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Sahitya Akademi

meet the author

Haraprasad Das



Awards

- Moorti Devi Award, 2012
- Gangadhar Meher National Poetry Award, 2009
- Sarala Puraskar, 2008
- Odisha Sahitya Akademi Award, 1993
- Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad Award, 1990
- Rajbhasha Samman, 1996
- Utkal Samman, 1993
- Pathani Samant Samman, 1995 and many others

Haraprasad Das made an immediate, if overpowering, impression as a poet with his first anthology of poems *Alokita Vanavasa* (Illumination in Exile) published way back in 1978. Cast in the surrealist-symbolist mould this book marked the beginning of experimentation in form and content which eventually catapulted him to the stature of a major poet in the history of modern/post-modern Odia poetry. Haraprasad is one of the most distinguished idiom-makers of New Indian Poetry that broke away from the Euro-American tradition of modern poetry and crafted for itself a host of idioms in the vibrant Bhasha-tradition of India. He writes principally in Odia, his mother tongue, and in English. Odia is a classical language of India spoken in the eastern part of the country in the state of Odisha, by forty million people. Haraprasad is principally a poet, but considering his contribution to Odia prose, translation works, and ethnic historiography can be counted as one of the few complete writers in contemporary India. He has to his credit 15 works of poetry (including two huge epics *Desh* and *Vamsh*), 5 works of prose (including monumental history of the Odia people), 4 works of translation (Srimad Bhagwat Gita, Togore's Gitanjali, Rubaiyat of Omar Khayaam, and

poetry of Arthure Rimbaud), two works of literary criticism (exploring modernity in tradition) and regular columns in the major newspapers of Odisha. He anchors a challenging television programme in National Television (Odia) on matters of concern to the public space.

His two critical works *Adhunikatara Parampara* and *Adhunikatara Samakala* where he rediscovers the comparative experiences of modernity in Odia and European literatures are regarded as seminal texts. His two major poetic works *Desh* and *Vamsh* are in the epic mode. While *Desh* explores the loss of home in the borderless world, *Vamsh* recreates the *Mahabharat*. His most outstanding prose work *Odia Jatira Jeevan Katha* is a monumental work that interpretes the ethno-cultural space of the Odia community life.

Haraprasad has been at the forefront of new writing in *Odia*, having set new standards and newer heights in poetry, prose and literary criticism. He received prestigious *Moortidevi Award* of the Jnanpith for his epic work *Vamsh* in 2012. He received the *Sahitya Akademi Award* for his collection of Odia poems *Garbhagriha* in 2000. An English translation of the work was published by Sahitya Akademi in 2003 under the title *Dark Sanctum* with forwarded by Keki N Daruwalla, a celebrated Indian-English poet. He also received the Gangadhar Meher National Poetry Award in 2009 and Sarala Puraskar in 2008.

He is a distinguished alumnus of the Ravenshaw college (now university) and the Utkal University of Odisha having obtained a first class Master's Degree in Political Science with specialization in International Relations and International Law. He joined the civil service of India at the early age of twenty two and served the government of India in many important positions at the highest level, including that of the Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General of India, Administrative Member of the Central



Administrative Tribunal, and the Chairman of the State Administrative Tribunal at the level of a Judge of High Court. In a distinguished career in civil service spanning four decades, he remained responsible for mainly for the administration of Public Accountability Institutions and contributed to the multiple initiatives of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institute (INTOSAI) at the global level. He also served the United Nations Organisations like ILO (Geneva, Switzerland), ARPLA (Bangkok, Thailand), HABITAT & UNEP (Nairobi, Kenya) and the European International Organization for Prevention of Chemical Weapons

(Hague, Netherlands) as an expert and consultant. He was also a member of INTOSAI Expert Committee that laid down the guidelines for Privatisation (Warsaw, Buenos Aires). After demitting office he worked briefly as the Pro-Chancellor of KIIT University and headed a green field project for setting up a Global University in Odisha.

A poet, thinker and ethnic historian Haraprasad Das is regarded as the most important public intellectual of the state, and is highly regarded for his originality and integrity.

His latest experimentation in poetic form is introduction of the Gazal as an idiom of new poetry.

-Rohinikanta Mukherjee



Receiving Sahitya Akademi Award for his poetry collection Garbhagriha (The Dark Sanctum) in 2000 from the then Akademi president Ramakant Rath

Receiving Rajbhasha Puraskar from President in 1996



Published Works

Poetry (in Odia)

Alokita Vanavas, 1978

Mantrapath, 1991

Garbhagriha, 1993

Duratwara Bhrama, 1994

Artha Sahita Satruta, 1996

Khooni Apsara, 1998

Desh, 1999

Sthala Puran, 2000

Aparthiba Prema Kavita, 2001

Vamsh, 2007

Harmoniumre Todi, 2007

Nastikar Bhakti Kavita, 2008

Poetry (in Hindi Translation)

Door Ki Bhram, 2001

Garbhagriha, 2001

Prarthana Ke Liye Jaruri Shabd, 2003

Aparthiv Prem Kavita, 2006

Desh, 2002

Vamsh, 2010

Poetry (in English Translation)

The Dark Sanctum, 2001

Poetry (in English)

Shiva in Manhattan, 2012

Fiction (Odia)

Lubdhakar Tiniprahar, 1980

Essay & Literary Criticism (in Odia)

Adhunikatara Parampara, 1995

Adhunikatara Samakaal, 1997

Sabhyata O Sahitya, 2009

Translation into Odia

Gitanjali of Rabindranath Tagore (from English), 2005

Shrimad Bhagwad Gita (from Sanskrit), 2006

Omar Khayaam's Rubaiyat (from FitzGerald's English), 2007

'Season in Hell' of Arthur Rimbaud, 2012

Ethnic History (in Odia)

Odia Jatira Jiban Katha, 2010

Odia Jatira Jiban Chinta, 2016



Receiving Sarala Puraskar from Sashi Tharoor in 2008



wife Sandhya receiving the National Award for acting



young Haraprasad with wife and infant son

Katak

I grew up here amidst the smouldering temple bells of evening and muffled calls of muezzin stoking the slow fire of dawn and boxy palanquins quietly carrying the bride across the anodized river of rust.

