

## **Manas Bakshi: A Poet from ‘Void to Vibrancy’**

Shaleen Kumar Singh  
Assistant Professor, Department of English  
Kisan Mahavidyalaya, Kherhat Khurd,  
CSJM University, Kanpur  
Email: [shaleen999@gmail.com](mailto:shaleen999@gmail.com)

### **ABSTRACT**

Only a few young poets writing in English have been able to achieve the satiety that almost every true poet strives for. Manas Bakshi is one of those poets who has mastered both theme and craft. With the advancement of human knowledge, one cannot help but be impressed by the richness of individuality among mankind, the almost infinite variety of human beings, and the complexity of human nature. Theosophists have provided a numerical key to understanding the infinite variety and vast potentiality of man, with the governing number being seven, implying that there are seven main types of human beings, each with outstanding natural attitudes and qualities. Man of the Seventh Hour appears to be completing the cycle of human spirit evolution, which is journeying from primitive to modern, from void to vibrancy, from subjugation to emancipation, from beginning to end, a process of compelling reality. The one who perceives every' materialistic, "superficial,' 'universal,' and 'supernatural' gyration in its entity, as well as everything mundane and beyond/ not beyond his ascetic perceptibility. This paper attempts to explore the seven types of bodies and its evolution at the philosophical and poetic self of the poet Manas Bakshi.

*Keywords: Poetry, Indian English poetry, Philosophy, Seven bodies, Human evolution.*

Amongst the young poets writing in English, only few have been able to attain the satiety which almost each and every true poet aspires to attain. Manas Bakshi is one of such poets who have attained perfection in both theme and craft. Though he is a rising column of Indian English Poetry with six collections namely Long Awaited (1988), The welkin is Blue Yet in Agony (1995), Of Dream and Death (2000), From Adam to Myself (2003), and Not Because I Live Today (2005) published to his credit and a number of other poems published in different well known journals of India and Abroad by which he has registered his active presence in the Parnassus of Indian literature, yet he has several milestones to achieve and has to produce much more poetry from his fertile pen.

Man of the Seventh Hour is fortunately the seventh collection of poems in which the poet has divided it into seven parts viz. Victory, Desire, Greed, Fear, Rage, Conflict and Decadence. Actually these seven parts are the seven different stations of human cycle during which evolution of Human Cycle completes. According to Srinivas Rangaswami:

“It’s a continuing story of evolution, confusion, revolution, dissolution- an unfolding mystery of a life- cycle- a strange continuity in all that is inalterable, superficial, universal, supernatural, gyrating in man’s entity.” (8)

According to Indian mythology 'seven' is the symbol of Shubh (Good) and piousness so we have seven Rishis- (Kashyap, Agni, Bharadwaj, Vishwamitra, Gautam, Vashistha, Jamdagni), seven Dweep (islands)- (Jambu, Shak, Kush, Konchu, Shalmali, Gomed, Pushkar), seven Swara (notes), (Shadaj, Rishabh, Gandhar, Madhyam, Pancham, Dhawat, Nishad), seven Seas- (Lavan, Ikshu, Dadhi, Ksheer, Madhu, Madira, Dhrat), seven Swargas-Heavens- (Bhu, Bhurva, Swah, Maha, Jal, Tap, Satya), seven Patal- (Atal, Satal, Bhastimatal, Vital, Mahatal, Rasatal, Patal), seven Sukha (joys)- (Khan, Pan, Paridhan, Gyan, Gan, Shobha, Sanjog), seven Colours- Lal (Red), Narangi (Orange), Peela (Yellow), Hara (Green), Neela (Blue), Asmani (Sky Blue), Bangani (Violet) and seven Var (Days)- Ravi (Sunday), Som (Monday), Mangal (Tuesday), Budh (Wednesday), Brahaspati (Thursday), Shukra (Friday), Shani (Saturday). Besides, theosophists have discussed much about Seven Human bodies, seven human temperaments and even seven principals. H. P. Blavatsky in The Secret Doctrine gives seven principals of human life-

