

CHAPTER - V

COMMUNICATION: SATIRE AND SARCASM

5.1. Satire: An Introduction

For the purpose of the present study, 'satire' may be defined as a literary composition or form in which human or individual vices, follies, abuses, or shortcomings are held up to censure by means of ridicule, derision, burlesque, irony, or other methods, ideally with the intent to bring about improvement.¹ Although satire often seems to be funny, the purpose of satire is not primarily humour in itself so much as an attack on something of which the author strongly disapproves, using the weapon of wit.² The satirist examines human conduct or motives critically, and intends to communicate to the reader his/her own attitude toward the subject, using the means appropriate to his subject and within his/her power. Satire is, therefore, distinguished both by intention and by the means used to fulfill the intention.³ It is not necessary that a satire needs to be violent in nature all the time, or even obvious, attack. When the satirist's means includes irony or subtle ridicule, the composition/work may not seem to appear to the reader an attack at all.

The most important characteristic of a satire is that it criticizes/ridicules in an ironic, mostly indirect way, and therefore, it does not appear biting/caustic/harsh. Satire's act of communication is different, as in the focus of the satirist's observation are the morals and the conventions that embody the fundamental values of a group of the society. It turns the attention of the public to the defects, degradation, degeneration, corruption, and such follies of the society. Satire's method is that of the ironic accentuation of social vice. The readers to whom the satirist turns are, primarily, the more conscious members of society. The satirist attempts to create and by writing contributes to an intolerance of vice, and the mocking of

vice amounts to its punishment. The characters or subjects on whom/which the satire is built display the principle of contrast, i.e. instead of shame they have pride; instead of disgrace, honour; and instead of punishment, praise. Most satirists – indeed, virtually all English satirists from the late sixteenth century – claim one purpose for satire, that of high-minded and usually socially oriented moral and intellectual reform.⁴ The most common rhetorical devices employed in the production of a satire are irony, paradox, and oxymoron – all three based upon opposites – and therefore, they maximize the imaginative tension of the text to produce in the reader a consequent sense of discomfort. It is the tension created in these oppositions that mainly constitutes the ‘art’ of satire.

Satire in verse is, most often, a sort of monologue in which the poet denounces various kinds of vice and folly, and implicitly puts up against them his moral ideals. The subject matter is daily life and it is treated realistically. It makes use of words and phrases from ordinary speech, and the tone tends to be conversational, rather than declamatory. Vice and folly are delineated in ‘characters’ which may be individual or representative; and the poet himself sometimes appears as a character, describing some event autobiographically or speaking through a mask or ‘person’ which he/she assumes for the occasion. A poet’s satire mainly uses irony to make the reader uncomfortable, to shake him out of his complacency, and to make him an ally in the battle against the world’s stupidity.⁵

5.1.1. Discourse of Satire

Satire’s discursal properties may be sketched in the form of four principal components: setting, method, uptake, and target. The first category ‘setting’ is built around Nash’s observation that any ‘act’ of humour requires as its initial, principal reference a ‘genus’, which is “a derivation in culture, institutions, attitudes, beliefs.” The notion of setting also follows in part the traditional argument in linguistic pragmatics about how utterance interpretation is shaped by and is heavily dependent on features of interactive context. ‘Setting’, therefore, is essentially a non-linguistic component covering the preparatory preconditions necessary for the construction of satirical discourse. The second component, ‘method’, marks a linguistic stage proper. This category corresponds, again, to one of

Nash's benchmarks for verbal humour which is that it requires both "a locus in language" and a "characteristic design, presentation, or verbal packaging." The third, 'uptake', is drawn largely from concepts in linguistic pragmatics and echoes Austin's concept of "uptake." In Austin's framework, 'uptake' encompasses the understanding of the illocutionary force and content of the utterance by its addressee, and the perlocutionary effects on the addressee brought about by "means of uttering the sentence, such effects being special to the circumstances of the utterance." The concept of perlocution in satirical discourse relies heavily on inferencing by the satiree; an inferencing which requires the resolution of the incongruity created along with an identification of the component which constitutes the fourth element, i.e. the satirical 'target'. The satirical 'target' realizes four subtypes, best thought of as interlocking domains or zones rather than discrete units. The first type is *episodic*, where the target is a particular action or a specific event that has taken place in the public sphere. The second is *personal* target where the object of attack is, unsurprisingly, a particular individual. An *experiential* target is directed towards more stable aspects of the human condition and experience as opposed to specific episodes and events. The fourth subtype, *textual* target, spotlights the linguistic code itself as its principal object of attack.⁶ Of course, a single satirical text may realize multiple targets, and this is more prominently discovered in poetry.

5.2. Sarcasm: An Introduction

Another very closely related concept to satire is 'sarcasm'. Satire, when caustic and bitter, becomes sarcasm. 'Sarcasm' stems from the Greek word 'sarkazein', which means 'to tear flesh, to bite'.⁷ It involves the use of cutting, contemptuous, biting, derisive, bitter, mordant, or sardonic remarks delivered in a hostile manner. The manner of delivery plays a very important role in the identification of sarcasm, as its tone bespeaks the contemptuous attack.⁸ It evolves out of a witty language that is used to convey insults or scorn. It is believed to be a low form of humour as its intent is generally to get laughs at someone else's expense. The pointed humour may not be funny to the victim but it's funny to those who understand the barb as it feeds their intellectual egos.⁹ This is because sarcasm is a form of humour that is known to require the highest functions of human brain. Areas of the brain

that decipher sarcasm and irony also process language, recognize emotions, and help understand social cues.¹⁰ Therefore, it may be stated that sarcasm is related to ones' ability to understand other people's mental state, and thus, it is not just a linguistic form but is also associated with social recognition.¹¹ Sarcasm's intent is to wound its target, i.e. tear apart with no intention of putting back together; whereas satire cuts but does so carefully that the parts may be reassembled after the corrections have been made, i.e. change in the behavior/attitude/function by rectification of the faults.¹² The tone in the case of sarcasm is always high and uniform, whereas it varies (non-uniform) in a satire.

