feelings. She suffers in parting but her only wish is-

भातृ-स्नेह सूधा बरसे
भू पर स्वर्ग भाव सरसे ।”
यह भातृ स्नेह न ऊना हो,
लोगों के लिए नमूना हो ।”

But as she is a human being, many thoughts rise in her hearts. She waits for her husband wistfully. She does not find interest in her life. She feels even the food as poison. She says to her friends:-

रस है बहुत, परन्तु सखि
विष है विषम प्रयोग ।
बिना प्रयोक्ता के हुए,
यहाँ भोग भी रोग ।”

She does not like to eat anything. She says:-

अरी व्यर्थ है, व्यंजनों की बड़ाई,
हटा थाल, तू क्यों इसे आज लाई ।

There was a time when she herself used to prepare food for others but now she feels only weeping has remained in her share. She says:-

रहा किन्तु मेरे लिए एक रोना

खिलौऊ किसे मैं अलोना सलोना ।”

But sometimes in the hope to meet to her husband, she is ready to eat every food. She says:-

पियू ला, खाऊँ ला, सखि पहन लूं, सब करूँ

जिऊँ मैं जैसे होय यह अवधि का अर्णव तरूँ”

She wants to live so that the separation period may pass easily. Her condition is so sorrowful that the poet writes for her:

मानस-मन्दिर मे सती, पति की प्रतिमा थाप,

जलती सी उस विरह में, बनी आरती आप ।”

She is burning in the fire of love but she worships her husband in her heart thinking him as her god.

आंखों में प्रिय-मूर्ति थी, भूले थे सब भोग,

हुआ योग से भी अधिक उसका विषय वियोग ।

Her separation with her husband becomes longer than the union. Gupt takes the help of different natural objects to describe the pathetic condition of Urmila.

हंसो-हंसो हे शशि फूल फूलो

हंसो हिंडारें पर बैठ झूलों

यथेष्ट मैं रोदन के लिए हूँ

झड़ी लगा दूं, इतना पिये हूँ ।

She wishes nature to laugh, flourish and develop. She herself is sufficient to weep. She wants to fill the nature with pouring of her tears. She is so desirous to meet to her husband that she says:-

यही आता है इस मन में

छोड़ धाम धन जाकर मैं भी रहूँ उसी वन में,

बीच-बीच में उन्हें देख लूं मैं झुरमुट की ओट,

जब वे निकल जाएँ तब लेहूँ उसी धूल मे लोट ।”

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She sees her inner wish in the whole nature:-

वह कोयल जो कूक रही थी, आज हूक भरती है,
पूर्व और पश्चिम की लाली शेष वृष्टि करती है,
लेता है निःश्वास समीरा सुरभि धूल चरती है
उबल सूखती है जलधारा यह धरती भरती है ।”

In the condition of dilemma, when she forgets the period of separation, she invites her husband-

भूल अवधि सुध प्रिय से कहती जगती हुई कभी-आओ,
किन्तु कभी सोती तो उठती वह चौक बोलकर-जाओ,

It seemed to her as if her husband has returned back leaving his duty for Ram and Sita, so she says to Laxman to go back and fulfil his duty. In her state of madness, she thinks that her husband has returned back without fulfilling his duties, she gets annoyed at it. But when she finds that it was only her madness, she becomes angry on herself and says:-

पतित नाथ हैं तू सदाशय
अधम उर्मिले, हाय निर्दया !
अधम पालती एक मात्र तू
सब अपात्र हैं और पात्र तू ।
मुँह दिखाएगी क्या उन्हें अरी ?
पर संश्या, क्यों न तू मरी ?”

She thinks that her husband is kind natured, so he will pardon her but she thinks she will always feel repentant for it. She talks to herself-

सहृदय तू बता, किन्तु चंचला,
वह क्षमा सही जाएगी भला ।

She thinks what he will say to her:

स्वपति-पुण्य ही इष्ट था तुम्हें,
कटु मुझे तथा मिष्ट था तुम्हें ।
प्रियतमे ! तपभ्रष्ट मैं ? भला,

मत छोओ मुझे लौट मैं चला ।”

Urmila again imagines:-

हट सुलक्षणे रोक तू न यों,

पतित मैं तुझे रोक तू न यो ।

When her friend asked where Urmila, Then she herself becomes surprised, she was regarding herself as Laxman. She regains her ‘self’ after same time and says:-

फिर हुई अहा मत उर्मिला,

सखि प्रियतम था क्या मुझे मिला ?

यह वियोग या योग, जो कहे-

प्रियमयी सदा उर्मिला रहे

When she comes to her senses, she says to her friend-

उन्मादिनी कभी थी, विवेकनी उर्मिला हुई सखि अब है ।

अज्ञान भला, जिसमें सोहं तो क्या, स्वयं भी तब है ।”

By devotion, the devotee becomes successful to be one (Soham) with God. Urmila’s state is also of such kind. Now she has reached to state of being one with her god. In this state, she visualises the image of her husband and says to her friend bring the brush so that she should not forget his image-

लाना, लाना सखि तूली !

आंखों में छवि भूली !

आ अंकित कर उसे दिखाऊँ,

इस चिन्ता से छुट्टी पाऊँ

मैं हूँ भूली-भूली ।”

In the end, she accepts her fate. She wants that that all the universe should run according to wish of god and she would wait for her husband. God, who has assigned the pangs of separation for her, will give her power to bear it. Her only wish is that her weeping would become music for the universe and be beneficent to the people.

Urmila’s character which was summed up in two to four lines in Valmiki’s ‘Ramayana’ and was given a less attention in Tulsi’s ‘Sri Ramcharitmanas’, she becomes the main heroine of ‘Saket’. Sita is with Ram, Mandavi and ShrutKirti are also with their husbands respectively

Bharat and Shatrughana, it is only Urmila who is helpless. She has nothing that could relieve her from the pain of separation. In her parting from her husband, she has only tears which not only make moist to the eyes of Urmila, even the eyes of the readers of 'Saket' are filled with the sorrowful condition of Urmila.

सिर माथे तेरा यह दान,
हे मेरे प्रेरक भगवान ।”
अब क्या माँगू भला और मैं फैलाकर ये हाथ।
मुझे भूलकर ही विभु-वन में विचरें मेरे नाथ ॥
मुझे न भूले उनका ध्यान,
हे मेरे प्रेरक भगवान ।”

The ninth canto ends with Gupt's note of sympathy:-

अवधि शिला का उर पर था गुरुभार
तिल-तिल काट रही थी दृग जलधार

Urmila was bearing the load of a heavy rock of separation period. She was continuously trying to cut this heavy rock with her tears. The closing line of the poem puts a deep sympathetic, pitiful and emotional effect on the readers.

All the three characters are eulogized for their exemplary sacrifice.

अब जो प्रियतम को पाऊँ
तो इच्छा है उन चरणों की रज में आप रमाऊँ
आप अवधि बन सकूँ कहीं तो क्या कुछ देर लगाऊँ ।
मैं अपने को आप मिटाकर, जाकर उनको पाऊँ ।”
उर्मिला स्वयं अवधि बनकर अपने को मिटाने को तैयार है ।

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