Chapter IV

Psychological Images
4 Psychological Images

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4.1 Introduction

The Present chapter is planned to undertake a critical study of the psychological images in Ezekiel’s poetry. It is found that Ezekiel, being the poet of most contemplative turn, seems to have used, the images of psychological strain in an ample number in his poetry. Basically the psychological images are divided into the images like visual images, sound images, smell images, taste images, touch images, body images, muscular images etc.

The world of the human psyche, of the internal nerve centres, of the brain and the mind, is often explored by the poets in this matter. A common traditional image explaining the process of self-realization is the rising of the ‘Kundalini’ or serpent power, purifying the various nerve centres from the base of the spine to the brain in its uprise. This imagery is used by Sri Anand Acharya, Sri. Aurobindo, Puran-Singh, and Paramahansa Yoganada. In addition to this, the psychological images involve various psychological preoccupations of people, their desires, disappointments, conflicts, elations, projections, fears, insecurities, doubts, jealousies, hatreds, needs, etc. referring to them to illustrate, the hopelessness of the human condition bereft of self-realization.
Images play a vital role in explaining the inner meaning of poetry. As V.K. Gokak (1987:72) rightly says, "The inner meaning of poetry is embodied in its suggestive, figurative or imagistic language. Inner meaning is closely related to the expression of moods and attitudes of the poet. The inner meaning, moods, attitudes, vision all these are 'conspicuous' by their absence." Apart from this, there are two main views on poetic imagery. For psychoanalytic critics, images in poetry stand for the realities of the unconscious mind. For other critics, they are certain figures of speech that cover all types of metaphors and similes. While talking about how the psychological images generate R.S. Varma (1972:4) rightly observes:

"For Freud, The sources of artistic imagination lie in unconscious motives. The unconscious is a dark abyss from which arise the inspirations and visions of the artist. Poetry is not entirely a matter of conscious reference, it employs images arising from the unconscious. It is often composed in the moments of self abandonment and is allowed to throw out its contents."

4.2 Disturbed Mind

4.2.1

The conjugal life of man and woman is portrayed in Ezekiel's poetry, which has the touch or a feeling of despondency and gloom, this gloom is obvious when in the poem 'The Old Woman' the persona observes:
“She let her husband **die of too much dying.**”
(Ezekiel, 1989: 24)

Ezekiel bears a highly poetical sensibility. He understands human nature neatly. This is evident to show that he has a deep concern for the problem of existence. Ezekiel has become successful in projecting the psychological malaise of the modern man. The Man-woman relationship in his poetry is not only confirmed to the traditional mutual understanding but it brings out the important feminine values like independence, wisdom, responsibility etc.

4.2.2

Ezekiel believes in the fact that man’s personality, in the ultimate analysis, is undeniable. Ezekiel attempts to explore it through many. Psychological images. In the poem ‘An affair’ the Lady, very categorically says:

"...............I love you, just like this
As I had seen the yellow blondes declare
Upon the screen, and even stroked my hair.
But hates me now because I did not kiss"
(Ibid, 11)

This evokes rather an image of an ultra-modern woman who can boldly confess her partner, her love. The open talk about the act of kissing is also a sign of a forward woman.

4.2.3

Ezekiel’s potential of **thinking** is really great. He is capable of creating fine **psychological images**. Ezekiel is very apt in expressing

the inner emptiness and disillusionment. He has observed that poverty, social injustice are less harmful than the unnamed hostile faces in the city. This idea of disillusionment is very dominant in the following lines:

Always, in the suns’ eye,
Here among the beggars,
Hawkers, pavement sleepers
Hutment dwellers, slums,
Dead souls of men and gods,
Burnt-out mothers, frightened
Virgins wasted child
And tortured animal;
All in noisy silence
Suffering the place and time
I ride my elephant of thought
A Cezanne slung around my neck.