5.3. Satire and Sarcasm in the Two Poets

Maha Nand Sharma and I.K. Sharma, both are typically satirical and sarcastic in their communication. They employ rich and evocative imagery, which arises from a word or a phrase, making the satire more sharp and effective. The tone of their poems, the rhythm, use of punctuation marks, the lexical items, the rhetorical devices, and the syntactic-semantic structure along with the pragmatic grounding and discourse elements bring out the inherent satire and sarcasm in their poetry in a more subtle manner. Both of them are sick of the filth such as superstition, hypocrisy, callous bureaucracy, corruption, opportunistic politics, scams, moral and spiritual degradation, etc. that they observe around them in all walks of life. They feel compelled to resort to the writing of realistic and satirical poetry. In the following sections, an analysis of a few poems of both the poets clearly exemplifies their poetic process rooted in satire and sarcasm.

5.3.1. Satire and Sarcasm in Maha Nand Sharma

Maha Nand Sharma has established himself as a poet of kaleidoscopic settings in the social dimension of time. He is distinct among the group of contemporary poets as he interprets the past in terms of the present and *vice-versa*. He historicizes the present and makes it more relevant and interesting for the modern generation. He weaves into his poetry significant truths of life and serious reflections of the contemporary times. Like Dr. Johnson, he believes that the primary function of poetry is to amuse and instruct, and it must be relevant to life and society. Therefore, Sharma's poetry, very often, creates a satiric and sarcastic

impact. His long narrative poems as well as the shorter ones are equally rich in the use of satire and sarcasm, and overall, his poetry displays such an intense satiric intent that the reader cannot escape its influence.

5.3.1.1. *A Rudraksha Rosary*

His long epic narrative *A Rudraksha Rosary* exhibits a number of instances where there is an intense concentration of satire and sarcasm. The poem celebrates the exploits of Lord Shiva. Sharma infuses wit, irony, humour, satire, and sarcasm into his narrative of Lord Shiva's exploits. He recreates and reinterprets the myths related to Shiva and Shakti in such a way that the forgotten past is revived for the readership now, communicating his own views as a representative individual and devotee. In fact, he looks at the declining present with an awareness of the divine past:

...The rogues are from the planets
 Where secret sin's the price of progress fast.
 In different walks they showed their skills. They are
 The politicians talking day and night
 Of unity, yet dividing caste from caste;
 The teachers who awarded heaps of marks
 To sons of rich and reaped the bribes fat,
 Who watered fields at night and snored in the class;
 Professors smartly dressed and looking stern
 Who bartered Ph.D's for Ph.D's,
 Who dangled dextrously the sword of marks
 O'er heads of pupils frightened like the sheep,
 Whose motto was "Oblige and be obliged"
 For beautiful girls and rich men's sons and daughters,
 Who subtly threw the bait of sinecures
 To trap their juniors—fishes looking up,
 Who honoured second class by travelling second,
 They said, and showing that as first in bills;
 The judges under whose tables assistants charged
 For date-postponements, wads of notes which bought
 The transparent *saris* for the judges' wives
 And *ghee* and gas- cylinders for their kitchens;

The magnates who would pay big sums to those
 Who fought elections, won and ruled and raised
 The prices which would break the workers' back;
 The legislators with their fingers deep
 In the Nation's pie of which they ate the most
 And left some rotten crumbs to toiling masses,
 And these and such as these had milked the state
 And government- none's, though each one's, business- dry. ¹³

Here, the guard of the Hell is in conversation with Lord Vishnu, and is answering his query in regard to the inhabitants of Hell. The non-human guard informs the divine, i.e. 'Vishnu', about the steep decline in the morality of the contemporary beings, and their steep decline into the dungeon from where there is little hope of resurgence. Vishnu learns from the lion-shaped human voiced guard of dungeons that the inhabitants inside the 'Hell' are rogues from the planets where "secret sin" dominates. The sinners include politicians, teachers, legislators, judges, and bureaucrats; all of them addressed as rogues and compared with Brahma and Vishnu, who are fighting like dogs. The fight between Brahma and Vishnu is viewed as archetypal and expressive of reduction of "heav'n - chained Earth" ¹⁴ to hell "where men will breed and multiply like rabbits." ¹⁵

The philosophy of "oblige and be obliged" is sarcastically contextualised by referring to professors "who bartered Ph. D's for Ph. D's"; judges, who postponed dates for money which enabled them to buy "transparent *saris*" for their wives; and business-magnates, who support politicians in winning elections for their own vested interests.

The expressions like "heaps of marks", "reaped the bribes fat", "snored in the class", "dangled dextrously", "bait of sinecures", "wads of notes", "fishes", etc. construct the satirical discourse in the narrative. The use of the similar sounding words such as "heap/reap", "watered/bartered", "none/one", "worker/legislator", etc. not only provide internal rhythm, but also add to the making of satire, through its harsh tone. Moreover, the verbal finesse of the blank verse is pragmatically communicative in that the underlying criticism is strongly conveyed.

