
Anita Desai's Characters: A Paradox of Robin Sharma's Doctrines – An Overview

Dr. Ramya Chelliah,

Assistant Professor, Yadava college for Men, Madurai, Tamilnadu.

ABSTRACT:

Robin Shanma is an inspirational personality who has published the best – sellers all over the country focusing on delivering powerful, wise and practical lessons that would teach us to develop joyful thoughts and live life to its fullest. Anita Desai is an exquisite writer whose novels are female – centric where her heroines are mostly the victims of parianchial, patrilineal and father dominated Indian family. She has potrayed both kinds of womens – those who are symbols of growth and change, those who are powerful means of withdrawal, regression, decay, death and destruction. This article shows us number of Robin Sharma's doctrines that would help anyone approach life with greater courage, balance, about ance and Joy. Mrs. Desai's heroines, would have been 'Joy Personified' individuals if they were aware of these principles.

"Mind Management is the essence of life Management . . . Most people just don't realize the enormous power of their minds"

Robin Sharma (TMWSHF 43)

Through the words of Julian Mantle, Robin Sharma, a much sought – after speaker, influential blogger and social media celebrity narrates an inspiring fable providing a step-by-step approach to fulfill one's dreams an live a life of greater courage, balance, abundance and joy. According to his convictions, the garden is a symbol for the mind. One should guard one's minds and care for its thoughts just like how the gardeners cultivate and nurture a fertile and rich garden so as to blossom without letting the weeds take roots and elude the deep inner harmony. The worries, anxieties, agonies, self – created fears, bleeding over the past and fretting about the future are like the toxic waste that most people put into the fertile garden of their minds every single day. In order to live life to the fullest, one must stand at the gate of the garden and let only the best information of positivity to enter and curb even a single negative thought that would block the enormous potential of their minds to carry out the magic and get all that they want in life.

As all lemans under the sky look for, Anita Desai's protagonists thrive for a contented, balanced and rewarding life. To put it straight forward, everyone wants to be happy and merry but how closes it happen? What has to be done to fulfill all that one wishes from life? Robin Sharma gives a quick answer,

"The secret of happiness is simple : find out what you truly love to do and then direct all of your energy towards doing it" (TMWSHF 55)

Mrs. Desai's Characters, rather than focusing on all the good in their lives, are remaining captives of their pasts. They either worry about their financial problems or failed relationships or their lost – happy – childhood or brood over trifling matters and they merely exist instead of truly savoring the magic of life.

Maya, for instance, in **Cry, the Peacock** Keeps longing for a happy romantic life with her husband Gautama that her head throbs and spins as she lays flat on back through the long afternoons. Instead of putting her leisure times into a purposeful efforts, she becomes mournful of being lonely and keeps upsetting herself that she never sleeps all night. When Gautama takes effort to take her out amidst his hectic schedule, she blames him for taking her to such a stifling party. She considers the whole evening wretched. Gautama, the practical person, accuses her of being so sensitive and wonders how she felt so miserable that she is left exhausted and miserable about the evening. He coolly puts,

“I might have been bored, yes, but, really, wretchedness is a strong word for the normal, everyday mediocrity a man puts up with all his life” (CTP 58).

When she opens up that the sight of a pregnant woman makes her burst out. We could sense how miserable the childless Maya feels suffocated emotionally. She is observed with her lone livers, seclusion, unfulfilled womanhood, debilitating husband, and over – ridden death phobia and thereby she becomes a neurotic. She fears an unnatural death of either her or her husband as per the words of an albino astrologer. This self – created fear torments her and she hallucinates the sight of the albino astrologer and horrifies herself. Robin Sharma rightly puts it,

“If you have become a negative thinker, this is because you have not cared for your mind and taken the time to train it to focus on the good” (TMWSHI 51)

Maya’s negative thoughts all together put her into deep alienation and seclusion from the normal life that she drives herself to an extent of killing her husband in a fit of maddening cry.

Voices in the City Presents, Monisha, an intelligent and sensitive girl with oetic knowledge. She feels stifled in the over – crowded joint family that she hardly finds privacy to do a single task of her wish. Any married woman would definitely encounter certain problems in the initial stages of their married life. What makes the difference is the way each person handles the trivialities and experiences.

