

THE ALMIGHTLY AS SUPREME CONTROLLER AND REDEEMER OF ALL BEINGS IN RAJA RAO'S NOVEL: THE CAT AND SHAKESPEARE

Dr. Sangeeta Chauhan
Assistant Professor
Garg P.G.College,
Laksar Haridwar

Raja Rao is known as the religious, spiritual and philosophical indo- Anglian novelist in the whole international world. He is called a world-wide religious writer. His novel 'The Cat And Shakespeare' is like an Upanishad. Here Raja Rao Shows us the absolute power of the Almighty through mother cat relationship. This novel is written in the manner of the religious parable. Here the Almighty (god) is shown us as the supreme controller of the world and the good redeemer of all beings. The novelist also tells us that the human beings are subjected to ignorance and suffering. They are unaware about the supreme power of the Almighty.

The analogy of Shakespeare is worldly mayas. There are worldly mayas in all dramas of William Shakespeare. In The Cat And Shakespeare; Raja Rao shows the worldly mayas in the ration office. The story of 'The Cat And Shakespeare' is gentle, almost teasing fable of two friends- Govindan Nair and Ramakrishna Pai. The whole story moves round Govindan Nair, friend of the narrator. Ramakrishna Pai is employed as a divisional clerk in Trivandrum. He is 33 years old, lives alone in kamla Bhawan, a rented house in Puttanchantai. His wife Saroja lives far from him at Pattanur with her two children in her own ancestral home called Karitipura house.

There she has thirty-three acres of wetland and her family business to look after. She cannot remain far away from her home even for the sake of her sick husband.

Govindan Nair is Pai's neighbor. He is a clerk in the ration office no. 66 in Trivendrum. He is an astute and philosopher, who solves the problems of routine living with his extra ordinary commonsense. He is big tall and simple man. He lives with his wife Lakshamma, and sons Sridhar and modhu. Cats and kittens are the currency of Nair's talking in Raja Rao's novel 'The Cat And Shakespeare'. "Yes, Sir, the cat always meows, that is may nature, to say meow-meow." p.³²

His wife has some lands, and the rice comes in plentifully, otherwise it is difficult to like on forty-five rupees as month, a second clerk in the ration office no.66.

As the kitten totally surrenders itself to the care of mother cat, and the mother cat takes the responsibility of caring the kitten for its life. Like this a man should completely surrender himself to god. This analogy of cat-kitten relationship is known as Marjara-Shishu-Nyaya. It is described by Raja Rao in his novel 'The Cat And Shakespeare'. As Govindan Nair says to Ramakrishna Pai in The Cat And Shakespeare;

"Ah the kitten when its neck is hold by its mother, does it know anything else but the joy of the being held by its mother?" p.¹³

Govindan Nair believes in the total surrender of man to God. Although aware of his low status of a clerk in the ration office, he is altogether carefree, pure and happy because of his

registration to the will of god. He holds this faith in god not only for protection and grace but also for the joy it given him. The state of total surrender is a state of perfect happiness.

One day John, a fellow clerk of Govindan Nair in the ration office, brings the cat. He cuts jokes and presents a cat to Govindan Nair. In a world inhabited by corrupt persons, the cat is only savior. It can clean the ration office of the rats. Boothalinga Iyer the fellow of Govindan Nair is an orthodox brahmin. He does not like the cat but Govindan Nair loves to the cat. He worships her as a devotee worships his God. He loves her as a child loves her mother. The cat has a divine grace for Govindan Nair.

One day the cat sits on the head of Bhoothalinga Iyer in the ration office and he dies uttering 'shiva shiva'. Bhoothalinga Iyer despised the cat but the cat proved to be an agent of his death. Govindan Nair says Ramakrishna Pai to do his normal duties of life and to surrender himself to the mother cat (God) like the kitten (human-being) Govindan Nair says that they can attain the absolute by following the path of Bhakti-Yoga. Govindan Nair is a sadhaka, who is leading a normal life of social man but, he is above from any other normal human being. It is possible for him because he has faith in the mother cat. As Govindan Nair says in Raja Rao's novel 'The Cat And Shakespeare.'

"What is death to a kitten that walks on the wall? Have you ever seen a kitten fall? You could fall. I could fall. But the kittens walk on the wall. They are so deft. They are so young. They are so white. The mother cat watches them." p.⁶¹

Nair teaches Pai to do his duty and to surrender himself completely to the almighty without caring for the fruit of action.

Govindan Nair is arrested for accepting a bribe of one hundred and nine rupees. During the trial he convinces the judge that the version of the accused alone can be true. He convinces the judge with tears running down his big black eyes and answers in Raja Rao's novel 'The Cat And Shakespeare';

"Your lordship, I speak only the truth. If the world of man does not conform to truth, should truth suffer for that reason? If only you know how I pray every night and say; mother keep me at the lotus feet of truth." p.⁹¹

The Judge realizes that he can know the truth only by being it, as Nair says to the judge. Nair throws whole blame on his boss Bhoothalinga Iyer, who died. He brings the cat in the court to prove his innocence. The appearance of real cat first in the ration office to clear it of the corrupt rats and then in the court as defence witness to protect Govindan Nair, offers a fable appearance to the book. The cat escaped from shantha's hand and ran all over the court. Then it jumped straight on to the judge's table. The court clerk was at the file; ('Raja Rao 'The Cat And Shakespeare')

"The cat now jumped over to the table and sat. Usha came from the back, led by an attendant, and took the cat in her arms. The clerk indeed found the paper." p.⁹³

Bhoothalinga Iyer's signature is revealed by the sunbeam. The people in the court know this reality that Govindan Nair was innocent. He did not take bribery. He is not a sinner. And it was all happened by the divine grace of the mother cat (Goddess). As Govindan Nair remarks in Raja Rao's novel 'The Cat And Shakespeare';

“You no more find the truth in the Himalayas than you find it in the Indian Law Register. You may find it on your garden wall and not know it was it. You must have eyes to see.”⁹⁵

The cat jumps here and there and Iyer’s signature is revealed under another signature in the light from the ceiling as sunbeam. It means the light of the divine has to dawn on him (Nair). Through this divine grace on Govindan Nair, Raja Rao wants to say that man must consider himself a metaphysical entity to be happy because real happiness lies not in worldly acquisitions but in spiritual attainments. Raja Rao wants to state that the God is supreme controller of the whole world and he (God) is the redeemer of all beings.

The Almighty saves the life of Govindam Nair in the form of a cat. As the god sends always someone to defence his children (Human Beings). Like this the almighty sends the cat to save the life of Govindam Nair in the court. So we can say that God is the powerful controller of the universe and he (God) is the redeemer of all beings.

Work Cited

Raja Rao: *The Cat And Shakespeare: A Modern Tale of India* (Delhi; Orient paperback revisi edi-1996 P.32.)

P.P Mehta : *Indo-Anglian Fiction An Assessment* (Bareilly Prakash Book Depot, 1968).

K.R.Srinivash Iyengar *Literature As Sadhana* A Note on Raja’s *The Cat And Shakespeare*, Aryan Path, 6 Bombay, June 1969, 301-305.

Raja Rao ‘*The Cat And Shakespeare: A Modern Tale of Indian* (Delhi; Orient Paperbacks revi edi-1996)