The lines display poet's complete mastery in exploiting the metaphoricality of the language, i.e. use of the language in its best metaphorical sense, to help the readers experience the thrill of the suggested

thought. A number of words such as “secret”, “price”, “fast”, “walks”, “heaps”, “reaped”, “fat”, “bartered”, “dangled”, “sword”, “threw”, “bait”, “trap”, “fishes”, “honoured”, “that”, “under”, “tables”, “break”, “fingers deep”, “pie”, “milked”, “business”, “dry”, etc. are used in its metaphoric sense for the discourse organising purpose. The use of the direct, indirect, and personification metaphors in clusters, with appropriate phraseology, generates the rhetorical effect that facilitates poetic communication.

The same context is recreated in lines 202-212 of the First Book, where inhabitants of Heaven are compared with the contemporary men by Brahma:

“Far happier are these people than the ones
I saw in dreams, upon Earth of future
Whose whole society torn to classes, groans
With roaring mills, in cut-throat conflicts wild ;
Whose only bond’s the bond of chinking coins ;
Who rob the honest worker of his meed ;
Whose faith, resembling sleep-inducing drugs,
To slumber deep of weak contentment lulls
The have-nots feeble while they roll in wealth ;
Whose plenty juxtaposed with want creates
The rapes, the frauds, the robberies and the thefts”.

The way in which the contemporary scene is fused with the mythical events displays Sharma’s imagination. The Earth’s future, as dreamt by Brahma, is far from happiness; development is coupled with suffering, groaning, and cut-throat conflicts. The use of words and phrases such as “chinking coins” and “roaring mills” evoke satire. In fact, the narrator makes a harsh comment on industrialization becoming a means of exploitation and suffering of the poor. The satire lies in one’s rising higher and higher, and yet “all in vain”; eyes are dazed at “dizzy heights”, as the narrator notes:

Then higher and higher he soared but all in vain—
Nowhere in sight was the top of the endless column.
At dizzy heights his eyes were dazed, his head
Was giddy, and his wings—once light, now heavy—
Could any moment stop; and he might fall

In Book II, 'Fire and Light', of *A Rudraksha Rosary*, Sharma presents the 'Sati-Khand' (Sari-episode) of Shivpuran, where Sati jumps into the *yajna* fire as she could not bear the insult of her husband (Lord Mahesh). While Daksh tells his wife about performing *Aswamedh Yajna* to test his "awe and sovereignty", and prove his might as 'Prajapati' – a title used for Brahma, next to God—his wife views the occasion for meeting with her daughters "living far away"¹⁷ and "bearing taunts of cruel mothers-in-law / And daily drudging hard from dawn to dusk / As slaves without a voice, in household chores, / And pierced by the taunts of harsh in laws."¹⁸ Here, the repetition of the consonant sound /d/ for seven times in the same line (line 38) adds harshness to the tone of the poem, thus, facilitating the construction of the discourse of satire. The satire lies in the two persons', i.e. Daksh and his wife, concerns and views: one, very high; and another, very low. The mother is more interested in seeing children of her daughters, and the father interested in establishing his suzerainty.

Daksh also seeks to persuade his wife for not inviting Shiva, who is his son-in-law, as he is not worthy of sitting with his other sons-in-law, who are kings and princes and may feel ashamed of sitting beside him, i.e. Shiva, husband of Sati.

The narrator contextualizes loss of wisdom that precedes the fall of men:

Thus goes the world of pelf and pow'r and pomp;
 Thus royal glamour kills the spiritual traits;
 Thus dullness downs the shutters of the mind;
 And cold selfishness chills the warmth of love.¹⁹

The queen rises to the occasion and dares to disagree with her husband's "vily words."²⁰ When Daksh fails to convince the queen, he asserts his male chauvinism: "A woman's wisdom dwells in the back of head / And not in forehead."²¹ This is sarcastic and unbecoming of a monarch, who views himself "next to god", mad in his power and pomp as he has become. Daksh fails to realise insignificance of his kingdom before Shiva's eternal might and glory.

Again, satire is ingrained in the description of kings who stand as a representative of all different forms of government in the present times. As the narrator asserts:

All kings are politicians, as you know,
Who wear the velvet gloves and flow'ry masks
But gnaw full deep and straight but subtly so
That victims do not feel the pain at all. 22

The rich use of the metaphorical language that is displayed with the use of the words and phrases such as “velvet gloves”, “flow'ry masks”, “gnaw”, “deep”, and “straight” facilitates the communication of satire as the pragmatic aspect of the discourse on governance.

The narrator continues in the same manner as he describes the beauty of Sati in terms of what it is not, and thereby, satirises the sense of beauty that women today have:

A beauty just the reverse of the charm
Of lipstick-reddened lips and powdered cheeks,
Of bob-cut hair, of breasts exposed and tight,
Of high-heeled shoes, of long and polished nails
And mini-skirts which throw romantic hints
Of tapering thighs and upward private parts
Arousing passions base in ogling eyes. 23

The narrator sounds critical of pseudo-feminists who fail to view women's beauty as “sublime”, “elevating”, and “full of spiritual joy” rather than mere physical and made-up. The use of the words and expressions such as “lipstick-reddened”, “powdered cheeks”, “bob-cut”, “breasts exposed and tight”, “high-heeled”, “polished nails”, “mini-skirts”, “romantic hints”, “tapering thighs”, “private parts”, “passion base”, and “ogling eyes” provides a sarcastic bend to the inherent satire in the lines, and it depicts the degradation of the society in the veil of urbanisation and fashion.