(Ibid. 131)

All the while, Ezekiel’s attempt in his poetry seems to harmonise time, the fountain of his inner life, with the outer world. He wants to seek redemption through his creative writing. He would like to continue the creative process in his life to reveal his identity.

4.2.4

The title poem of the volume “A Time to Change” is a sincere record of a man’s departure from home and the consequent desolation. As Dwiwedi A.N. (1979: 271-72) rightly observes that the poem, “Taken as a whole, outlines a man’s departure from the home, consequent desolation and the search for a new life; a look into the desired pattern of the future; a statement of the means of attaining this; and a final recognition of the need for penitential exposure of secret faults.”
The amputated gestures, eyes turned away, incomplete absorption in the common scene, Marking time an unknown ground with faults concealed.

(Ibid, 3)

4.2.5

The psychological images pertaining to the state of frustration, despondency and gloom are found everywhere in Ezekiel's poetry. The poet takes resort in poetry to give vent to these strong desires. The poet doesn't find his past life any longer useful for his presumed redemption. The present life of the poet is equally frustrated because of the overpowering influence of sex as he is in his twenties. Ezekiel expects the future to fulfil his life. But he can attain redemption not outside but in the country of his mind. His present is not helpful to him and in this connection Kurup (1991:21) says 'But still there is hope, hope for future.'

4.2.6

Ezekiel's emotional mind desires to plunge into the creativity. He would like to detach himself from the outer world of materialistic pleasure. For the creation of poetry and the revelation of his personality, he wants to search for the knowledge. In the disturbed state of mind, the poet feels that he is corrupted by the world. 'The Double Horror' begins as:

"I am corrupted by the world" continually
Reduced to something less than human by the crowd.

(Ezekiel, 1989: 7)
Ezekiel's disillusionment, alienation and hopelessness make his poetry writing very difficult. So, he cannot write poetry without referring to his own self in his poems, which may also termed as poetic intrusion. He feels oppressed by the crowds of the city in alien land. It shows the introspective nature of the poet. He feels that the inner moods and the state of mind are more important than the outward life.

The poet has undergone a lot of frustration in love and life and he has experienced bitter disillusionment, which is embodied in the next volume of his poetry i.e. 'Sixty Poems'. It was published after the poet left London and shifted to Bombay. Professor Indemath Kher published an article on 'Sixty poems'. He writes:

"The volume does not represent any major thematic development; the themes that continue to occupy Ezekiel's mind are love and sex, poetry and existence, body and mind, flesh and spirit participation in the world, self identity and concern for the other. However we witness here (in all sections) greater involvements in the theme of human passion and sexuality, and a suggestion concerning the possible relationship between the female form and poetic creation. The volume also does not show any advancement in Ezekiel's craftmanship, compared with the overall brilliance of 'A Time to Change'. This collection is somewhat disappointing. Many poems here suffer from looseness of structure, confused imagery and discursive rhetoric."

(Kher, Indemath, 1985: 74-88)

4.2.7

This is what is found in the poem 'Sotto Voce':

I often think of death,

Death or perfect peace,
And life is imperfection

(Ezekiel, 1989:52)
4.2.8

**Psychological images** in Ezekiel appear, most of the times, through his skillful use of metaphors. Bombay city itself is a metaphor for the urban life in India. The effect of the city on the mind and perception of the poet is very bad. In that worst condition Ezekiel has the dream of pastoral world. The images in the following lines turn rather pastoral:

"he dreamt of being lost.
Upon a hill too high for him"
(Ibid, 199)

It seems a day dream for the poet as the poet's response to this is rather mechanical to the hill of vision. It is the incapacity of the will of the poet that is crushed under the tyranny of the urban life. He is aloof from the real experience of nature. He can only dream. he thinks that he is among the hollow men:

"Is he among the men of straw
Who think they go which way they please."
(Ibid)

The above lines evoke a sense of moral degeneration. The psychological images in the above raise a question before the human existence. The poet feels as if he is living among the hollow men. This shows Ezekiel's inclination towards the great modern poet T.S. Eliot.

