

The Poetry of S. L. Peeran: A Hope for A Better World

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ABSTRACT

S.L. Peeran, a Judicial Member of Customs, Excise and Gold Control, Appellate Tribunal, Chennai, is a bilingual poet composing poems in English and Urdu. He has seven collections of poems to his credit. The poetry of S.L. Peeran is an outcome of his confrontation with the stark realities of contemporary society. He is uncommonly sympathetic and knowledgeable about man's faults. He is dolorous at the rapid growing capitalism, imperialism, individualism, communalism, tyranny, agony, dissatisfaction, poverty, avarice, corruption, exploitation, violence, moral degeneration, selfishness and profanity. He is well conscious of the lethal and unhealthy situations around him. His poems are a call to invoke in dead veins of man- spiritual light, wisdom, peace, truth, happiness, glory, universal brotherhood, devotion, beauty and goodness and to revolt against darkness, foolishness, war, inhumanity, egoism, selfishness, superficiality, ugliness, indifference and jealousy.

Keywords: *Philosophy, communalism, aesthetic, spiritual light, salvation.*

“Immersed in the Philosophy of the Suffists theological precepts, S.L. Peeran has emerged from the dying embers of 20th century Indian English Poetry like a veritable phoenix. Here, indeed is a poet with a sense of mission,” (A Call from the Unknown, 50) says B.M. Jackson. S.L. Peeran, a Judicial Member of Customs, Excise and Gold Control, Appellate Tribunal, Chennai, is a bilingual poet composing poems in English and Urdu. He has seven collections of poems to his credit. The poetry of S.L. Peeran is an outcome of his confrontation with the stark realities of contemporary society. He is uncommonly sympathetic and knowledgeable about man's faults. He is dolorous at the rapid growing capitalism, imperialism, individualism, communalism, tyranny, agony, dissatisfaction, poverty, avarice, corruption, exploitation, violence, moral degeneration, selfishness and profanity. He is well conscious of the lethal and unhealthy situations around him. His poems are a call to invoke in dead veins of man- spiritual light, wisdom, peace, truth, happiness, glory, universal brotherhood, devotion, beauty and goodness and to revolt against darkness, foolishness, war, inhumanity, egoism, selfishness, superficiality, ugliness, indifference and jealousy. Dr Shujaat Hussain observes:

“When he finds against human beings and what is dangerous for the country, he sits not idle; on the contrary, he becomes ferocious and fearlessly expresses his views through his poetry. His heart bleeds seeing the deterioration that is taking place in the country.” 2

The threads of love and kindness are torn and dissolved by misfortunes, hunger and diseases. Miseries, sufferings and humiliation are unable to affect the affluent. These surroundings make him dejected, and he cries:

“Shattered are the lovely dreams and uprooted
Oceans are now on fire; who will quench the thirst?
To whom shall they render their tragic tunes?
How to revive the dead spirits? How to redeem them!” (N.E. 8)

He feels that the time is wholly changed and mishaps occur each day, and dangers lurk everywhere:

“Life in a city fraught with dangers many,
At every corner, some devils asking for money
Time clicks, its seconds beckoning,
To a hazardous fearful journey!” (I.G.M. 24)

The poem ‘Ah Relatives’ is a satire on blood relations that boast of being his well-wishers, but at last, they ‘make us bleed and wounds all over.’ Whenever he tries to find solace and comfort, he finds only shattered dreams and mirages where nothing comes to be true. His heart becomes heavy, and his mind feels dullness on the callousness of man for each one where literate-illiterate, young- old and man-woman all are in lack of sense and shame and chaos is rampant everywhere sans the least touch of peace:

“Overflowing patients in hospitals, callous doctors
Government officials work with indifference, and unconcern.
Police turning their face away from picketing ‘mamools.’ (A.R.L.11)

Besides this, his poetry is par excellence in healing the wounds given by the extra modern modes of the man of the present millennium. He has thoroughly searched out the loopholes in civilizations, culture, spirituality, love, peace and salvation. Dr Manas Bakshi comments:

“Peeran’s probing mind explores several areas of human concerns and consternation and writes with such dexterity, sincerity and devotion that his poetry becomes vibrant, his expressions become candid. More so, because Peeran is not afraid of calling a spade a spade despite being a Govt. official.”³