The low level consciousness that pervades the environment of the palace is felt by Sati as she enters the “outer parlour” and suffers ‘a dark welcome’ by her own family members. The king's men fail to hide that they were alert enough to convey to their master the plots and ambitions of the courtiers and kith and kins:

For royal mansions are the dens of tricks,
 Of rumour-mongerings, scandal-whisperings,
 Of back-bitings, of politic leg-pullings,
 Of stratagems bred by green-eyed jealousy
 And conspiracies masked by friendly smiles. ²⁴

The use of the compound words “rumour-mongerings”, “scandal-whisperings”, “back-bitings”, “leg-pullings”, and “green-eyed” evokes satire and sarcasm in the context of the poem as well as the contemporary times. The use of the expression “dens of tricks” to describe the “royal mansions” infuses a satiric affect. The metaphorical use of the words such as “dens”, “tricks”, “back-bitings”, “leg-pullings”, “bred”, and “green-eyed” adds a new dimension to the implicit meaning and suggestiveness of the extract, and also intensify the satiric and sarcastic affect of the message communicated. Sati was already warned by Mahesh against attending the “*yajna* celebrations” and now she realises the truth and feels worse: “Indifferene wounds much more than words or swords.” ²⁵ Ironically, Sati’s mother, too, finds Daksh, a “monstrous –father” ²⁶ with false dignity and crooked “in pursuit of worldly ends.” ²⁷ She advises Sati to return to her husband because this house has already become a hell.

Guided by her creative consciousness, Sati tries to justify her presence there and says:

Endurance is the badge of women’s tribe
 And wisdom’s calm and quiet preserve is hers.
 If King has lost his sense, then why should we ?
 Will not our enemies fling the biting taunts
 At him and at our family if I go ? ²⁸

Both, the mother and the daughter, sound human and contemporary in their victimisation by the decision of the masculine, i.e. the male members of the family lead by Dakh:

How long, O woman, you’ll be crucified !
 How long will your modesty compensate
 For mad and swelling vanity of dull men !
 How long your lofty sacrifice and work

Will rectify the follies of the males !
 How long your tears will water barren trees
 Of hate and try for growth of fruit of love ! ²⁹

Sati stays there while the *yajna* was in progress because she stands for spiritual ascent through love and harmony, transcending human nature while Daksh and other Kings and princes were enchained by their false sense of superiority and low level consciousness. In fact, Maha Nand Sharma seeks to recreate the archetypes of male desire to dominate and assert superiority and female sense of oppression and revolt, openly or secretly. The lines are a satire on the society in which woman is treated as the ‘second’ sex. The lines depict the sordid picture of women, which has always fell prey to the “mad and swelling vanity of dull men”. In spite of making all her efforts for the betterment of the society, she has been looked down with her sacrifices unnoticed. The use of four exclamation marks in the quoted extract of seven lines brings to the surface the personal pain and lamentation of the speaker, thus, adding impetus to the satiric effect on the reader and encouraging them to change their stand/approach towards women. The words “crucified”, “compensate”, “mad”, “swelling”, “dull”, “lofty”, “sacrifice”, “tears”, “water”, “barren”, “trees”, “hate”, “fruit”, and “love” are used metaphorically in the context to construct the discourse of satire. The male-female conflict is perpetuated from age to age in innumerable forms and hues but identical in essence. For example, in the First Book, which draws on the erotic aspects of beauty, of *A Spiritual Warrior*, the “passion-blinded” King of Hastinapur, Shantanu, seeks physical union with Ganga. She considers the advances of the King as sinful and snubs him, saying:

Are women bitches for their rape by dogs,
 Or cows squeezed by bulls between their legs ?
 Or are they cattle easily bought for gold ?
 Or are they juicy mangoes to be pressed
 Between the thumb and fingers, sucked and thrown
 As juiceless skin and fleshless kernel lean ?
 You have been citing instances from Nature.
 In Nature people see whate’er they feel;
 And so you, blind with lust, your mating see !
 Why have you knavely carried instane each

So far alone that it may serve your aim,
And not beyond ? ³⁰

Ganga raises the same age-old questions about man-woman relationship that has degenerated to mere physicality, with or without marriage. In the present context too, she sounds sarcastic as most men seek women for “sheer enjoyment” ³¹ and “coitus.” ³² The narrator adds to Ganga’s voice of “conscience” ³³ by sarcastically remarking: “The man who’ used to varying delicious tastes / Dislikes the prospects of one regular taste.” ³⁴ The King, too, disdains “the prospect of one boring wife” ³⁵ in Ganga and yet he tries to persuade her by insisting that since he is a King, therefore, he could go scot free even if detected making love with her. He even tempts her to ride her “way to fortune” ³⁶ and not lose this opportunity of union with him, “a monarch lying prostrate at your feet, / With boundless pelf and pomp and pow’r awaiting.” ³⁷ The epigrammatic “Enjoyment for enjoyment in exchange” ³⁸ is also a satire on the contemporary sexual values.

