



## Indian Renaissance: With Special Reference to Goswami Tulsi Das

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P. P. Mukherji is of the opinion that the 19th century cannot be accepted as the only Renaissance.

Prof. Namvar Singh says that the real Renaissance took place in Bhakti period. The knowledge which was in Sanskrit in the Vedas, was made simple by Bhakti poets in local dialects. So the renewal took place. Entire country became one cultural unit. He is against as 19th century to be called as Renaissance. He called 19th century as 'Abhigyan Kal'.

According to Dr. Ram Vilas Sharma, Renaissance took place in Bhakti period but in 19th century, Navjagaran took place. He says that 19th century should be called as period of 'Navjagaran'.

But whatever it may be, there was certainly a reform, a consciousness and cultural movement brought out by the Bhakti poets. The character of Bhakti movement was different in different states but the catalytic agent was the same. It was the submission of the individual self to the higher self. When a lower self loves a higher self, it is Bhakti. Participation of the people was at a larger scale. They were not educated but their appeal was very large.

Goswami Tulsi Das was one of the pioneer poet of the Bhakti movement. His works are aimed at Bhakti as well as social ethics. His epic 'Shri Ram Charita Manas' is the greatest epic in Hindi language depicting the family and social ideals. He illustrates the legend of Ram's victory over Ravana and at the same time puts forth different social and human ideals by means of different characters.

His epic 'Shri Ram Charita Manas' is divided into seven units as Kands namely Bal Kand, Ayodhya Kand, Aranya Kand, Kishkindha Kand, Sundar Kand, Lanka Kand and Uttar Kand. He narrates a beautiful story of victory of good over evil. He uses couplets, sorthas and chaupai and shlokas as the form of poetry. Though he uses simple words, simple language, the appeal is very large. His aim is to address Indian audience and give them moral message.

In 'Bal Kand', he starts with the prayer of 'Shri Ganesh', 'Saraswati', 'Guru', 'Shiva' and 'Shri Ram'. He describes the tyranny of Ravana and birth of Ram in Ayodhya. He puts an example for the respect for the teachers, father, mother, brother and friends. He describes the bravery of Ram and how he kills the giants who disturb the yagna of Rishi Vishwamitra. Then he describes 'Dhanush Bang' and marriage of Ram with Sita. He illustrates Ram's devotion to his father King Dashrath's words and how happily he accepts 'Vanvas' for himself and leave the empire of Ayodhya for his brother Bharat. He tells his step mother Kaikeyi:

सुनु जननी सोई सुत बडभागी. जो पितु मातु बचन अनुरागी.

means O mother, that son is very fortunate who obeys the words of his father and mother.

In this way he illustrates an example of son's obedience to his parents. Then he describes Bharat's devotion to his brother Ram and how he defies the empire of Ayodhya and is ready to accept vanvas in place of Ram. But Ram persuades him to go back and teaches him about 'Raj Dharma'. He tells Bharat:

राज धरम सरबस एतनोई. जिमि मन मांह मनोरथ गोई.  
तुम मुनि मातु सचिव सिख मानी. पलेहूँ पुहूमि प्रजा राजधानी.

means the religion of king is inseparable with him like the wishes are inseparable from the mind. You should obey the teachings of guru, mother and minister and protect the mother land, the public and the capital.

Bharat returns to Ayodhya and begins to live in Nandigram near the river Saryu and at the same time, conducts the affairs of the administration of the Kingdom of Ayodhya.



Ram meets the tribal in the forest. He meets several rishis. He meets Atri and his wife Ansooya. Ansooya teaches Sita about the virtues of a good woman. Ram puts forth as an example of untouchability and cast free society when he meets Shabri and eats her berries. He says that he does not care about cast, class etc. He says,

कह रघुपति सुनु भामिनि बाता. मनहु एक भागती कर नाता.

means Ram tells Shabri that he does not care about cast, untouchability and loves those who love him irrespective of the class and caste.