4.2.9

The poet bears a strong sense of belonging to the city, Bombay. That may be the reason for his disillusionment as
Chindhade Shirish (1996: 31) aptly says "There is a profound sense of compassion, understanding, acceptance and sympathy for the city."

At deeper level, he is pitted against the urban environment. He sympathises its sordidness and misery. The love sonnet highlights a typical psychology of the lovers when they feel lost in the crowd. They never get a peaceful place for sharing their joy at a sweet moment. Hence the poet says:

"We lose ourselves in mingling with the crowd."

(Ibid, 121)

Ezekiel uses metaphors such as 'to die' 'salty sea' to express the psychological feeling of nervousness and despair in his mind. The phrase 'To die' means to make love. The image of a weak willed person is expressed in 'Case Study'. The protagonist suffers from a state of indecisiveness and ambivalence, which are the defining characteristics of the urban life. The poet says:

"Whatever he had done was not quite right."

(Ibid, 124)

In his disillusioned state of mind he feels that nothing is there in his life. Even though he loves his children, he states that his marriage was the worst mistake:

"His marriage was the worst mistake of all - Although he loved his children when they came"

(Ibid, 125)
4.2.11

The title of the collection 'The Unfinished Man' shows that the feeling of nervousness and the hurdles are not finished. Ezekiel can't find the solution to this nervousness and loneliness. What is to be done is the problem before him. He thinks that it may be the prophecy told by any 'fool' about his nervousness.

4.2.12

In the poem 'Confession' the poet comes out with a psychological outburst at the behest of loneliness and desolation:

"And what is in this loneliness?
...........................................
And at the end, desolation,
Which any fool have foretold."

(Ibid,63)

4.2.13

The poet sincerely feels his own limitations as he says in the poem 'The Crows':

"Lord, when I am numb, alone,
When, in my small, domestic room.
The heart has quietly turned to stone
I hear again a cry of doom."

(Ibid,41)

He listens to the crying of the crows. It aggravates his feeling of loneliness. He thinks that it is the cry of doom and feels his heart has turned into stone. The stone is the image fixity.
The poet's frustration turns more poignant when he feels that he is no longer young. He comments over his inability to express anything owing to his passing youth. The state of mind of the poet seems confused. He feels that his 'identity' is 'dim' in the audience and that is why he becomes nervous. He thinks that he is deserted and is away from the audience. The feeling of frustration and loneliness become again predominant in his mind. So in 'Song of Desolation' he says:

"Know, I went walking alone.  
Record it that I sat upon a rock,  
Heard the sea moon,  
Felt the inner block."

(Ibid, 103)

Ezekiel turns more introspective when he gives the reasons for his frustration and nervousness. The frightening condition of the poet is best revealed in the following lines from the poem 'What Frightens Me'; the poet says:

"Myself examined frightens me  
I saw the image being formed  
I saw it carnal in the arms of love  
(crushed, compromised and consummated)  
I saw it making vows  
With hidden weakness in the bone."

(Ibid, 106)

Ezekiel is candid enough to say that the worst in man may be of any extent. The real danger to everyone may be his own-self. The
self that its brighter side is only known—the darker is yet to come in focus. Ezekiel thinks that the image of woman with whom he loves eternally frightens the poet. Thus, the thoughts of loneliness, frustration haunt him like anything, as Bruce King (1991: 31) rightly remarks, “But the naked face of crisis, of emotional turmoil, of frustrated desires, of disillusionment and longing, of despair, screaming to escape from its cage, its still another persona, another face.”