Coming back to the episode of Sati in *A Rudraksha Rosary*, Sati finds her father’s indifference to Shiva, too insulting to bear, and decides to kill herself by jumping “headlong into the flames” ³⁹ of the *yajna*. Symbolically, she seeks atonement for not following the “matured counsel” ⁴⁰ of her husband; she seeks to liberate herself by freeing herself from all attachments or inner enslavement responsible for her suffering. Her action as a human being relates to burning to ashes the ordinary consciousness and rises to the higher consciousness, or unites with the Supreme reality, i.e. Shiva:

Mahesh appeared, like bolt from blue, in fire.
As Jesus walked the waves but was not drowned,
Mahesh, unburnt, was walking on the flames.
As out he came with Sati’s corpse in arms,
In jumped his aides and picked up sticks of fire,
And hurled them all around at running kings.
But Daksh they left untouched, inflicting blows
Of deep remorse which tell much more than those
Of words or fists or rods or spears or swords.
The pitchers full of maunds of *ghee* they turned
Upon the walls of Daksha’s mansion huge

And set them all on fire whose leaping flames—
 As hot and bright as thousands suns combined—
 Were spreading gloom of thousand concurrent nights
 In Daksha's heart, but in his mind the light
 Of wisdom dazzling more than thousand days
 If they can synchronise as Nature's freak.
 And whoso looked at spreading fire now said,
 "O ! what a strange and startling fire is this—
 The fire which thus illumines Daksh by gloom—
 The gloom of his immortal daughter's death !" 41

The narrative is woven in satire which rises from ego-centric celebration of physical existence by Daksh and its end in gloom. The king had sought to celebrate his own immortality by treating Sati and Shiva as mortal, but it costs him his own existence to realise that both Shiva and his daughter were immortal. The poet merges vision and creation in his poetic consciousness.

Elsewhere, in the narrative, the poet exposes his social concern about marriage and the related rituals contrasting it with Shiva's marriage with Parvati and the guests that King Himraj, Parvati's father, had to entertain. Apart from humorous episodes, the poet offers a criticism of the evil of dowry that prevails in today's Indian society:

Accursed be dowry! Wicked are the ways
 Of getting and of giving more and more.
 The men whose insatiable dowry-lust
 Increases more and more, the more they get,
 Are still unsatisfied and burn the girl—
 The girl so innocent, tender, lovely, pure,
 So fresh from loving parents' cosy care,
 So new to alien ways of household new,
 So sacrificing for her husband dear,
 So faithful to the fiats of all in-laws.
 Her only fault's the father's limited cash. 42

The lexical-items such as "Accursed", "Wicked", "more and more", "insatiable", "dowry-lust", and "unsatisfied" projects the sprawling evil practice of dowry in the institution of

marriage. It communicates that the lust for dowry remains insatiable and goes on increasing the day after day. There have been a number of incidents in the contemporary age, especially in India, when a girl has been made to face severe threats, and even burnt to death, if her parents have not been able to meet the demands (dowry) of her in-laws. It implicitly communicates that in this purely materialistic world, humans are so blinded that they keep their virtues at stake and embrace vices for the attainment of their materialistic ends.

The poet also draws a picture of the feast that is traditionally offered to the guests in villages and cities. Humorously, the feast is the same in manner and content as Himraj offered to Shiva's marriage party—thirty-six dishes of different tastes—including *kachauri*, *chatni*, spicy soup, *papur*, *laddoo*, *mawa*, curd, etc.—all personally served on leaf-made *pattals* (plates). The narrator contrasts the old practise of welcoming the marriage party with today's buffet system:

... The feasts of love were those,
 Not like the feasts of vultures, buffets called,
 Wherein the well-dressed gents and ladies pounce—
 Likes kites on flesh or dogs upon the bone—
 On delicacies stored in bowls on tables
 By hired waiters. Stand they like a wall
 Along the tables, picking more and more,
 And thrusting soup-wet spoons to pick up sweets—
 The syrup-sunken *rasgullas* in bowls—
 While persons old who stand and wait behind
 Are helpless 'gainst the wall of chattering ladies
 And robust youth upon this plenty pouncing.
 Lo! as they find their way, the bowls are clean ! 43

The narrator is sarcastic when he mentions “vultures”, “kites”, and “dogs”, or even “hired waiters”. These are loaded expressions to convey that the guests are not civilised as they pounce on delicacies like vultures, kites, and dogs. Other suggestion implied in the expressions is that the traditional feasts consisted of vegetarian dishes (as many as thirty-six) whereas today's dishes are non-vegetarian, enjoyed by the likes of vultures, kites, and dogs, who do not even let others take their share, or even allow aged persons and children to eat

first, thus, depicting moral-degradation in the contemporary society. The expression “hired waiters” reflects that in the present times, the person offering the feast no more takes interest in personally looking after the guests. The depicted scene is in utter contrast to the Indian cultural and traditional practices where the host used to take immense pleasure in serving food to his guests, and thus, displaying his personal involvement, love, care, and respect for the guests. One cannot miss the use of enjambment at the end of a number of lines to meet the metrical pattern, and at the same time, it also facilitates the tone of satire and sarcasm.

