

The Reluctant Anchorite: The Inverted Price of Sainthood in R.K. Narayan's *the Guide*

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Abstract: *Hindu saints have often renounced the material society. They are known as sadhus swamis, guru and rishis. Some Hindu saints are provided god-like figure being observed as incarnations of God Shiva and God Vishnu- this may happen after their Moksha.*

Various men have combined the words 'saint' and 'sant' which is a 'Sanskrit' word referred to devotional Bhakti poet-saints of two categories: Vaishnava and Nirguna.

Sainthood is a position given not by officials of the temple, but by supreme authority of Universe. Saints are real worshippers, not the worshipped.

Keywords: *Saints, Malgudi,,Mangla, Fast, Moksha*

1. INTRODUCTION

India is a nation of saints, priests, quacks who, while professing to commune with a higher actuality continuously keep their sight on mundane and physical concerns. This provides elevation to an inclination towards social parasitism in a definite kind of people who desire to enjoy the best results of life without doing labour to achieve them. While the worths of non-activity and non-action meant to develop a realization of indifference to the society and its consequences, its ideological implication is clearly to empower a non-active receiving of the status quo. This magnitude of values, is skillfully illustrated by Narayan in his much hailed novel, *The Guide* which is structurally more intricate than any other of his novels which usually have an upright temporal framework. Two cycles of incidents create main structural norm of the novel: the hero Raju's upliftment and decline in the society of common observation and his career outside as the strange ex-prisoner and culminating as the popular Saint. The purpose of the novel is revealed through the narrative technique which does not disclose itself in a chronological order but by artistically manipulating transfers in time and narrative voice. The events in the life of Raju are described in a disunited order which exhibits his life after his release from the jail and eventually his earlier life is disclosed in flash backs.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Raju is ideally forced to frolick the role of a pious man whereas really he is an ordinary standard person with all his inducement and materially involvements intact. It is by an irony of situation that Raju is created an anchorite and is compelled to act self-mortification so that the rains may happen to stop the drought and famine situations prevailing in the village of Mangala. Thus, through the character of Raju the author exhibits a picture of the recluse by keeping him against the traditional views of a holy person. It may be debated however that Raju does not alter when he gets that there is no medium out for him from the great pedestal on which he has been established by the people of village. Till the last part of the novel, however, he becomes the same sort of brilliant person who lives on his clever conversation and judicious observation. His ultimate breakdown as a consequence of his fast puzzles more difficulties than it solves. But illustration of the novel's ending is entirely put in wrong cause there is no symptom that the rains come.

The novelist is attempting to highlight in his own characteristic way that Raju finally gains salvation. His aim is to present that Raju, by sacrificing his life for the sake of society, is released from his earthly involvements. He advises that Raju attempts to believe that he is enduring the fast honestly but that does not happen spontaneously. It only becomes when he observes that there is no opportunity of

achieving any food, so why not provide an opportunity to the villager's faith and attempt its efficacy? For Raju, it is not a chance of free option become a saint, he is only a reluctant holy man. It is absolutely accident. His demise is also purposeless because it cannot develop the fierce circumstances of the village nor can it make safe that the famine situations will not prevail in the future.

Piety, sanctity, chastity genuineness of emotions, passions, self-offering, aloofness and meditation are the ideals and worth's which are usually connected with the life a sincere recluse, but these ideals are highlighted in their inverted level in Raju who fosters unholines and impurity of emotions instead of piety and purity. Raju is very much involved to the material society. Instead of moving in for self-surrender and tackling social requirements of villagers, he is concerned about his own physical survival. When he is told of a grave fight among the people of the village, he desires that:

The best thing for them (the villagers) would be to blow each other's brains out. That keep them from bothering too much about the drought.

The novel describes the development of an honest person it a fraudulent man who finally attempts to turn into a pure human being. From the starting of his life Raju has been a romantic person. Raju wishes to carve out a bright career for himself. William Walsh states about Raju:

It is Raju's fate to be the product of other people's convictions. In his nature there is development to the point of extremity that exists in all of us to some degree the quality of suggestibility to the desires of others. Plasticity of response in most of us is limited by an unyielding core of self. It operates only so far as the bias of nature allows. But in Raju it is the centre of his nature and an influence at each phase of his add career.