4.2.16

The poems written from 1965 to 1974 are included in ‘Collected Poems’. In these poems, he shows his confusion and despair, weariness, groping in darkness, his boldness and self confidence, dilemma in choices and process of creativity and growth. As P.K.J. Kurup (1991: 77) rightly puts it:

“The recent phase of his poetry presents an anticlimax from ‘The Exact-Name’, not in terms of creativity but in terms of the poet’s faith in the power of poetry.” The feeling of disillusionment, confusion and despair are also there in his process of writing poetry. No doubt he is a matured and perfect man with a definite vision. He faces the problem of confusion and despair.

4.2.17

Ezekiel becomes nervous because he would like to fulfil his dream. Hence the poet, in A Small Summit says:

“I close my eyes and let
my dreams sustain me for a while
..............................................
Perhaps there is another way

and I will find it: concentrate,
make the mind a fist.”
(Ibid, 152-153)

4.2.18

In his confusion and despair, which characterize existential involvement, he thinks that he is not able to find the proper way to solve the problem. Hence he says that there is another way, which leads to concentrate only deep thinking, therefore, is the solution. Sometimes the poet blames himself for his vocation as a poet. He sought refuge in irony and paradox for self realization. But he could hardly succeed. The poet comes out with a psychological outburst when he says:

“Lord, I am tired
of being wrong
..........................
I am tired
of irony and paradox
of the bird in the hand
and the two in the bush
of poetry direct and oblique”.
(Ibid, 156-157)

Ezekiel exhibits various aspects and experiences of his life related to confusion and despair, weariness, boldness, self-confidence process of creativity and growth and dilemma in choices etc. Ezekiel's Hymns in Darkness is a sincere record of the above feelings- As Prem Kapoor (1994: 116) rightly observes that "Hymns in Darkness is a book of songs of the troubled, alienated modern spirit.”
4.2.19

After the death of his father and mother, Ezekiel thinks that there is only darkness before him. He develops the feeling of selflessness and despondency. The problems of his living alone become more compounded by his habit of meditating in isolation and by this vulnerability to nervousness. The poet seems to be disturbed by this incident. He feels darkness everywhere. This is the most pessimistic time of failure for him:

Illusion, with darker root I know
Makes me bristle with my paltry words

(Ibid, 192)

4.2.20

From the confusion and chaos created in him by demise of his father the poet moves on to describe the hypocrisy, cynicism and snobbishness, which have become so pervasive in his poetry. The commonplace Indian situations are precisely packed in poetic lines. Amar Kumar Singh (1993: 197) rightly observes that, “In The Exact Name’ he is trying to find the precise image for his emotional thoughts. Ezekiel elevates the common place to the poetic successfully. His style is disciplined and firm. His vocabulary is vague and abstract. On the whole, he shows a fine combination of remarkable clarity of expression with cogency of argument. He is consciously Indian in his sensibility. His poetry is simple, introspective and analytical.”
In the poem 'The Railway Clerk', the persona expresses a strong desire to escape from the situation which is essentially unbearable. The poet employs the bird image to express the suffocation he undergoes. The poet says:

“I wish I was a bird.”

(Ibid, 184)

4.2.21

The image of typical Indian offices which lack the basic amenities is evoked when he says:

the fan is not repaired for two months, three months

(Ibid)

The poem ‘The Visitor’ evokes many psychological images. In Indian mythology a ‘crow’ is associated with transporting the offerings to the dead parents. The dark/black complexion of the crow is always considered a harbinger of bad news. The belief that the impending visit of a guest forebodes inauspicious visitation, as is evident in poem. The image of the crow cawing at the window is at the opening of this poem. It also brings out the image of Indian superstitious masses-who believe that crowing of crow three times indicates an expected arrival of the guest. The words like ‘baleful eyes’ and ‘raised wings’ evoke a sense of bird which is very typical. The neck of the crow is aptly compared with a ‘nagging woman’. The image of the sleep walking of the poet after completely brooding into the thought, reminds us of the, sleep walking scene in Shakespeare’s ‘Macbeth’. The image of an ‘empty handed visitor’
who has arrived to while away the time is very significant. The lines below convey it most appropriately:

"His hands were empty, his need only to kill a little time."