Even the loud and continuous reciting of the lessons by the little children in the house shrieks her ears and puts her off. She considers the recitation thoroughly maniac and soughts ways to escape from the place. The very house of over crowded Calcutta City itself gives her a feel of imprisonment as she has enjoyed the solitude of jangles and aqueous shadows before she came into her iron bared house of her husband. Quite unhappy that she has not given birth and the open talks by her family members about her insides – her ovaries, the fallopian tubes, insult monisha as if they were laid bare to their scrutiny. Robin Sharma makes so much sense by quoting,

“By controlling the thoughts that you think and the way you respond to the events of your life, you begin to control your destiny” (TMWSHF 46)

He suggests to stop judging events as positive or negative. Rather, one should just experience them, and learn from them. Every event offers lessons and those lesson fuel one’s inner and outer growth without them one would be stuck on a plateau.

Monisha, an alien to all sharma’s positive life principles, fails to consistently start conditioning her mind in order to translate every event into a positive and empowering one. She chooses to be

a prisoner of the past than becoming an architect of her future. Her desolate condition is revealed as she muses,

“But I have no faith, no alter native to my confused despair, there is nothing I can give myself to and so I must stay. The family here and their surroundings tell me such a life cannot be lived – a life dedicated to nothing – that this husk is a projection from death. Ah yes, yes, then it is a choice between death and mean existence and that, surely, is not a difficult choice” (VIC, 121)

All Monisha’s frustrations all together lead her to self-hate which in turn causes ‘self destructive urges’ and Monisha Commits Suicide.

“Courage allows you to run your own race. Courage allows you to do whatever you want to do because you know that it is right” (TMWSHF 97)

Sita in **Where Shall We Go This Summer**, Unlike Maya and Monisha, takes a courageous step forward and decides to escape to her homeland, an island of isolation. She never fits into the crowded joint family frames and matches. With none of the family members wavelength. Sita grudges that women in that house has nothing else to do except eating and digesting.

“The whole house seemed to be a kitchen – Kitchen smells failed each corner of it, everyone talked of the meal to come; if meals were not being eaten, then they were being cooked, or cleaned up after, or planned” (WSWGTS 44)

Even the kitchen odours and sounds irritate sita that she chooses smoking instead of eating. Being a mother of four children and heavily pregnant for the fifth time, she feels rebellious around everything around her. The headlines about war in Vietnam and pictures of women weeping, articles about perfidity of Pakistan turn her off that she feels the world as a place where destruction is a true and inevitable element of life. Robin Sharma stresses on the importance of quality of one’s thinking that determines the quality of one’s life.

Sita, instead of blaming everything around her, should have cultivated a strong and disciplined mind through practicing cheerful and energetic thoughts. Robein Sharma, through yogi Raman’s philosophy in his inspiring fable, insists a technique called ‘opposition thinking’ which says,

“... Under the grand laws of Nature, the mind can only hold one thought at any one time . . . when an undesirable thought occupies the focal point of your mind, immediately replace it with an uplifting one.” (TMWSHF 62)

Therefore, when Sita Comes across so many irritable thought, she should have replaced those gloomy thoughts with cheerful ones. As Robin Sharma says, Sita would have lived life to the fullest if she cared her thoughts as he would have cared her most prized possession.

Maya, Monisha, Sita and so many other characters of Anita Desai’s fiction, spend their days in the chaos of crisis. The readers could notice that even though they hone done very little physical labor, all their worrying leaves them totally deflated by the end of the day. It is definitely true that Mr. Sharma Says,

“A Worrysome thought is like an embryo : it start off small but grows and grows. Soon it takes on a life of its own.” (TMWSHF 64)

In a nutshell, Mrs. Desai depicts her female figures as victims of patriarchal, patrilineal and father dominated Indian Family. She is ultimately a winner of portraying her women as powerful means of withdrawal, regression, decay, death and destruction. But, Robin Sharma, the much sought – after motivational speaker and writer, puts it that it is in our minds that we would our lives. By controlling one's thoughts, one can control one's destiny. If Anita Desai's heroines have guarded their minds like gardens, they would have achieved their life's purpose as they have dreamt of.

WORKS CITED

- i. Sharma, Robin. **The Monk who sold His Ferrari**. Mumbai Jaico Publishing House, 2003.
- ii. Desai, Anita. **Cry, the Peacock**. New Delhi : Orient paperbacks, 1980.
- iii. Desai, Anita. **Where shall we Go This Summer**. New Delhi : Orient Paper backs, 1982.
- iv. Kapur, Pronuilla. **Love, Marriage and Sex**. Delhi : vikas, 1973.
- v. Desai, Anita. **Voices in the City**. New Delhi : Orient Paper backs, 2005.