(Walsh 116-117)

Raju's affection for adventure leads him to become a renowned tourist guide. He develops in rapidly altering Country near the railway station of Malgudi observing the advancement of region. He is too ambitious to uplift higher in his life. He is disinterested in selling the things in his father's shop. His father did not sent him to a school but he attempted to literate his son. Raju frolicked with his torn books. With the growth of the railways, Raju's father achieved a new stall on the platform of the station. After the demise of the father, Raju began to study books.

Raju is able to impress people and it creates him famous far and wide as Railway Raju. He understands:

It is written on the brown of some that they shall not be left alone. I am one such, I think.

Traveller from all places insists on his services and he works everything for them without any personal advantage. As an honest guide he understands that:

How two persons were interested in the same thing? Tastes, as in food, differ also in sightseeing. Some people want to be seeing a waterfall, some want a (oh, ruin they grow ecstatic when they see cracked plaster, broken idols and crumbling bricks), some want a god to worship, some look for a hydro-electric plant, and some want just a nice place, such as the bungalow on top of Mempi with glass sides, from where you could see the horizon a hundred miles away, and observe wild game prowling around.

(Narayan 55-56)

Though Raju is in the service of tourist guide, yet he is not dedicated to his profession. He has no interest in showing the places to the travelers:

Don't imagine that I cared for elephants personally anything that interested my tourists was also my interest. The question of my own preferences was secondary.

(Narayan 57)

His main purpose as a guide is to become popular. He achieves fame for his skill of narrating the travellers' tales about the strange places. He has no information and knowledge of art history and architecture. He is not direct in his handling with the people. If he were sincere to himself and to his duty, he ought to have told 'no' to the men who inquired about the places he didn't learn anything about.

Raju entangles with other men's matter that brings disgrace to him. He is attached to Rosie, a tourist's wife who comes to Malgudi. Her husband Marco looks like a space traveler. Raju is enthralled by the unique attraction of Rosie. His hold on the actuality of life loosens. His liking for the beautiful girl is in similar symmetry to his dislike for the man. When Raju takes Rosie to see snake-dance, he has watched how Rosie moves her entire body in dance.

Rosie exhibits the creative need through which one can accomplish oneself. On the other hand, her husband Marco is a cold scholar. He is selfish and self-centered archeologist who searches delight in discovering the buried wealth's of nation.

He is so committed to his business that he completely ignores his human surroundings:

If a man has to have peace of mind, it is best that he forgets the fair sex.

(Narayan 63).

He writes about his adventures in the form of *The Cultural History of South India*. In comparison to Marco's high national standing, Rosie belongs to a family of traditional temple dancers. She is an educated woman, took her Master's Degree in Economics, she has a relish for life but gets Marco callous and always busy with his business.

Rosie and Marco have contrasting tastes and background. If Rosie exhibits the ever-present creative classical culture of country, Marco shows another appearance of Indian culture: The scholarly culture of Marco who gets his fundamental interest in historical memorials. He is married more to the invention of art and history than to a living and enthusiastic girl with feelings and emotions. On the 'Peak House':

She ran like a child from plant to plant with cries of joy, while the man looked on with no emotion. Anything that interested her seemed to irritate him.

(Narayan 67)

Raju is attracted towards Rosie in the very first meeting. Raju thinks Marco to be an outstanding man and hateful fellow at the same time. His sympathies are for Rosie. She was beautiful and attractive. Raju observes their disputes on every petty matter. Raju knows that this man will leave her to droop in her hotel room.

Rosie does not adjust well with Marco because she is a lady of different taste. Raju, who is young enough to have a yearning for a female partner, comes close to Rosie and begins to look after her choices.

(Singh 91)

Raju always wishes to be in her company and to appreciate her for dancing ability. He wants to present the pain of his heart and observes his life blank without her existence, but his choice for woman was wrong as this woman herself was a dreamer.

Marco wishes to treat Rosie as a lifeless tool. Raju immediately understands the cause of their fight is: her whole movement being so much against the fixed factors of bone and muscle, walls and floor.

(Narayan 112)

Raju's attraction towards Rosie is so powerful that the mere actuality in his life and awareness is Rosie. All his psychological strengths are now turned to keep her within his fold, and makes her happy. Marco is angry by the excessive interference in his married life. She becomes close to Raju with a wish to flourish her skill of dancing. Raju does not take interest in other tourists since Rosie's arrival and has transformed into a concentrated guide of a single family. Sometimes Rosie realizes that Raju is attempting to possess her and take benefit of her loneliness. She states about Marco:

After all, he is my husband. I have to respect him. I cannot leave him there... After all... Is this right what I am doing? After all, he has been so good to me, given me comfort and freedom. What husband in the world would let his wife go and live in a hotel room by herself, a hundred miles away? ...Is it not a wife's duty to guard and help her husband, whatever the way in which he deals with her.