(Ibid, 138)

The nature of the talk between the poet and the visitor is termed less substantial than the 'Cigarette Smoke'. The image of the cigarette smoke evokes the ultimate futility.

4.2.22

The poem 'The Couple' is a love poem but we find the love is treated in a variety of ways in this poem. Love can be mere pretence, it can be genuine, love may be emotional; or carnal. Woman is a symbol of indolence and arrogance. Here a negative, rather selfish image of a woman is portrayed. However the persona, in this poem advances his love indifferent to the consequences. The image of man with an uncontrollable physical desire is well wrought here. The images in this poem turn rather psychological as these images depict the psychology of both the woman and man. The blind physical desire of men sometimes lead to a kind of flattery. The persona sometimes tries to lure the woman by mere pretence:

"You are a wonderful woman, he said and she laughed happily, having heard it before from many men; all trapped in the desire to see her naked."

(Ibid, 183)
A woman, though hard and vain to woo, it is found that she surrenders very easily. A moment when both of them deceive themselves and remain no more of their own, she looks extremely beautiful with her child like simplicity. Here an image of the woman who is trapped in desire is expressed well. This image evokes a kind of helplessness at such an unguarded moment. The poem, while depicting, the outward action, penetrates deep into human psychology. As the poem progresses we notice that the woman's unwillingness to love turns into a strong sexual desire which is quite mysterious.

The persona in the poem well knew that he cannot hope winning the woman without the game of lying. Flattery and bold advances are must for the luring game. Without this one cannot hope of success in this art. This typical masculine behaviour evokes a bunch of psychological images pertaining to the masculine tendency in the progression of love making.

4.3 Mental Action

4.3.1

The poem 'Lines' evokes a particular mood exhibiting certain psychological images. The poet always dwells upon the various organs of the female body; the breasts and thighs, flesh and hair, belly and torso, bone and marrow, lungs and liver and eyes all enticing and repelling at one and the same time. Still, the psychological images that evoke the mood are very dominant.
"Unmask the mind, know the hardness
Of the hidden and oppressive bone,
Locate the source of shallow breath,
Hear the throb of loins in love
Listen to the secret marrow,
Lung and Liver speak the word
Accept the Long tormented breath
And tremble in the thick of love

(Ibid,43)

Though the set of images in the above lines pertain to the physical and sensuous images, the psychological preoccupation seems very dominant.

4.3.2

Another such poem which exhibits the psychological preoccupation is about a thinking mind on the nature’s wonderful creative phenomenon. The poem ‘Description’ is unique in the expression of the presence of hair on different parts of human body, a mysterious natural phenomenon. The poem itself is an image of a ‘thinking mind’, the poem reveals a unique state of mind as much as the poet concentrates on a single image, that of hair, in its multiple associations.

"I will begin—but how should I begin?
with hair, your hair,
remembered hair,
touched, smelt lying silent there
upon your head beneath your arms
and then between your thighs a wonder of hair.

(Ibid,48)

4.3.3

Nissim Ezekiel differentiates a poem from poetry. Bruce King (1987: 91) aptly says, “Other wrote poems, he (Ezekiel) wrote..."
poetry." So also Raja Rao (2000: 107), "But it is Nissim himself who makes us aware of the distinction, in a poem called 'Poetry'. Ezekiel wants to write poetry to show the existence of the outer world. He attempts to seek redemption through this vocation. He feels that redemption is only possible, when there is faith and contemplation. It is the psychic process of the poet that makes him feel the world:

"Empty of faith in the comeliness of God
Empty of faith in the shapeliness of Man
Contemplation turned to pus, incapable of action"

(Ibid, 17)

Dwivedi A.N. (1979: 274) is of the same opinion as Ezekiel is, when he admits that, "The redemption is all a mirage for a man committed to the world and woman."

