

“When Water Fails, Functions of Nature Cease, When Rain Fails, No Men Can Walk in 'Duty's Ordered Way” with Reference to Girish Karnad’s ‘The Fire and the Rain’

V.Suresh

Lecturer of English, S.S.M., Polytechnic College, Kumarapalayam, Tamilnadu

Abstract -- The present study aims to portray the real need of water to lead life. Today there are number of countries are unable to live a normal life without water facility. Water is actually the elixir of life. Everyone should use the water in limited according their need. Water may avail excess, but not in deficit. Gulf countries, some of the African countries appear as deserts and very difficult to lead a normal life without water. The place is not having water that is a desert. If the place is in water resource, that is a heaven for human survival. If human wants to realize water, he should be in the desert. The thirst for a man can be solved, but a thirst of animals, birds living in the forest is unsolved. Hence one can understand the need of water to survival. The title of the paper is taken from the greatest Tamil grandfather Thiruvalluvar’s ‘Thirukural’. He has written about the water in one of his ‘Kurals’ (double lined poem). He further says, if water fails, functions of nature will cease and if rain fails, no men can walk in regular duty. Girish Karnad has found the need of water, so he has written the play ‘The Fire and the Rain’ to people realize one drop of water. Scientist can portray water is the formula of H₂O. But ordinary man, common people, animals, birds, reptiles are depending upon the water and its usage. Karnad has immensely defines the fire sacrifice for rain in this play.

Index Terms: Need of Water, Fire Sacrifice, Indian Myth, Life sacrifice.

I. INTRODUCTION

Girish Karnad is known for great dramatist of Indian English Literature. Indian English drama has been so fortunate as poetry and fiction in Indian English because drama requires specialized skill and talent in selecting a theme which is presentable on the stage and in picking up a technique which appeals to audience. Karnad used that very well in his plays. Girish Karnad in the present have enriched Indian English drama through their contributions, there is no proper atmosphere for its happy growth today.

II. WATER THE ELIXIR OF LIFE

The present study aims up the important of rain and water. In this play Karnad has portrayed fire sacrifice to bring rain to the drought land. The king and his associates make this fire sacrifice in a mythical way. The fire sacrifice happens for many years. The sacrifice finishes at a time. The sacrifice brings here the rain to avoid human sufferings. The globe was a fire box in once upon a time. The rain came and filled the enormous dig which formed as sea and great oceans. Then new creatures were born since Ameba to last creature of man.

Water helped for forming new creatures in this globe. Sea was in the important role in evolution of life. Water is very important thing in the life. Man cannot survive without water. So, all the civilizations formed near by a river in the ancient period. C.V.Raman says, ‘water is the elixir of life’.

In human civilization fire and water placed very important roles. Man can live without fire but he cannot live without water. The present study analyses the important of fire and rain. The thesis aims up how far people suffer much without rain resource and water resource. To force, the important of fire and rain Girish Karnad has written the play ‘The Fire and the Rain’ a significant play.

III. FIRE SACRIFICE

The titles of the plays of Girish Karnad are relevant and reveal the main theme. The title of ‘The Fire and the Rain’ is apt and brings to light the main theme which is the performance of the fire sacrifice to propitiate Indra, the god of rain, for bringing rain to the drought hit land. The play is based on the myth of Yavakri and Parvasu from the ‘Mahabharat’. The

theme of the play centres round the fire sacrifice for bringing rain to the land.

The land has been severely hit by drought for the last ten years. So the King ordains the performance of a seven year long fire sacrifice or Yajna to propitiate Indra, the god of rains. In the play the Yajna is performed inside a sacrificial enclosure. Parvasu is assigned the task of performing the duties and responsibilities of the Chief Priest.

He is the eldest son of saint Raibhya creates tension in the play. Yavakri feels small. He thinks that Parvasu has become the Chief Priest by manipulation. His father deserved to be the Chief Priest. He says to Vishaka:

“I cried at the humiliations filed on my father. He was one of the most learned men in the land. Probably the most brilliant mind. But he was scorned while this unscrupulous brother of his grabbed all the honors.”