The friendship between Ram and Sugriva is an excellent example of true friendship. He tells Sugriva:

जे न मित्र दुःख होंहि दुखारी. तिन्हहि बिलोकत पातक भारी.  
सखा सोच त्यागहूँ बल मोरे. सब बिधि घटब काज मै तोरे.

means those who do not care about their friend's pain, and sufferings, it is very sinful to see them. O sugriva, don't worry and please cast off your worries. I would do everything for you and would complete your tasks

Ram kills Bali. When Bali questions him about the reason to kill him, Ram says:

अनुज बधू भगिनी सुत नारी. सुनु सठ कन्या सम ए चारी.  
इन्हहि कुदृष्टि बिलोकई जोई. ताहिं बधे कछु पाप ना होई.

means O bali, son's wife, brother's wife, sister and sister in law, these four are like a daughter to everybody. Any one who has either foul thoughts or foul deeds to these four, there is no sin to kill him.

Then Sugriva sends Banar Sena for the search of Sita led by Hanuman, Angad and Jamwant. Hanumana meets Ravana and tells him to return Sita. Hanuman tells him to save his empire from the wrath of Lord Ram. He sets ablaze Lanka, meets Sita and then returns to Ram. Ram attacks over Lanka with his Banar Sena. He tries to negotiate with Ravana and sends Angad as his messenger. Ravana does not succumb and the war begins. Ram kills him. Sita returns to him and they all come back to Ayodhya. Ram is coronated and Ram Rajya returns to Ayodhya and instead all over the India.

Here Tulsi talks about the Ram Rajya. He says,

राम राज्य बैठे त्रैलोका. हर्षित भये गए सब शोका.  
दैहिक दैविक भौतिक तापा. राम राज्य काहुन्ही नहि ब्यापा.

means, during Ram Rajya, everybody was happy and prosperous and there was no sadness. No body suffered from any type of physical, spiritual and mental pain.

He talks about the qualities of gentlemen.

निज परिताप द्रवान्ही नवनीता. पर परिताप संत सुपुनीता.  
पर हित सरिस धरम नहिं भाई. पर पीड़ा सम नहिं अधमाई.

means, butter melts form its own heat but the good people melt by other's pain. The best religion is to do the welfare of others and the worst thing is to give pains to the other.

Not only Tulsi talks about the ideals and didacticism, he also talks about the evils of the contemporary society as well.

झुठइ लेना झूठइ देना. झुठइ भोजन जुंट चबेना.  
जो कह झूठ मसखरी नाना. कलियुग सोई गुनवंत बखाना.

means the people in contemporary society had the practice based on false notions. They were busy in false and unhealthy practices. That whoever was false and notorious was regarded as the virtuous person. He further tells,

जाके नख अरु जटा बिसाला. सो तापस प्रसिद्ध कलिकाला.  
मानहि मातु पिता तब लो. अबलानन दीख नहीं जब लो.



means that person who was dressed as Sadhu having long hairs, long nails, was regarded as saint though he might not have saintly qualities. Persons respected and cared about their parents only till they were married. Later they cared only about their wives.

Tulsi says that the truth is the greatest religion.

धरम ना दुसर सत्य समाना. आगम निगम पुरान बखाना.

He goes on to say that compassion is also one of the greatest religions.  
He describes about Raj Dharma. Ram explains Raj Dharma to Bharat and says:

मुखिया मुख सो चाहिए खान पान कंहू एक.  
पालई पोषई सकल अंग तुलसी सहित बिबेक.

means leader should behave like mouth in the human body. Only mouth eats but it distributes the nutrients to the respective parts of the body according to their needs. Similarly a king should take care of each and every citizen of his country.

He also illustrates that one should keep his words:

रघुकुल रीति सदा चलि आई. प्रान जाई पर बचन न जाई.

means it is the convention of Raghukul that they keep their words even at the cost of their lives.

To conclude, there is every element in Tulsi's Ramayan which may be called as characteristics of Renaissance. There is every aspect of human life in his epic. He talks about man and woman relationship.

जिय बिनु देह नदी बिनु बारी. तैसेहिं नाथ पुरुष बिनु नारी.

means a woman cannot live without man as their can be no body without life and no river without water. He also talks about the strength of the true love.

जैहि के जैहि पर सत्य सनेहू. सो तैहि मिलइ न एहिं संदेहू.

means if anybody has a true will power, he is sure to get his goal.

Bhakti period may be called as the period of the true renaissance. Goswami Tulsi Das was also among them. He tried to show the society their shortcomings, bad practices and presented before them an ideal way of life to live. Ram is an ideal man. He is also called 'Maryada Purshottam'. By his wonderful epic, the Hindu society had a magical transformation. So that period is the Renaissance period in the true sense.