4.3.4

In his frustrated married life in city there is no close attachment between himself and his wife because he is the 'Wedding guest' at his home to which he has committed. The feeling of disillusionment, frustration, nervousness in his married life in urban area. 'The Unfinished Marl' ends with a brilliant and evocative poem Jamini Roy that describes an urban painter. Jamini Roy is the chief protagonist in the poem. Though this man is from urban area, he tries to acquire the folk style. Still, innocence reflected through his eyes.

"A people painted what it saw
with eyes of supple innocence

An urban artist found the Law
To make its spirit sing and dance”

(Ibid, 126)

4.3.5

The images in the above poem evoke a typical psychological malaise of the poet. It suggests a way out of a dilemma before the poet. The demand is for commitment to the barbaric city. Though there is frustration in Ezekiel, he is committed to live in the urban setting only.

4.4 Commencement of Positive Action

4.4.1

Ezekiel’s quest for self realization is seen most clearly in his poem “Something to Pursue” with a fine use of psychological images:

“High endeavour with intensities
Of feeling and of thought.
That I may see myself
No longer unresolved
But definite as morning
Moving to fruition
When the season comes.”

(Ibid, 14)

In the critical survey of the images, there is bound to be the overlapping of different kinds of images for example a sensuous image, or a physical image may express certain psychological preoccupations also such as strong desire, disappointment or a typical mood of the poet.
4.4.2

'To a certain Lady' projects the image of a nagging woman—but it also comes, most probably, with the psychological image of compromise as a must thing for smooth running of the conjugal life. The persona seems coming to terms as he says with an almost helpless cry:

‘Lady don’t nag
If you want that expensive lipstick
Buy it, for God’s sake—not mine—
I mean, really, why should I approve of it?
And that goes for dresses, hats, shoes,
Slips, Knickers and brassieres,
So long as they’re not on the instalment plan.

(Ibid, 29)

4.4.3

He knows that the quarrels are the essential part of the married life. But Ezekiel overcomes such conflicts as he states:

“But I am interested!

........................................
I can’t make poetry out of this,
Always we must be lovers,
Man and wife at work upon the hard
Mass of material which is the world.”

(Ibid, 29-30)

He admits that poetry writing is impossible without love so he thinks about his marriage but he is equally aware that there are so many hindrances in married life, but he is ready to face them and possess the creativity. Here, we come across a psychological image of the compromise, adjustment as a part of human thought process.

4.4.4

He indulges in a kind of self-exploration. He has created an imaginary character by name Robert. He converses with Robert. The conversation is a kind of confession. The alleged conversation between Robert and Ezekiel is given in the poem Robert. Ezekiel introspects himself through Robert. He sees his errors in the same way as Robert sees himself, both of them trying to rectify themselves. Hence he says:

"And then I saw him clearly, the long Epic story of his errors shouted"

(Ibid, 10)

The character of Robert may be an externalization of the poets own self. It is his favourite made to disguise himself to create the poetic effect.

4.4.5

In the poem 'Enterprise', he puts forth the feelings of frustration. This poem describes the commencement of journey by a group of people including the poet. There are noble aspirations in the mind but their pilgrimage ends in failure and frustration. As Srinivasa Iyengar rightly points out:

"In a sense, of course, it's man's destiny to be forever evolving, and hence to be 'unfinished'. There is a movement, a growth; something is gained, but something is lost also. If the intellect acquires a sharper age, something else, perhaps imagination, perhaps hope or self-confidence - suffers in consequence. Between the motion and the act falls the shadow, and so the poems like 'Urban' and 'Enterprise' become images of frustration. The pilgrimage has become a
weary trek, and when the Goal is reached— It may be described as a miniature Ababasis, fancy fed the goal is alluring; but the process of reaching it empties the victory of its glamour and glory."