The poet also makes effective use of animal imagery to construct the discourse of satire and sarcasm, and facilitate the communication process in his *A Rudraksha Roasary*. In Book VIII, ‘The Daybreak’, Lord Shiva tells Parvati that the virtuous people suffer and the wicked people thrive in the reign of Tarak, the demon:

The darkest night envelops all, my dear,
 Illusion-breeding Tarak’s *maya*’s spell
 Has changed the law-abiding virtuous men
 To donkeys carrying heavy loads all life,
 To cows whose calves are starved of milk by the sly,
 To hares who run for fear of hunters wild,
 To the smaller fry devoured by the sharks,
 To sheep in dread of always prowling wolves,
 To cats deprived of all their due by monkeys.
 To monkeys, lions, foxes, dogs, chameleons
 And bulls and sharks and wolves and crocodiles,
 The wicked men have changed. They slyly prowl
 In blind confusion’s night. The lions fierce
 Devour the hares for there’s no law but might.
 The foxes thrive for tricks succeed, not truth.
 The dogs can fawn and gain the cosy comforts.
 Chameleons cheat by the charming changing hues.
 The bulls jump on to the backs of helpless cows
 And squeeze them ’tween their forelegs shamelessly.
 The crocodiles deceptive tears shed.

Lord Shiva gives a detailed description of the prevalent lawlessness and sprawling chaos in the reign of Tarak, and tries to convince her (Parvati) to send Kartikey for the noble cause of liberating all the people, down on earth, from the pangs of sufferings. The description closely resembles the contemporary social and political scene, and thus, implicitly suggests that the government in the present times is no better than that of a demon, which sucks the blood of innocent people. The expression “darkest night” symbolically refers to the contemporary times, where the governing forces are engaged in “Illusion-breeding”. The government, instead of working for the welfare of the society, is busy deceiving people for its easy sustenance. The sprawling evil forces such as corruption, hypocrisy, moral degradation, etc. have arrested all people in its tight tentacles. Sarcastically, the “law-abiding virtuous men” are reduced to “donkeys”, who never apply their sense and intelligence (?), as they continue to blindly obey their masters. The word “cows” metaphorically refers to the women, who do not engage themselves in breast-feeding as they think that it might spoil their figure or physical composure, and call themselves ‘modern’. The weaker sections of the society, may it be in terms of caste, creed, social status, economic status, or any other factor, are constantly exploited by the powerful. The term “smaller fry” stands metaphorically for the labours and peasants who are exploited by the “sharks”, i.e. capitalists and industrialists, and sarcastically, the “sharks” endanger the existence of “the smaller fry”. The depicted imagery communicates that in the present times, a human sucks the blood of another human. In the similar vein, the terms “sheep”, “wolves”, “cats”, “monkeys”, “lions”, “dogs”, “chameleons”, “bull”, and “crocodile” refer to humans of the present times, i.e. ‘honest’, ‘cunning’, ‘meek/foolish’, ‘wise’, ‘ferocious’, ‘subservient’, ‘opportunist’, ‘sexually obsessed’, and ‘hypocrite’ person respectively. The contemporary people have become ferocious as they devour their rivals because of the cut-throat competition all around. Young men have lost their ethical values and the moral degradation in the society has led to rape, murder, and other crimes all around. The politicians are opportunist, like chameleons, and hypocrites as they shed false tears, i.e. ‘crocodile tears’, on the state of the common people, and thus, deceive everyone.

Elsewhere, in a short poem ‘Coalition Circuses’, the poet satirises the political parties, politicians, and the parliamentary proceedings in the similar vein, i.e. with the use of animal imagery:

There swung upon a merry – go – round
 A fox, an ass, an ape
 Who, with their clashing voices’ sounds
 Amused and made me gape.

The fox and ape were calling names;
 The ass its brayings lent
 To the show. I asked them, “What ‘s this game?”
 They said, “ ’Tis Government.”⁴⁵

The reader can easily identify, or decode/interpret, the term “merry – go – round” as a metaphor for the ‘Parliament’; “A fox, an ass, an ape”, metaphorically and sarcastically, referring to the ‘parliamentarians’; “clashing voices” suggesting the discussion in the Parliament, i.e. the parliamentary proceedings.

The most disturbing trend as noted in another poem ‘Our Ills and their Panacea’ is:

The knaves in millions rule the fools in billions.
 Our wealth conceals our sins’ unending treasures;
 Our life of luxuries, foreign debts in trillions.
 Our vices rob us of our spiritual pleasures.⁴⁶

The use of the word “knaves” as a metaphor to address all such people who are involved in the governing-system, i.e. ‘Government’, especially the politicians and bureaucrats, evokes satire. Similarly, the use of the word “fools” to refer to the common folks/people is satirical as well.

5.3.1.2. *A Spiritual Warrior*

The issue of man-woman relationship is again satirically dealt in Book I, ‘The Union’, of *A Spiritual Warrior* with eroticism at the very centre. It depicts the King of Hastinapur,

Shantanu, making all possible efforts to persuade Ganga for having sexual union with him without getting into wedlock; whereas Ganga provides counter-argument to support her moral stand which directs her to get married first, and only then, involve herself in a sexual union. Initially, Ganga declines his advances as “stranger’s request strange”⁴⁷, but she agrees to marry him when his identity is known as the King of Hastinapur. Shantanu, in his attempt to persuade Ganga, makes “plausible pleas”⁴⁸ in “honeyed words”⁴⁹, and suggests her to move “with time’s current fast.”⁵⁰ He calls moral ideals and ethical values as “whirlpools wild”⁵¹ in which a person is “drowned helpless”⁵², and further adds, “There’s no sin in sin”⁵³, but only love. Shantanu asserts further that as he is the King, laws cannot harm him. As a representative voice of today, the mythical figure tells Ganga that even the “high officials”⁵⁴ and “*Acharyas*”⁵⁵, who are supposed to keep up to the law and set moral uprightness, satiate their lust for “pelf and sex”⁵⁶ in an “undeterred”⁵⁷ manner, but “with a moral mask.”⁵⁸ Ganga declines all his arguments, and finally, Shantanu agrees to marry her. But now, Ganga asks for an assurance before she could give her final consent: “That never shall you question what I do / Or if you question, I’ll be free to go.”⁵⁹ Shantanu is struck dumb at her demand, and he replies:

The freedom you demand is oft misused.
 The female serpent eats her eggs, they say,
 But well before the chicks appear in them.
 But there are women, freer, harsher far –
 The women slowly killing their babes in wombs,
 Thereafter too, to keep their bodies slim
 And luring level breasts intact and tight—
 Not eating fully in their pregnancy
 And then breast-feeding not their tender babes.
 The babes which Nature gives them lovingly
 And killed by them, with insults heaped on Nature.
 Such bounds the modern women’s freedoms reach.
 Accursed be freedoms such wherein the children
 Are starving for their mother’s precious love—
 The mother dancing in some costly club. ⁶⁰

The argument provided by Shantanu unveils, or reflects, the contemporary society where women are “freer”, “harsher”, and as a result, they kill their “babes in wombs.” He sounds sarcastic and contemporary as he reflects on the nature of women, especially echoing the so-called modern or working women, who keep themselves slim and presentable by not breastfeeding their babies, or not eating fully during their pregnancy, or even aborting their babes for their personal freedom. The use of the words such as “freer”, “harsher”, “killing”, “luring”, “intact and tight”, and “heaped” in the context of the extract, i.e. modern-women, evokes satire. The women in the contemporary age, especially the working-class, do not wish to get pregnant as it would distort their figure. While the monarch thinks of union with Ganga for plain physical reasons and sex, Ganga thinks of union with him for procreation. The satire lies in Shantanu’s pleas with a woman who does not seek sex for physical pleasure. Ganga understands this well and pooh-poohs his interpretation of Nature. The ancient King’s advances and arguments which is valid in contemporary context, even as the mythical Ganga is aware of the monarch’s insincerity in agreeing to marry her: “The shameless royal lust could wait no more.”⁶¹ The very moral stand of Shantanu is questionable, and then, the plot where both, Shantanu and Ganga, test each other’s sincerity is satirical.

5.3.1.3. *Flowering of a Lotus*

One comes across similar satirical strains in his third epic narrative *Flowering of a Lotus* as well. The whole narrative is composed in eight cantos of different lengths comprising of Spenserian Stanzas. Sharma meticulously adheres to the structure of a Spenserian stanza, and therefore, the last line of each stanza is an alexandrine, and it offers momentum and cadence to the whole narrative. The depiction of the contemporary scene at regular intervals, even in his epic-narratives, reveals the strong influence of his surroundings on him, and also reminds one of his prime objective of connecting poetry to life, and hence, to amuse as well as to instruct.

So long Maha Nand Sharma has dealt with Nature to highlight the negative side of the male characters such as Daksh, Himraj, and Shantanu, and reflected on the declining moral values

in the present times. In *Flowering of a Lotus*, the poet deals with the story of Bhartrahari, the King of Malwa, who suffers the immorality of his third wife Pingla. In Canto V, 'End of Mire' (a vicious circle), he uses the story of the presentation of the immortality fruit to the King by a poor Brahmin who had received it from Lord Shiva as a result of his penance. Bhartrahari offers the fruit to Pingla for her love to him but she gives it to her lover, the Chief of her bodyguards. The Chief, in turn, offers it to his beloved, a prostitute. Thinking that immortality brought about by the fruit may land her into miseries after her youth, she presents it to Bhartrahari, the King, who is disillusioned to learn that the prostitute had received the fruit from the Chief of Pingla's bodyguards. The discourse of satire is thus, woven around Bhartrahari who is considered as deserving to be immortal and powerful by the poor Brahmin and the prostitute, but undeserving by his own wife and Chief of bodyguards. He is so disillusioned that he retires to forest leaving the Kingdom to the care of his brother, Vikram. The King wanted Pingla to eat the fruit and remain beautiful and "Enjoy eternal life."⁶² She cheats him and remains only 'formal wife', giving the King no physical pleasure which she shared with the cunning Chief of guards, who was happier with the prostitute. The prostitute proves more honest to herself, when she thinks "What shall I do with this? / E'er since my birth my life has been a hell."⁶³ She, like the Brahmin, expects the King to shield the weak and the honest, but the King on discovering the fraud on him by Pingla decides to proceed to forest to atone his "monstrous sins."⁶⁴ He does not even punish Pingla or the Chief, who, too, partook of "mirage of world"⁶⁵ and "mad pursuit of lust."⁶⁶

Maha Nand Sharma also comments on the contemporary social, political, and academic scene in a satirical vein in his long narrative *Flowering of a Lotus*. The fourth stanza of the very first Canto is a satirical depiction of the prevailing practices in the academic sphere. It communicates that neither the students, nor the teachers, nor even the administrators care for imparting quality education, and as a result, complete lawlessness prevails everywhere:

'Twas substance, not the shell of education,
Not like the learning's drama that's now staged
Wherein the teachers, eager for vacation,
Teach but two months a year. Not one page

Of text is read by pupils in this age.
 But notes are mugged up. Vice-chancellors bow
 To higher-ups, goons and crowds. A sacrilege
 Of learning's temples! Hollow glittering show
 Where merit weeps and money makes the mare go! ⁶⁷

