

A study of the Poetic Art and Philosophy of Hindi poet Sachchidanand Hiranand Vatsyayan 'Agyeya'

VIPLAV KUMAR MANDAL

Asst. Prof. of English, Gangarampur College, P.O. Gangarampur, Dist. Dakshin Dinajpur
West Bengal-733124

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ABSTRACT: : Sachchidanand Hiranand Vatsyayan 'Agyeya' (1911-1987) was an extraordinary personality. To understand his genius we need to look into his poetry. They give a deep insight into his socio-mystic nature. A critic may also find suggestions of Buddhism in his pursuit for Truth. However, these are mere traits; 'Agyeya' surveys life here and hereafter. His surveilling temperament never sits in peace. His works are a penthouse flow down from where the water of love and humanity. The present paper is one such humble attempt to understand the quagmire of modern existence through Agyeya's poetic art and philosophy. Understanding Agyeya may seem a bit intimidating at first because of the inherent complexity of his philosophy. Translation of his 1967 poem *Kitni Navon Mein Kitni Baar* as **So often in boats many** is an effort to make the poet a little more familiar. It acts as the bedrock of this research paper.

Key Words: Translation, Self-actualization, Experience, Reconciliation, Hope, Society, Freedom, Globalization, Religion, Spirituality, Enquiry, Belief, Materialism

So often in boats many ("KITNI NAVON MEIN KITNI BAAR")

So often
in boats many
Did I come towards You-
O my splendid radiance.
In fogs, I struggled to discover You
but failed.
Lo! In the tiny sparkle behind the fog
I found You-
My undeciphered truth.
So often
did dazzling ketches drag me afloat
into
odour'd painful airs
of unfamiliar lands
where obscurities bare
were more obscured
by piercing illumination.
No halo no splendour
but blinding facts facts facts
thrown at me-

wrecked terrified dismayed
so often.
So often
in boats many
Did I come towards You-
O my splendid radiance.

At some point in our life, we start to question ourselves "who we are," "what this world is," "why are we here." Self-Actualization creeps in, and our soul compels us to discover our "being." The poem, forming the base of this study, has been translated by the researcher. The choice of the poem is not arbitrary though. "Kitni Navon Mein Kitni Baar" sights the angst from the bosom, locates existence in surrender. "Kitni

Navon Mein Kitni Baar" is subjective in tone but formal in tenor. On the other hand, it finds its voice in a deliberate singularity imposed on the subject "I". This *singular first-person feel* seems a little awkward when contrasted with the universal appeal and identification of the self in the Omnipotent. Technical study of his poems has not been attempted here. The poet, thinking in this manner, struggles to locate that ultimate truth which moves this world, that which lends life to everything. Every so often the poet finds a glimpse of that power within him and sometimes finds its suggestion extended everywhere. In such a state of existence, the poet often finds a kind of affinity between that power and himself. This realization (or actualization/association) is inarticulable. To put across his state of mind, his near epiphany, his blissful distress, the poet takes refuge in devices literary. During the Middle Period of Hindi Literature, Kabir; Jai Shankar Prasad, Nirala, MahadeviVerma, in the Modern (Chhayavadi or Romantic writers); and Agyeya, among others, in the Post-Modern Period have writings that serve as a conduit between the known and the unknown.

Emotions guide Agyeya. An experimentalist, he delivers to his reader his observation employing compelling and intoxicating words honestly. It is here that Agyeya the poet stands away from Agyeya the prose writer. Here he does not argue as he does in his novels. However, it does not mean that he will not contest his reader when sharing ideas. Generally, all poets and poetry convey and evoke thoughts sublime. Agyeya's are no exception. His verse attempts to fathom life and living along with its many problems. The poet's deep emotions are behind such poems. Though he refrains from a debate in his poems, he none the less uses figures of speech liberally to deliver his point home. The two poems considered and translated here may look like having a limited appeal. The conceptual aspect of life is a matter of study here. These are random pieces without any bias.

The poems translated and presented here are given with the single aim of understanding the thoughts touched upon by the poet and doing justice to the feelings associated with them. Comparisons and associations are welcome.

His poems are not assumptive. Assumptions are the conclusions we draw from the information we have at hand. If these assumptions are not discussed or checked for accuracy, they will cause conflicts. Agyeya's spiritual philosophy comes in here. He does not believe in general knowledge. He believes in *belief*. Not the *Information* others know and keep from us but the information hidden from everyone, just like the baby hiding behind a curtain. We can feel his presence just as the child feels ours. No matter what others say, we know the child will soon appear, basking in the glory of innocent bravado. He tells us to believe in our beliefs. The beliefs, consequently, become values about which we are comfortable to tell others.