The journey began with a purpose and hope but they had to face several problems on their way. Only the wise man was conscious of the frustrations and failures, which his life brings at every stage. The journey described in the poem is taken as a metaphor for life. The journey, symbolically, stands for the difficulties, failures and frustrations in his life. In order to retain peace of mind he has to look back upon this home. Ezekiel thinks that home is the starting point of things.

4.4.6

Ezekiel tries to resolve the choice of life in the poem 'Commitment' and decides that the action is better than none at all. The images in the following line evoke a typical psychology of the poet who believes in the necessity of action.

"At once we know that we must leap
Although we have not looked ahead
Lake falsely calm and mountain steep.
But we are wiser than dead."

(Ezekiel, 1989: 121)

We are wiser than the dead because life means action. The real meaning of action should be taken in his life. He thinks that there is no need of thinking about the failures in his life. Indemath Kher (1972: 156-157) rightly points out:
"Paradoxically speaking, the poems succeed as failures, because without the failures one may not perceive the dichotomy at the heart of existence itself. The action which is generated by these poems manifests itself in the form of ecstatic love, is an existential plunge into the world and in the prayer for a poetics—Commitment embodies the theme of action as an existential imperative."

4.4.7

Ezekiel feels that the cause of failure in love is only the crowd. The crowd debilitates him making love to his wife, hence he feels frustrated and despondent. As a frustrated middle-aged man, Ezekiel, in city life and married life, thinks himself to be a modern 'Cain'. According to Anisur Raheman:(1987:22)

"The poet considers himself to be a modern Cain, who is doomed to wander and remain unsatisfied, and even-though the poet is tragically aware of his fate, he chooses not to reveal it. He assumes a happy role before the word. He is a frequent wedding guest and his choice of not being deprived of this position is only too superficial—Marital failure is as much the theme of the poet as his other failures experienced from time to time."

4.5 Vision of Unity

4.5.1

The image of a weak minded person is painted in his poem 'The Way it Went', Ezekiel depicts a person afflicted by self-pity. He presents a faithful description of his married life. Even in his love affair he fails miserably because he desires some kind of spiritual experience and hesitancy in love which his better half fails to
understand. It seems that this sense of alienation has come partly from his inability to communicate and partly from the absence of meaningful faith. He seems to be craving for a perfect human balance as he says:

"I want a human balance humanly
Acquired, fruitful in the common hour."

(Ezekiel, 1989:40)

He declares openly what is there in his mind in the confessional mode. Hence Ezekiel can be considered as a confessional poet as well.

4.5.2

He admits that the only way for overcoming nervousness is reconciliation. In 'Nothingness' he says:

"At last I have been reconciled
To simple nothingness, and catch
Myself, hour after hour."

(Ibid, 50)

The reconciliation is there in his mind. "He finds himself inadequate to take decisions and is a victim of indecision."

(Kurup, P.K.J. 1991: 41)

He believes that his feeling of nervousness can only be overcome with the mutual understanding with his wife. So, the only way out from his present predicament is to converse with his wife. The psychological image of the need of mutual understanding is beautifully created in the following lines:

She tried her best to make me understand
Her voice was intimately soft.

(Ezekiel, 1989: 43)
This also evokes the optimism of the poet who thinks that the conversation between himself and his wife will be fertile and will be helpful to come out from the frustrated condition and continue his creativity. He states that with the help of the love of his wife he can create the meaningful poetry, but even in his married life there are problems related to joint family system and urban life. He doesn’t get the privacy in his married life. But his wife is the real support to his creation and inspiration.

Ezekiel goes for the comparison between God’s act of creation and the poet’s act of composing a poem. It is believed that the creation is the result of the combination of five-elements, which, in Hindu philosophy, are regarded as Pancha-Tatvas.

4.5.3

Ezekiel feels that every creation should try to equal or merge into the supreme soul or God. This is probably recommended by the sages in all the ages. As the poet directs:

“Child of flesh and fancy,
Be equable, as the sages recommend,
And God-like make a universe
From chaos,
Of fire and air and earth and water.”

