

Prose

Study of Poetry Free from Difficulty

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Electronic equipment all over the world have become the medium of expression in recent times. The use of pen and papers has been reduced to a certain extent in some cases. The electronic medium can communicate a thing from one corner of the world to another in an instant. Creative and critical writings today can be taken to the readers without giving them the form of a printed book or a magazine. Without belittling the importance of electronic medium in terms of its swiftness of communication and rapid popularity, I believe that print media will, for ever remain integral to human culture and civilization. The limitation of my acquaintance with the electronic media might be one reason for my belief. Another reason is my rapport with print media since my childhood. There is a third reason. If the invisible electronic media faces any disaster most unexpectedly, its treasure might get irretrievably lost. In spite of expert opinion on its safety and permanence, my fear persists that our knowledge, thoughts and ideas will be endangered by any unforeseen crisis faced by Google.

I felt something inexpressible like this at the time of inaugurating the bilingual online magazine *Poetry without Fear* on April 30, 2022. To whom do the title of the magazine refer regarding fearlessness? This does not refer to any fear for any individual, organization, or the displeasure

of the government which might lead to taking revenge upon the poet. Freedom from fear refers to freedom from difficulty in a poem resulting from personal associations of the poet and to make communication with readers easier.

So long poetry was related to collective life, poetry folk or elite, did not cause the fear of difficulty in the readers. But the dissociation of the individual from the collective life led to the poet's dissociation of sensibilities communicated in terms of simile, image and all other references and such personal associations in a poem offered resistance to the readers. Civilization changes mode of living and makes man more individualistic, lonely and indifferent to collective life. Internalised thoughts and emotions of a poet cannot be dismissed away as a trifle but the poet's mode of expression makes difficult the understanding what the poet intends to communicate. Internalisation and private associations may become, however, accessible to readers in course of time. But the poets who intend to hide what they think and feel and use difficult and far-fetched similes and images make poetry not only difficult but obscure. It is precisely this kind of poetry that rouses fear in readers towards poetry. Words which carry personal experience of the poet may add to obscurity at times. Even T.S. Eliot was referred to as the 'foot note' poet by critics at the early stage. But he did not always use obscure similes and images. Moreover, readers later became familiar with his poetic style and accepted his poetry. Jibanananda, the Bengali poet, to convey the appeal of the eyes of Banalata Sen, used the image of the nest of bird instead of a fish or the petal of a lotus like the Sanskrit aestheticians. There was no reason to believe that such a simile would be accepted by the readers at first sight. As time passed in the readers began to realise that the eyes of the beloved for the poet were what a nest was for a bird, i.e. security and shelter. Such initial difficulties disappeared along with the growth of education and civilization. But the poems of those who use similes and images to hide their emotions from others and to preserve them exclusively for themselves are bound to be not only difficult but obscure.

This online magazine has been launched with the objective of doing away with the fear for poetry. But we should keep in mind that behind each literary and cultural movement, the social condition and attitude to life and the world are at work. In recent time, the changes have been so rapid that what happened yesterday cannot be compared to what happens today. Even then the nine different explanations of human thought and emotions given by the Indian aestheticians may change their forms but the core remains invariant. Depending on social changes and individuals, expression of human awareness might differ, but the awareness remains original. If an individual does not feel and empathy with the rest of the universe, nothing creative or thoughtful is born within and such flitting thoughts and emotions do not look for a way of expression. Those who write for name, fame and money cannot be expected to come close to man. Kahlil Gibran said that soul advised him and taught him to listen to such things which was not created by any tongue or voice.

We should remember that we read poetry not to learn any theory. We read poetry with an unexplainable love for man and nature. We therefore, share the joys and sorrows of man. We love poets for such innocent tears and laughter. The word poet may include all those who have universal creative power. They can see man and nature with inner sight, understand them, feel empathy with them. If we can find verbal equivalents for such states of mind in terms of words, phrases, simile and image, the poem will naturally appeal to sensitive minds. The poet then

becomes a human self close to man. Achievements well as expression of the poetic self depend on the poet's ability to find that path. Those who can love man and nature with an open mind and heart and a keen awareness, similes and metaphors will enrich their mode of expression. If a poet fills his heart with human sympathy, the poet will be able to communicate with his readers without making his poems difficult and making himself free from fear as well as. I feel that this online magazine will create such a congenial environment for poetry and fulfill a need.

Translated from Assamese by **Ananda Bormudo**.

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