(Narayan 105-106)

Rosie is a new, literated and Indian woman who thinks the place of her husband next to God. Raju is too clever to understand to dominate Rosie's desire for dancing. She informs Raju about classical dance. Marco comes to realize about Rosie's liaison with Raju and his high morality does not permit him to keep relations with Rosie anymore. Marco says to Rosie:

You are not my wife. You are a woman who will go to bed with anyone that flatters your antics.

(Narayan 134)

Rosie comes to seek assist from Raju who is amazed to watch her on his threshold. There is the tension in Raju's family because of Rosie's belonging to a family of traditional temple dancing. Raju's mother and Raju are separated from eachother:

The mother is a typical traditional Indian woman who is obsessed with the thoughts of caste family position and blind faith in and obedience to husband.

(Goyal 167)

The novelist's basic concern is to highlight a contrast between Marco's cold intellectualism and Raju's warm emotionalism. Raju engrosses into the pretty romantic world of music and dance so much that he doesn't bother even for his social accountabilities. When Raju's creditor comes for his money, Raju informs him that he does not:

like be bothered by anything. Living with Rosie under the same roof was enough for me. I wanted nothing more in life. I was slipping into a fool's paradise.

(Narayan 143)

Raju, earlier a tourist guide, now transforms into a career guide for Rosie. Rosie's only concern now is her dance:

She was a devoted artist, her passion for physical love was falling into place, and had ceased to be a primary obsession with her.

(Narayan 145)

Raju confirms to launch Rosie's dancing career with a new name for her, Nalini, which sounds more appealing:

Rosie is a woman of strong emotion and passion. She has a passionate ambition of becoming a dancer of name and fame.

(Singh 68)

Along with Rosie's career Raju's position also alters. William Walsh's view of their current situation is as follows:

From being primarily personal it becomes primarily functional or official Rosie has great talent as a dancer and with Raju's eager support she applies herself rigorously to develop her art. As she succeeds, her gift gains recognition. Raju's status changes. He is less the lover, and more the manager, trainer and agent. Rosie or Nalini as she becomes in the theatrical world blooms into a great artist and Raju thrives as a successful entrepreneur. They enjoy a period of immense success, and the money parties, drink and acclaim that go with it.

(Walsh 124)

Raju faces the results of his deceitful deeds. Instead of receiving the parcel of the jewellery box, he achieves a warrant for his arrest on a formal accusation from Macro, on the charge of forgery. When Rosie is informed about his interest, she presents her concern, but her opinions in certain matters that one has to reap the fruits of one's own deeds. After Raju imprisonment, she performs an independent way as a creative dancer. Raju comes to know and realizes about Rosie :

Neither Marco nor I had any place in her life, which had its own sustaining vitality and which she herself had under-estimated all along.

(Narayan 199)

Raju has been fond of adventures in his life. First, in his duty as tourist guide, his relations with Rosie, the events of forgery and imprisonment, he has received pleasure in the exciting observations of life. In imprisonment he lives like a man belonging to that place and in spite of his habit of laziness and passivity, he operates hard and is later on, free from the jail for his ideal demeanour.

After his release, Raju realized that his past life cannot be lived again. All the old relations are cut off and he has to begin life anew. He finds himself clean-shaved after paying hard earned money of imprisonment and is looked like a king. He arrives a village named Mangla.

Raju is seen sitting on a granite slab cross-legged perceived to a holy person by an ignorant villager, Velan. Because of his old practice of instructing others, he assists Velan to alter his rebellious sister's opinions by creaking her consent to the marriage with the cousin and Velan out of esteem, bends to touch his feet. Raju, however, does not lower the dignity of practice. He states :

I'll not permit any one to do this. God alone is entitled to such a prostration. He will destroy us if we attempt to usurp his rights.

(Narayan 15)

Raju begins a new adventure with sharp wit in his life. He realizes that he is gaining the stature of a saint by his witty statements and clever conversation like this:

If you show me a person without a problem, then I'll show you the perfect world.