1. Universal Spirit (Atma)
2. Spiritual Soul (Buddhi)
3. Human Soul (Manas)
4. Animal Soul (Kama Rupa) the principal of animal desire which burns fiercely during life in matter, resulting in satiety, it is inseparable from animal existence.
5. Astral Body (Large Sharira) the inner vehicle on which the body is moulded, the vehicle of life. It is dissipated very shortly after disintegration of the Body.
6. Life Essence (Prana) Life, the active power producing all vital phenomena.
7. Body (The gross mater of the body; the substance formed and moulded over the Linga Sharira (Chhaya) by the action of prana. ( Blavatsky: 627, 631)

With the growth of knowledge of human nature one cannot fail to be impressed by the great diversity of human gifts by the richness of individuality among mankind, the almost infinite variety of human being, the complexity of human nature. Theosophists have answered to the question of understanding the infinite variety and vast potentiality of man by the numerical key in which the governing number is seven, so there are seven main types of human beings, each with outstanding natural attitudes and qualities. Knowledge of these seven types and their

corresponding attributes provides a key to the understanding of human nature. Again Sinnet in Esoteric Buddhism gives seven principles that are given below:

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. The Body       | Rupa          |
| 2. Vitality       | Prana or Jiva |
| 3. Astral Body    | Linga Sharia  |
| 4. Animal Soul    | Kama Rupa     |
| 5. Human Soul     | Manas         |
| 6. Spiritual Soul | Buddhi        |
| 7. Spirit         | Atma          |

The seven principles or the components of the human individuality may be regarded as vehicles through which self-expression and experience are gained by that unity of spiritual existence that is often called as the Monad (in Theosophy) and we may say it as the spark of one divine flame, the great breath, scintilla of the spiritual son, immortal gem, human spirit and logos of the soul.

The 'Monad' which is regarded as source of the objectives of the seven fold human beings and which is said, never leaves, 'the bosom of the father' the divine spirit of man remains within the parent flame throughout the whole period of its partial manifestations as the seven fold human being.

In the light of the above discussion Man of The Seventh Hour appears to be completing the cycle of evolution of human spirit who is journeying from primitive/ To modern/ From void/ To vibrancy/ From subjugation/ to emancipation/ From beginning/ To end/ A process/ of compelling reality'. The who feels each and every 'materialistic', 'superficial', 'universal' and 'supernatural' gyrating in its entity and everything mundane and beyond/ not beyond his ascetic perceptibility, has divided the book in seven hours-Victory, Desire, Greed, Fear, Rage, Conflict and Decadence wherein the poet has tried to reach both the pinnacles of progression and digression.

In the first hour of Victory, the poet starts with - "The seven Seas/ The seven hills/ The iris of life/ The recalling the myth' and again knowing the same 'the sun/ As a seven horse chariot/

Unmasking the world at its beginning'. The poet takes man and woman with the legacy of/ Adam and Eve and admits time as the most powerful-

Endless Time  
Fathomless Time  
In the vortex  
Of birth and death  
An eternal riddle  
Around each ephemeral existence. (11)

The poet remains optimistic and vivacious in this hour. So, he writes on-

Victory of man  
Focusing on  
New frontiers around  
His progeny's survival texture. (14)

In the second hour of desire the poet seems to be 'speaking to self-is shapeless one' and is involved in the realization of his self/ In the art of knowing life itself where 'from birth to death' he faces, 'the infallible lessons of time' and later on questions:

What does human being resembles?  
A wave  
In a vast ocean?  
Latent in Gun power?  
A decibel  
In a hubbub?  
A Particle  
In a Solid substance? (19)

And adds:

Or,  
A boiling point  
Of the unending desire  
Sprouting and spreading  
Day in and day out in him? (ibid)

And at last, he watches the ever-desirous nature of man as follows:

Primitive longing  
And primary incertitude  
Over,  
Human being  
Becomes desirous  
More than he needs to be  
Squandering everything  
To satiate  
His desirous self. (20)

Similarly in the third hour of greed, he commences:

Desire begets instinct  
Instinct begets lust  
Lust lasting  
Till it's combust  
In a life- cycle  
Digging up man's innate urge. (23)

And again, he questions the modern man in this hour which is not only relevant but also hints us of our divine 'self':

Does Twenty First Century man know  
What he really needs  
To satisfy himself?  
The flower knows not  
How its fragrance springs  
The garbage knows not  
How its rot stinks- (26)

In the fourth hour of fear, the poet talks of fear- 'that renders one/ dejected and defeated within himself,/ makes him apprehensive' and even afraid of the trait he has so far left,/ the sceptre of his own shadow. According to the poet it is all-

As if  
Satan inside  
An embodiment

Showing so far the seeds  
Of lust and greed  
Has come out  
Growing taller  
If not subversive  
To  
Ridicule man  
Scared  
Of his own misdeeds  
Camouflaged with  
Baits and gimmick. (33)

The fifth hour of rage is the shattering of the dreams where he is 'facing the stark reality/ the emptiness/ and sombreness around' but he admits a catharsis and adds:

Purification  
A process  
Linking  
Body to soul  
Thought to maturity  
Humanism to eternity,  
That's yet another phase  
Of man trying to come out  
Of a deceptive self. (39)

In this section, the poet tries to break all the mirrors of suspicion, bravado and false notions and condemns the man who from Babri/ To/ Bamiyan/ From/ World trade Centre/ To/ Tube rail in London and the same hydra headed monster/ A hoodlum/ Or a hypocrite/ Shorn of realization/ Of his own outfit/ Commits the same crime and repeats the same mistake.

In the sixth hour of conflict, the poet mirrors the modern modes of life like night clubs/ Disco theque/ Body ay play/ Mind at stake and people who are, 'hand in hand/ chanting deliriously/ feeling hot hot hot' are so common and the modern nuclear age in which the human being is 'dying for/ His undying craze and the same 'twenty first century man/ unmindful/ of his/ struggle rich heritage/ Of love and peace/ and/ A divine origin.' And at last, in the seventh hour

of decadence, the poet thinks deeply about the fate of man recalling the history from Kurukshetra to World War II and questions judiciously:

Does Time  
Always demand  
Sacrifice  
Of innocent blood?  
A perennial penalty  
For a momentary upsurge  
Against  
The affluence of a few  
At the cost of the masses,  
A socio-economic blur? (56)

And he mirrors several bare realities of modern life when he says:

Trust in life  
Awaits  
The verdict of Time  
May be  
Hemlock for Socrates  
Ambrosia for hypocrites! (57)

The vulgarity, vanity and lucre-dust of materialism has made the manpower hungry and Westoxication of five-star glitterati consumerism have liquidated the higher values of our life. Now a days violence and torture, carnage and communal laughter have become so common that humanity and compassion seem a dream now. In this hour of decadence, the poet reminds us of our follies and evils that we have committed in the human history. According to him, history and nature are the best judges:

The bitter truth:  
History takes its own turn  
And nature never pardons  
Spares none, (63)

Again, he questions:

Isn't

The quake in Kashmir  
A caution  
Against human being  
Not being  
What he should have been. (64)

Therefore, it is spick and span that the poet Manas Bakshi has epitomized the feelings of cosmopolitan heart into his slender volume of poems *The Man of the Seventh Hour*. Philosophically the poet, in all the seven hours vacillates between materialism to spiritualism and seven bodies reaches to the pinnacle in the seventh hour of decadence. When his personal feelings become universal and his individual pain of the self merges into the point of the globe, when his body (Sthool Shaareera) becomes the universal spirit (Atma) In his gradual evolution from Rupa or Sthool Shareera to Atma, the spirit, the poet face and feels kaleidoscopically and consequently becomes one with the absolute and its radiation. So it is undeniably admitted reality that the poet has known and felt in all the seven planes of theosophy. The book is though in free verse, yet sometimes appears to be tinged with beautiful lyricism. The content and the universal appeal of the poet make us feel that only poetry can rouse the interest and awareness among mankind for the welfare and upliftment of mankind.

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