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SUBRAMANIA BHARATI AS A PATRIOTIC POET

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ABSTRACT

Bharati was an ardent Indian nationalist, an impassioned advocate of social reform, and a pioneer of the Freedom movement in early twentieth-century South India. He belonged to the *extremist* party of the Indian National Congress, and worked alongside the great leaders of the Freedom movement, including Tilak, Lajpat Roy, Bipin Chandra Paul, and Sri Aurobindo, from the North; and G. Subramania Iyer, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, Subramania Siva, and Surendranath Arya in the South. Bharati's contribution was unique – as a journalist and writer, his powerful words kindled passion and patriotism in the hearts of the Tamils. A true visionary, he anticipated freedom and independence for the three hundred million Indians of his day, at a time when the entire world was dominated by British Imperial force and a decline in British power seemed unthinkable. For Bharati, freedom meant freedom at every level – political, social, and personal – and for every individual, irrespective of caste, colour, gender, or religion. The present article shows the spirit of Bharati during his struggle for freedom and encourages the readers towards knowing of India and Indianness.

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Subramania Bharati is one of the great patriotic poets in our country. He hails from Tamil Nadu, was born at Ettiapur in South India in 1881. He started writing poems when only 7. His Tamil poems were quite interesting. Impressed by his writings the king of Ettiapur conferred on him the title 'Bharati' when he was just 11 years old. He was made the king's court poet. During short span of 39 years he wrote patriotic poetry which shook the nation. He boldly stationed himself at the field of action and poured at his poems of patriotism and vision. Through his poetry he exhorted his countryman to fight for the freedom from the century old tool of the British.

Most of his patriotic poems were published in the most popular Tamil Daily, 'Swadesh Mitram', 'Chakravartini', a monthly journal and 'Bal Bharata'. His first published book of poems was called 'Songs Of Freedom'(1908). In addition to writing patriotic poems, translated some of the Vedic of devotional poems, translated some of the Vedic hymns, wrote editorials to a daily, 'India'. Like Aurobindo he moved from the revolutionary politics to Shakti Tatva and Vedantic Humanism.

Bharati's poetry expressed a progressive, reformist ideal. His imagery and the vigour of his verse were a forerunner to modern Tamil poetry in different aspects. He was the forerunner of a forceful kind of poetry that combined classical and contemporary elements. He had a prodigious output penning thousands of verses on diverse topics like Indian Nationalism, love songs, children's songs, songs of nature, glory of the Tamil language, and odes to prominent freedom fighters of India like Tilak, Gandhi and Lajpat Rai.

'Bharat Our Land', is one of the important patriotic poems of Bharati that expounds patriotism, rich in symbolic connotations and profound in its spiritual content. It captures the imagination of readers, creates Mantrik effects in the listener. The reputation of "She is Peerless, let's praise her" uttered in adoration is admirable and memorable.

The Indianness of his poems is noticeable not only in the choice of his poetic material, diction and imagery but also in his adherence to Indian aesthetics in the opening stanza in itself.

The mighty Himavat is ours  
The generous Ganga is ours  
The Sacred Upanishads are ours  
There's no equal anywhere on the earth.

It projects the India as a whole before consciousness, a unified vision of India in physical beauty, grandeur, intellectual and spiritual powers. The rhythmic flow is noticeable in the poem.

The poem is blended with both past glorious of Bharat and present vision of India.

Gallant warriors have lived here,  
The divinest music has been heard here,  
Of hoary antiquities Bharat,.....

The poem beautifully presents the emotional intensity of the poet. It deals with varieties of subject matters from geographical features to great people and to reality. The title itself suggests that the past wants to tell something about his mother land, thus when we read the poem we feel proud to be an Indian.

'Salutation to Bharat' is another prominent patriotic poem written by Bharati. The poem serves the best example for her abilities as a poet of freedom. In the poem the word 'this' a demonstrative pronoun captures the beauty of the land. It focuses itself on the poet's commemoration towards his mother land. There is a rhythmic flow in the poem, the lines

"Mother I bow to you  
Mother I bow to you"

Shows the emotional intensity of the poet. He praises the land with beautiful lines like 'light of knowledge', 'grew in wisdom', 'the truths of the spirit', etc. The poem deals with three stanzas, presents the life of beauty, music, joy. Our attention is drawn to the countless great ancestors who flourished the land with their noble thoughts, mother land, girlhood that is pure virgin, young woman, spiritual truths and we notice how harmoniously all these are combined, merged into a single poem. The rhythm of the song intimately corresponds with the heartbeats of the poet and the reader too.

A reader is compelled to be lost in the music, the rhyme, the melody, the joy of the song by considering the following lines,

"This, this is the land that gave us birth  
And the light of knowledge  
This is the land where our mothers lisped this first words  
And grew in wisdom  
Mother I bow to you  
Mother I bow to you"

Writing at time when the country was suffering under the yoke of foreign rule, one could expect a different approach to poetry. The poet feels proud to be a citizen of this land and poet asks may I not praise this land? This is a beautiful expression of patriotic feelings.

The poem 'Jaya Bharat' is another poem which celebrates the joyous and hectic life of a patriotic. The patriots get out of anguished mind and shriveled body to cry from the depths "Mother, we bow"

The poet says,

“Victory to Bharat  
Victory to Bharat”

Which shows the craze of a patriot to free his land from the clutches of British. The following lines also show the quality of a real warrior ,

“Be victory that is,  
Or defeat and death  
We stand united  
And raise the chant, mother we bow”

This poem differs from the last discussed poems in its content and form, in the sense it is patriotic and symbolic. The repetition of word “victory” itself suggests that the poet is writing this poem in thirst of victory. The poem has the musical quality. It upholds the political values and strengthens the minds of a reader. Writing like this poem when country was suffering under the clutches of foreigners, is reality, an encouragement song to true patriots. There is weight age in every words like,

“Men,women, Gods  
Of Aryavarta  
Sing in chorus  
The exultant chant, Mother we bow”

We can observe that the poet is in full mood while writing these poems. He expounds the patriotic feelings in a magnitude or splendid way.

“Freedom, freedom  
Is the talk of the town  
It is certain now  
That we are all one  
No one inland or sea  
Shall bind us in slavery  
Only to God Almighty  
We bow down meekly.”

Bharati wrote a poem in praise of Mahatma Gandhiji and said: Long m,ay you live, Gandhi. Gandhi after seeing him, told that Subramania is a gem of the country to be safe guard and nurtured.

Bharati, the poet of freedom and the laureate of the spirit as Parashakti were really one and the same person. He was a patriotic as well as universal man, the worshipper of Bharat, the Mother as well as Shakti, the supreme world creature. To win national freedom no less than to achieve the soul’s liberation, the recipe was the same: banish fear, serve her with single minded devotion and make total surrender to her.

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