(Narayan 14)

Raju gets himself uplifted to the level of a holy person by the general and unsuspecting villagers, who are the stuff and who can't imagine of any probability of anything false or evil connected with the Saints:

He had gradually come to view himself as a master of these occasions. He had already begun to feel that the adulation directed to him was inevitable.

(Narayan 17)

Raju receives their presents gracefully and is satisfied with his current position because he was never practiced for difficult deeds. When Raju's conscience does not permit him to deceive the innocent villagers, he attempts to run away from there. One day, he conceals himself behind the bushes but he hears villagers's talking that he is a great man he may move anywhere; he may have various things to do. Sometimes these saints can go to the Himalayas just by an opinion. He has abandoned the world, he does nothing but contemplate. Observing villagers's sentiments and blind belief in him and his own passivity to act anything, Raju confirms to live there. He begins preaching the children and adults. In this way he gets an opportunity to spread his opinions on life and divinity before the boys. He thinks it his duty and is astonished at the amount of intellectuality.

Like Rosie gains success and reaches to the top in dancing. Raju too establishes himself on the height of sainthood. Before getting this height of sainthood, he finds himself fumbling with the mere externals-the showmanship and performance needed to appear like a holy saint. He realizes that :

his spiritual status would be enhanced if he grew a beard and long hair to fall on his nape. A clean-shaved close-haired saint was an anomaly.

(Narayan 47)

Raju searches sainthood in the merit to create mystifying proverbs and only growing a beard:

He seemed to belong to the world now. His influence was unlimited. He not only chanted holy verses and discoursed on philosophy, he even came to the stage of prescribing medicine; children who would not sleep peacefully at night were brought to him by their mothers... people brought him their disputes and quarrels over the division of ancestral property... He could hardly afford a private life now.

(Narayan 48)

His compelled sainthood creates him reach a stage of timelessness:

He realized that it was unnecessary maintain a calendar... His beard now caressed his chest, his hair covered his back, and around his neck he wore a necklace of prayer beads. His eyes shone with softness and compassion, the light of wisdom emanated from them.

(Narayan 79)

The role of saint not only gives Raju with sufficient living, but also pervades him with self-affection. He is hypnotized by his own power of speech and dreams himself growing in stature.

Raju manages himself to the enforced character of the saint and his followers also ply him systematically with presents and food. Drought comes there which makes fear in the heart of villagers. But they have distinct opinions about the reason and treatment of their mishap. Raju, according to his nature attempts to fetch comfort to the villagers. He says such type of things are very general in life. They must be optimistic for the best but:

a situation was developing which no comforting word or discipline of thinking could help. Something was happening on a different plane over which one had no control or choice, and where a philosophical attitude made no difference. Cattle were unable to yield milk, they lacked the energy to drag the plough through the furrows; flocks of sheep were beginning to look scurry and piebald, with their pelvic bones sticking out.

(Narayan 81-82)

People start failing the zeal of natural human affinities and become self-centered. The sellers of stall become more money-oriented and attempt to get advantages by increasing the rates. The people are afraid and gloomy phantom of fear, can be observed in their eyes.

The people come to inquire for Saint's assistance for they believe that this elevated soul will diminish their fear and unhappiness and solve their troubles. They create a reckless inquiry for some soothing belief.

What's the world coming to? You must show us the way Swami.

(Narayan 83)

The drought simulates difficult and fearful dimensions when villagers and the cattle begin to die. Raju always observes villagers grievancing about others and quarreling with one another for the gratification of their fundamental requirements, though his wants of food and refuge are still being given to him. The wrong and deceitful sainthood can marked in his wish to run away from this hard circumstances:

He wonders whether he should not simply run away but is afraid that he will be caught and brought back. There is nothing for him to do except go through with fast.

(Sundaram 78)

He sees himself no more interested in villager's matters and without observing for their situation, he believes in escaping to some other place, untill the situations are common in the village. So long as there was polite sailing, Raju was interested in villager's lives. Now when there is commotion and

upheaval everywhere and villagers are not getting any solutions to their problems, he wishes to abandon them alone in sorrow. His surliness and inhumanity comes to the power and he needs the best thing for the people would be to blow each other's brains out and according to him that would be better medium to keep them from worrying too much about the drought.

When things start to slip out of his grip, Raju adopts the Gandhian technique. After being told of the riotous fight among people of the villagers, Raju inquires Velan's brother to inform the villagers that he doesn't wish them to quarrel like this. Unless they are generous, he will not eat. But the message note of the Saint is communicated to the people in garbled way. He informs the villagers that Saint will not eat food any more because it does not rain and he needs that there should be no disputings anymore. The sorrow stricken people find relief from this and start to compare Raju with Mahatma Gandhi, knowing him to be their protector as he is supposed to be performing repentance to soothe the rain-gods.