Agyeya is an exceptional teacher though. His poems are experiences. Alternatively, to be precise, he mentions his experiences as an example of how our innate capacity for finding security is expanded and deepened; how a disbelieving part of the self is brought to life and conjoined to the believing self. As children, we have borne the scar of growth in some way or the other. The growth-wound inflicted by the wild world we encounter later on. This child grows with a mindset that carries the legacy of disbelief and antagonism. His ever-green wounds provoke him to surrender his child-self to an internal antagonist, and saboteur. He unwittingly accepts the world's view of him. He ends up believing his wounds are justified by his unworthiness. He sets out on a journey-eternally entrenching in his already clobbered and wounded self a lifetime of doubt. Where, then, do we search for healing? How do we reconcile with the unseen future? What strategies can we adopt to come out of this lurch? This confusion? Agyeya believes that healing rests in our relationship with one another and a shared commitment to higher goals in the face of doubt. There is a palpable force of healing that reaches out to the multitudes in the form of a divine halo-the eternal light of life and hope. It then leads us from despair to hope-a mantle of divine grace.

It is true that Agyeya belongs to the greatest poetical genii of India. It is, however, astonishing that he was able to combine so much passion and sentiment of love, so much alliteration in language, that often resounds as pure music in our ears, with such a delicate and yet artificial a form. It is so challenging to bring into translations the brilliance of language that they can reproduce its charms just partially.

These poems throw up the vital issue of the nature and function of the intellectual. This socio-cultural crisis has brought about a split between emotions and aesthetics, between social ideas and human values. Conformist intellectuals live securely in smugness, adopting unfathomable social drivel and withdrawing from reality. The cooption of intellectual life by a class-centric society marks the decline, if not the suppression, of man in a commoditized and bureaucratized society. Agyeya wants this class to supersede their ivory tower state of existence.

An individual existing in a cocoon of "I", "me", "mine," should possess the attributes of commitment and risk, boldness and vulnerability. Crises hold the seeds of creation in its womb -the binaries of crisis and creation incubating together. One who seizes the potential hidden in the crisis will be able to shape a new reality.

This rampant capitalism, a burgeoning middle class, a slowing economy, a creeping intolerance, a terrorist challenge and a growing *voice* in the world has made Agyea all the more relevant to us. Man is intolerant of neighbor's happiness than about his unhappiness. This intolerance acts as a catalyst which big corporate houses welcome to coax the intolerant to buy things by any means is the reason that Americans are well known for their shopping sprees. Ambition and dissatisfaction have driven us to spend more than we should. Existentialists like Agyea, have shown us the way towards a rational way of living. We have realized that before the hungry tide of globalization, we are using nature to serve our endless, needless caprice. We have become more and more devoid of the milk of humanity. The nature-centrism in his poems brings a fresh whiff of respite to the lost souls. Just wonder how relevant he is today! The teeming millions are looking for an answer to come out of this crisis of civilization. This crisis has serious implications. It has warped and altered the path of happiness and accelerated emotional aging. Materialism, monetary affluence, and status mislead us. The search for an exact definition has ironically undefined our existence. Now is the time for personal transformation. A self-striving will lead us to insight, which in turn will lead us to freedom. They, whom we looked up to as examples, failed us. They betrayed an entire generation of followers. Religion has waned in almost every country. A virtual movement based on personal seeking (Facebook, Twitter, and other social networks) has been rising steadily. Through these platforms, we are trying to fill in the vacuum of our insatiable confused self and exposing our hollowness.

Agyeya's philosophy comes handy as a talisman to fill in this vacuity. It leads us to real personal freedom. This then leads to self-belief. Self-belief, then, helps us to comprehend our situation, take control of it, and accept opportunities with all fairness, express love, compassion, and camaraderie. An exponent of the path of self-inquiry or *Atma-vichara*, on the lines of Rahul Sankrityayan, Agyea believed that the spiritual seeker through Atma-vichara or self-inquiry attain Self-realization. Reflecting on the question "*Who am I?*" and tracing the thought to its source through deep meditation the *self*, will eventually realize that because of ignorance he falsely identifies *self* with *the body*. Eradication of the false notion of 'the self and body through Self inquiry is the goal of meditation. What remains then is the pure Eternal Self.

"AGYEYA" can also be spelled as "AJYEYA" or "AJNEYA."