As the multi-tongued flames lick the hibiscus at fringe, a bazaar awakens to its residual life and I return home at last to stay.

The fruits sellers on the wayside build pyramids of oranges and the ageing pickpocket waits to board the dusty town bus just once.

in ILO, Geneva (1985)

ଗର୍ଭଗୃହ

ଏତେ ଅନ୍ଧାର କାହିଁକି ଘର ଭିତରେ ?
କାହିଁକି ଏତେ ଅନ୍ଧାର ?

ସକାଳ ବି ତ ଭାଟି ଭଳିଆ ଏଠି
ନେରୁଖୁଣ୍ଡକୁ ଆଉଟି ଠିଆହେବାର
ସେଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ଧାରୁଆ ଠାଣି,

ସେଇ ଗୋଟିଏ କଳାକନାରେ
ମୁହଁ ଓ ମୟୂଖ ଯୋଡ଼ିନବାର
ଭୟ ସବୁଠି,

ଦୂରରୁ କିଏ ଡାକିଲା ଭଳି
ଶୁଭିଗଲାଣି ନାଦ,
ଭାଗିଗଲାଣି ସବୁ ପଥରର
କଫାକ ଭପରେ ଟିପା ଲହୁର,

ତଥାପି,
ଏତେ ଅନ୍ଧାର କାହିଁକି ଘର ଭିତରେ ?
କାହିଁକି ଏତେ ଅନ୍ଧାର ?



हरप्रसाद दास की नयी काव्यकृति 'देश' इस अर्थ में महत्वपूर्ण है कि यहाँ पहली बार देश की अस्तित्वमूलक संरचना को एक आकार दिया गया है—ठोस, ज़िन्दा और रंगारंग आकार। यहाँ देश कोरा भूगोल नहीं, बल्कि भारतीय अस्तित्व के आधारभूत सरोकारों के अर्थ में प्रयुक्त है, जिसका फलक मनुष्य के धुँधले प्रारम्भ से उसके अज्ञात भवितव्य तक फैला हुआ है। केवल उसके विस्तृत आकार में ही नहीं, अपनी बिम्बमयी सघन संरचना में भी यह काव्य पूरी समकालीन भारतीय कविता में एक अनूठा प्रयोग है, जो वृहत्तर पाठक समुदाय को लम्बे समय तक आमंत्रित करता रहेगा और बेशक परितृप्त भी।

—केदारनाथ सिंह

अगर कविता में भाषा वहाँ आती है जहाँ वह पहले न गयी हो तो ओड़िया कवि हरप्रसाद दास ने देश जैसे लगभग परित्यक्त और अविचारणीय मान लिये गये अभिप्राय पर जो लम्बी कविता—शृंखला लिखी है वह सघमुच चकित करनेवाली है। उसमें देश की पदार्थमयता, ऊर्जस्वित से लेकर निहायत घरेलू ब्यौरों में उसकी ऐन्द्रिय उपस्थिति, उसकी असामान्य निजता और लगभग वैदिक आभा ऐसे विन्यस्त और प्रगट हैं कि आश्चर्य होता है। मेरे जाने न सिर्फ हिन्दी बल्कि किसी भी भारतीय भाषा में 'देश' को लेकर ऐसी विलक्षण कविता दूसरी नहीं है। हमें हरप्रसाद दास का कृतज्ञ होना चाहिए, उन्होंने इस साहसिक उद्यम से एक तरह हमें अपना देश पुनरायत्त कराया है।

—अशोक वाजपेयी

हरप्रसाद दास आज हमारे कुछ उन दुर्लभ कवियों में हैं जिनके यहाँ एक ही वृत्त पर सूर्यमुखी के दो फूल स्थित होते हैं—एक प्रकाश की ओर, बाहर और एक अन्धकार की ओर, भीतर। उनकी कविता बाह्य और आभ्यन्तर के परस्पर सम्बोधन और आवागमन की कविता है, जीवन के इन्द्रिय-अनुभूत तथ्यों तथा मानव-मन के निविड आभासों के परस्पर गुम्फन की कविता। हरप्रसाद दास ठेठ ओड़िया कवि हैं क्योंकि उनकी हर कविता के नेपथ्य में ओड़ीसा की गूँज है। यही स्थानिकता उन्हें ठेठ भारतीय कवि भी बनाती है और जब इस भाव-संकुल स्थानिकता का संयोग आधुनिक बौद्धिकता तथा विडम्बनाबोध से होता है तब एक नयी परिघटना की तरह हरप्रसाद दास की कविताएँ अपना आकार ग्रहण करती हैं।

—अरुण कमल

... so different from the ones I have read. The craft and the precision in these invocative poems humbled me ...

- Jayant Mahapatra

Haraprasad Das's poetry is a meeting ground of many elements: poems where the romantic and the cerebral meet halfway, poems with multiple meanings and hence open to different interpretations, poems where faith and agnosticism jostle and fight with each other.

- Keki N. Daruwalla

Garbhagriha, the award-winning collection of poems, is noted for philosophical insights which effectively combine emotional fervor and highly expressive, unusual metaphors ... the work is deemed an outstanding contribution to Indian poetry in Odia.

- Sahitya Akademi Award citation