The people have superstitious faiths about the force of fasting to cause rain. But he unconscious that he has been trapped in the net of his own quickness. He waits for his meal as usual. Watching the crowd of people arriving toward the temple he imagines of the bags full of flour and food being fetched to him. He informs them the significance of eating healthy food and moving on to complete belief in God's goodness. He is, however, absolute intrigued when he searches that the people have fetched nothing for him except their thankfulness for his repentance and say:

Your prayers will surely be answered and save our village. Every one of us in the village prays night and day that you come through it safely. Your penance is similar to Mahatma Gandhi's. He has left us a disciple in you to save us.

(Narayan 93)

Raju sees himself tongue tied and fails to protest. He has always enjoyed an easy moving life. At every stage in his life, he has desired to get benefit for himself by dominating people. At first he used to entertain the travellers by informing them unheard, fairy tales about various places of their interest and later on by creating Rosie's skill a profession to mint wealth. Similarly with him as a feigning spiritual guide. In his character of Saint he dominates the innocent villagers. He is more concerned about his physical survival than about handling villagers' social requirement. His own conversation on the rains ensnares him now. He said:

When the time comes; everything will be all right. Even the man who would bring you the rain will appear, all of a sudden.

(Narayan 96)

3. RESULT

He recollects the description of the ritual. The fasting protector has to:

Stand in knee-deep water, look to the skies, and utter the prayer lines for two weeks, completely fasting during the period-and to the rains would come down, provided the man who performed it was a pure soul was a great soul.

(Narayan 95)

He remembers his mother's statement also:

If there is one good man anywhere, the rains would descend for his sake and benefit the whole world.

(Narayan 97)

Raju on the contrary, he is a sinner and transgressor who has been transformed into a saint only because of the unsuspecting villagers.

Narayan appears to advice here that every human being has some noble feelings which are never ceased and therefore a sinner can also change into a Saint. But we observe that Raju, a typical roguish hero has always been interested in adventure and confirms to move through the repentance as a new enterprise of hazard. Formerly he was busy in physical adventures but later on at the conclusion, it happens a spiritual adventure when for the first time in his life he realizes seriously:

If by avoiding food should help the trees bloom and the grass grow,
why not do it thoroughly.

(Narayan 213)

Although the want of food makes a spiritless sensation in Raju and he feels faint yet metaphysically he is energetic and it provides him power to be the physical problem. As he is engrossed in the act of gaining spiritual power, the earthly and mundane delights appear secondary and neutral to him.

While Raju is honestly engaged in doing penance, the common folk pass their time in jovial spirit. Observing the protector's repentance the editor of a journal comes to interview him. But Raju's spiritual adventure and his discovery for individuality remain a kind of hallucination when he faces his final demise. On the ultimate day of his fast, he feels spiritless and is unable to fix his own feet. To continue his sainthood and the holiness of his fasting, he denies to eat any medicine. He is assisted by two persons to take an upright position in the small scrap of water. He starts to realize as if it were raining in the hills. It is clear that Raju states so because he is in level of deception and conjuring trick:

The rains he sees (or thinks, he sees are indeed, pathetic hallucination
of a starving imposter.

(Ram 135)

Otherwise it is a illustrious sky. Raju however made a faith in his brain that his penance would definitely be purposeful and worthfull and so he claims that the rains to be coming. His self-sacrifice remains useless at the last because they could neither eradicate the famine situations nor the scarcity of villagers. But it provides abundant opportunity for the representation of Narayan's opinion of emancipation and salvation from involvement of material world.

4. CONCLUSION

It is clear from this description that a definite amount of philosophical uncertainty in *The Guide* culminates in producing a sense of the inversion of values because Narayan has faith in philosophical implications of the Hindu value order which in its basic structure reserves a feudal taste, also throws a critical light at it from the modern bourgeois corner. This apparently culminates in depiction of definite repugnancies innate in the antagonizing accesses of feudal and bourgeois points of view. While at the stage of abstraction the Hindu values have a fixed perennial attraction in their real reflection they show the values generated by the prevailing social order at a peculiar level of historical advancement. Thus the world of ideals obtains incessantly entangled in a dialectical intricate dilemma.

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