The fire-sacrifice is also the cause of jealousy and heart burni g between the father and the son, Raibhya and Parvasu. The King would have preferred Raibhya to be the Chief Priest. Since it was a seven year rite he thought “a younger man safer”. So the King appointed Parvasu the Chief Priest. Raibhya feels humiliated. He is jealous of his son’s elevation as the Chief Priest. He hates him. He tells Parvasu:

“So you measured my life-span, did you-you and your king? Tested the strength of my life line? Well the sacrifice is almost over and I’m still here. Alive and kicking. Tell him the swarm of dogs sniffing around my daughter-in-law’s bottom keeps me in good shape”

Vishaka, emphatically exposes her father-in-law’s jealousy and hatred against her husband, Parvasu:

“Something died inside your father the day the king invited you to be the Chief Priest. He’s been drying up like a dead tree since then. No sap runs in him. On the one hand, there’s his sense of being humiliated by you. On the other, there’s lust.”

Parvasu too hates his father. He intentionally kills him, but he tells his wife and brother: “In the dark, I-I mistook him for a wild animal.” The fire sacrifice also consumes Raibhya. Parvasu lays the blame of

fratricide on his younger brother, Arvasu and instructs him to make atonement for his crime. He wants Arvasu to be expelled from his participation in the fire sacrifice. He is ostracized, humiliated and insulted.

Vishaka, Parvasu’s wife, suffers because her husband leaves her alone to bear the anguish of separation from her husband during the seven year fire sacrifice. Her former lover, Yavakri, makes her an instrument of revenge on Raibhya and his son, Parvasu. Yavakri fornicates her and her lust-tormented father-in-law also rapes her during the long absence of her husband. The fire sacrifice is the root cause of her sufferings. Parvasu expiates by sacrificing himself in the fire sacrifice for fratricide. Arvasu fails to take revenge on him. He says:

“I lost, Nittilai. And Parvasu won. He went and sat there in front of the altar, unafraid and carried on with the sacrifice. I couldn’t destroy him.”

The fire sacrifice has been disrupted. Rain does not fall. Arvasu with Nittilai’s corpse on his shoulder goes into the burning structure. The fire dies out. Indra, who is pleased with Arvasu, appears before and persuades him to ask for anything he wants. Crowds request him to ask for rains but he wants that Nittilai be restored to life. Indra cautious him that if the wheel of time rolls back Parvasu, Raibhya and Yavakri too may return to life. Even those who died all over the earth at the same time as his family would also come back to life. The souls of Nittilai, Parvasu, Raibhya, Yavakri, Andhak and many dead people enter the stage silently and come close to Parvasu.

IV. HUMAN SACRIFICE

Meanwhile Brahma Rakshasa, who begs for his release, appears. Indra tells him that “the wheel of Time must roll back if Nittilai is to return to life. It must roll forward for the Brahma Rakshasa to be released. Arvasu will have to choose either the restoration of the life of Nittilai and others or the release of the Brahma Rakshasa. He pleads for his release and tells Arvasu that Nittilai, gentle soul, would have cared for him and would have “wept at the thought of my endless life in death. If you bring her back, you’ll have destroyed what made her such a beautiful person.” He adds that if Nittilai lives again, she will live a life as tormented as his. Arvasu

seriously requests Indra to release Brahma Rakshasa, who cries in triumph. The souls of Nittilai and others vanish into nothingness.

“It begins to rain. The crowds exclaim: What’s it? - You smell that? –Yes. Yes. The smell of wet earth. Of fresh rains. It’s raining. Somewhere. Nearby. The air is blossoming with the fragrance of earth. It’s raining-It’s raining-Rain! Rain!”

CONCLUSION

It is the selfless sacrifice of Arvasu that pleases Indra and consequently the rain begins to fall after ten years. Human kindness gets victory over personal love. Hence the study focused the important of water and rain. Hence Karnad stands as a versatile writer of literature and further he is considered a man of human resource in order to depict the great message through the play ‘The Fire and the Rain’.

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