(Ezekiel, 1989: 79)

4.5.4

As God has made the universe through the five elements, the poet makes a plea to the humanity to be equal with God by creation a balance and having a better understanding of the principle of the
world. It is through poetic creation, the poet wants to free the world from this chaos. According to P.K.J. Kurup (1991: 37):

"The depiction of this parallelism between the acts of God and those of the poet is not to be considered as a lofty view about the vocation of a poet. It has something to do with his perception. It hints at the sense of religious alienation of his poetic self which finds in itself a condition of fragmentation leading to diminution of the self."

Ezekiel admits that there is a chaos in his family and society. He is not a religious person of the first rank but he needs to come to terms with self-realization or confession. In fact, self-realization is a process of self-exploration where there is a sincere objectification of the self. The poet's loneliness, nervousness are very personal and continue to wreck the feelings of the poet. In the process of self-exploration, the poet comes very near to the process of psycho-analysis of his own behaviour and the social behaviour as well.

4.5.5

Ezekiel delineates that there are some limitations of the life of his own and he aspires for the unity of 'heart' and 'intellect'.

"For nothing can be hidden long
From heart or intellect
But welded they could seem and be
A single architect."

(Ezekiel, 1989: 88)
Ezekiel doesn’t want to conceal anything of the dichotomy of heart and intellect. He thinks that everything should be revealed from the unity of ‘heart’ and ‘intellect’. He is the only architect who welds heart and intellect into one.

4.5.6

Ezekiel comes out with a typical human psychology in the matters of quenching the natural appetite that is ‘sex’. He is of the opinion that women can be enjoyed only by maintaining a safe distance. But still, taking into consideration the long perspectives, one must go for a quick compromise or reconciliation. The poem ‘Declaration’ elaborately deals with the psychological preoccupation of the persona regarding the mysterious darkness physical appetite—which is pure one. The poet says:

"The sensual form may serve to calm
The senses and keep the darkness pure
Darkness, disturbed and turbulent
Is also dear: possession is necessary
...........................................................
Deaf and blind to all is appetite."

(Ibid,93-94)

Ezekiel thinks that for the fulfilment of his life love and sex (man-women relationship) as ‘seeing’, ‘touching’, ‘kissing’, ‘loving on the bed’ and imagination of all are important and are needed.

4.5.7

Ezekiel’s distrust of marriage and fears about its possible emotional degeneration compel him to turn to it as a theme at short intervals. How the warmth of love and intensity of mutual devotion

play the vanishing trick baffles him first, but then he knows how to rationalize it. “Sonnet” gives, in a cursory glimpse, the long and short of it:

“At first the beloved merely finds fault, Later comes the slow unresponsive kiss. Between the first encounter and the friend, And the friend no more, the truth is known The truth is in the face when morning breaks.”

(Ibid, 107)

The bitterness that result through the shocks and surprises, and regrets, have all enabled Ezekiel to have, extraordinary enough, a rare sanity of vision. As a confessional poet of rare breed he exposes failures and frustrations that accompanied him at the various stages of his growth.

4.5.8

Ezekiel expresses a concern over the thinness of the second, daughter in the poem 'For Kalpana'. How unfounded and absurd their fears are is proved by the last lines of the poem where the poet has the last laugh:

“Flesh of their flesh she sings like the wind she laughs like a river she sleeps like a flower but the parents despair in the bland glare of marriage and look with narrowed eyes as though threading a needle at their tall thin perfectly happy altogether delightful daughter”

(Ibid, 27)
Thus, the poet has most candidly expressed his feelings of nervousness and frustration caused due to failure in marital life and urban set-up. The chapter offers a study of the psychological images. Which these image ultimately involve the psychological pre-occupation of the people, their desires, disappointments, conflicts, elations, projections, fears, insecurities, doubts, jealousies, hatreds, needs, failures, despondency, nervousness and disillusionment and other innumerable aspects.