He, like an aesthetic being, feels the presence of vain ephemeral desires, the root cause of all ills and tornados. They mar the charm of this world and the next. There is a gulf between man and civilization that can not be bridged without realizing God and his omnipotence beyond the literal meaning of existence. He believes in simple wisdom and meditation to feel the mystic

current in life. Now and then, Sufism can glance in his poems as he appears very close to every religion and wants to be one with the higher spirit. Dr C.L. Khatri says about his Sufism:

“For the poet, the goal of life is to be one in solitude and ‘to free forever of shackles of every kind, and he partakes into the glory of a teacher, saints and prophets.’”⁴

He invokes the man to be merged with God. In ‘Light upon Light-‘Noor’ he says:

“Utter His name, enlighten thy soul,
Mind eyes, sparkle, lo behold
Light upon light, for the final merger.” (A.C.F.U. 34)

Spirituality can vitalize the wretched because God does not differentiate between rich and poor. The presence of divine light is the panacea of all ills that makes man indifferent to all the hurdles and obstacles of life. In ‘Bliss Amidst Poverty’, S.L.Peeran shows the satiety and satisfaction of the poor:

“A divine light dwells
In our hearts
To console, give solace
To be at peace and in bliss.” (A.C.F.U. 34)

He finds that man should not spend his life in trifles of worldly desires and grieve in pain on not finding the cherished dreams, but he must surrender himself before the Almighty:

With deep devotion, I burn the candle
Of my life at His feet in total surrender.
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I am now left with no ill will of my own.
My master’s service is my main motto
I wish I were a dog to befriend HIM.” (I.G.T. 63.)

According to him, if man surrenders himself whole heartedly before God, the eternal light certainly help him in reducing the self.

He considers the religion of humanity as the supreme religion of the cosmos and demolishes the barriers of religious orthodoxy by bringing out the message of God from all religions, i.e. Christianity, Hinduism, Muslims, Sikhism and Buddhism for the betterment of humanity. Srinivas Rangaswami comments:

“When we approach Peeran’s poetry, we are on holy ground. With a pilgrim of deep piety, utter humility and sincerity, infused with pure love and compassion for all of mankind joyous in the certainty of faith that goodness and truth will ultimately prevail over darkness and evil, and ever blissful with a heart brimming over with yearning for union with the universal soul.” 5

Dejection and disappointment can be marked out in the poetry of S.L. Peeran but in spite of noticing so many pitfalls he is still optimistic to mend the torn cloth of humanity and civilization. He is hopeful for the glorious future:

“To be up and sing in chorus and harmony
Rejoice in the light of wisdom
In the learning in the elevation of mind and soul
The dark one, accursed devil vanishes in thin air.” (A.S.F.W 34)

In the poem, ‘A Cry of a Victim for Peace’, lamenting at the inhuman treatment of man, destruction of nation and growing crop of double talk, hypocrisy and falsehood, he gives the message of Ahimsa and Dharma:

“Shun thy enmity and illumine thy heart
With lofty ideals of Ahimsa and Dharma
To recreate a paradise on earth, here, here!” (I.S.W.13)

His is not a class poetry but a poetry in which he celebrates and gives the world and en masse. He burns with great sympathy and brotherhood for all, high and low, rich and poor, noble and vile etc. The human soul has immense possibilities of good in it which are brought out fully by the poet. His strong faith in the regeneration of humanity runs through his whole poetic work. Dr. R.K. Singh remarks,

“He is a firm believer in God, family, humanity. He stands for values like humanity, tolerance, love, faith, charity, respect, justice, freedom, peace, harmony, unity of God and mankind; promotion of education and culture and love of nature.” 6

His haiku and Tanka bear the same appeal to humanity and his insistence on moral values in life. His haiku cover the whole spectrum of human experience and emotions. Dr. K. Srinivas says:

“He writes haiku and Tanka with illumine vision. There is inner vibrancy, the matchless verbal incantations in his lyrics! They gleam as flames, intense and fine. They have visible brilliancy. They have deep poignancy. And there is passionate naturalness in all he writes.” 7

His versification is as unconventional as his language and there is a rare compatibility between his form and his themes. Sometimes the long unrestrained lines in its free flow captures in its

very form his spirit of humanity and harmony that Peeran breaths into his verses. Both his verse and his diction are suited to create the effect he aimed at, and to convey his message. Through his reflective, idealistic and spiritual poetry he is hoped to transform the very character of man, his follies, vices and unspirituality; and change greater than those caused by the longest and the bloody wars.

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