It is the use of the words such as “shell”, “drama”, “staged”, “mugged up”, “bow”, “higher-ups”, “goons”, “sacrilege”, “temples”, “hollow”, “glittering”, “weeps”, and “go” in its metaphorical sense imparts a deep suggestiveness and constructs the discourse of satire. It communicates that in the present times: the teachers do not show any interest in the teaching affair but are interested in going on vacations; the students have faith in mugging-up a few important questions from their syllabus and getting through their exams; and even the administrators and other people appointed to look after the teaching-learning process in order to ensure healthy education system or academic atmosphere are busy entertaining such people to whom they are answerable, or other influential people around, instead of eradicating the problems or loopholes in the system. Thus, the activities of the students, teachers, and the administrators jointly reduce the high stature of a learning place, which is referred as the “temple” of knowledge, to that of a ‘theatre’ where one is free to enter and entertain oneself. The mention of “Vice-chancellors” bowing to “goons and crowds” is sarcastic. The last line also communicates the increasing role of money in the educational set-ups, and satirically, “merit weeps”.

In stanza no.22 of the same Canto, the speaker describes ‘Democracy’ in a pungent tone:

A system called Democracy which galls
 The people good who weep as criminals' thralls,
 A system wherein cheats and murderers rule.
 They don't govern since votes are for them, all—
 The votes for which they, void of conscience, fool
 The common folk. Hypocrisy's their vicious tool. ⁶⁸

One finds the poet using enjambment as the most prominent poetic device in order to meet the standards, structure, and the metrical pattern of a Spenserian stanza. The stanza depicts democracy as the system in which “cheats and murderers” form the government, or are in

the authoritative positions. It is also revealed that they befool common people in order to ascend to power, and all of them are well-equipped with the trait of “Hypocrisy”.

To quote an example depicting the contemporary social scene, the tenth stanza of Canto VII, presents a satirical portrait of the contemporary people:

The weak are satisfied with what they get
 However little that may be. The strong
 Whose aims at heights greater far are set,
 E’en in their dreams, can never get along
 With less than that which lies in reach of long
 And mighty arms. Though hunger-struck, a dog
 Is satisfied the fleshless bones among
 But a lion, scorning jackal’s flesh, unclogged,
 Attacks the tusker wild, by hugeness never dogged. ⁶⁹

The stanza, satirically, communicates that the hunger/aspirations/desires of a strong person is insatiable in nature as it goes on increasing day after day; whereas the “Weak” remain content with whatever they get, “However the little that may be.” The comparison/contrast between “The strong” and a “dog”, which satiates itself even with pieces of “fleshless bones”, communicates that even a dog is better than humans in this regard, and thus, evokes sarcasm. One again finds Maha Nand Sharma using animal imagery in order to create the discourse of satire and sarcasm.

With his spiritual sensitivity intact, Maha Nand Sharma thus offers his socio-political vision with a view to improving the lot of the age he lived in. Since he attempted three long narratives *a la* epic, he incorporated most of the social cultural, political, and even psycho-sexual themes in these narratives in perspective. He appears to interpret the past in terms of the present language and consciousness, and makes the narratives relevant and readable for today’s generation.

Given the design and content of the long poems, and the fact that one can write only one epic in lifetime to construct one’s vision, it is not surprising that Sharma is repetitive in most

unearthing virtues not smelt so far
will pile high to the sky above. 71

...
Once pyre on fire, the work is done 72

While Maha Nand Sharma's 'The Poet's Fortune' begins with an image of "the poet's **arthi!**" (the dead body), sarcastically chanting 'God's name as true' (Isn't the poet, a god, singing Truth ?), I.K. Sharma's poem begins with a conditional clause, "If I die tonight." The former is conceived as already dead, while the latter presents a hypothetical death of the poet. Satirically, both the Sharmas reach the same conclusion *albeit* in two different tones to commemorate the poet's 'achievement'.

There are yet other poems by the two poets that invite comparison despite difference in approach: Maha Nand Sharma sounds impulsively harsh, while I.K. Sharma sounds soberly ironical or humorous.

5.3.1.5. 'Gods versus God'

In the poem, 'Gods versus God', Maha Nand Sharma sarcastically refers to politicians and the ruling class as "God" and their supporters "mindless clods" ⁷³ and "slogan-shouting mobs" ⁷⁴ that sustain the ruling politicians. The use of epithets such as "the knaves" ⁷⁵, "the touts" ⁷⁶, "the wolves" ⁷⁷, and "TV – Gods" ⁷⁸ communicate the theme and tone of the poem, and attitude of the narrator: "By communal, casteist slogans as their tools, / Has torn this land asunder ! How insane!" ⁷⁹ The moralistic view is sarcastically evoked:

And where is God? By thoughtless creatures cast
Before the wolves of anger, greed and lust!
Our TV – Gods provide us rich repast
Of rapes and murders. God within us rusts. ⁸⁰

The poet of 'The Leader', I.K. Sharma, is however, non-moralist in his depiction of the "God" of Maha Nand Sharma. In eight lines, he underlines the deceptive mindset of the leader who successfully bullies the followers:

He gave them a loud call
 like a cock in a lane
 announced on the air :
 dawn is not far-off.

The early risers followed him
 stumbled, and found :
 he walks with his back towards them
 hides the rising sun. ⁸¹

The poet draws a comparison between the politicians (leaders) and a “cock” on the basis of their “loud call”. Like a cock, the leader makes an attempt to awake the sleeping masses, and encourages them to follow him by announcing: “dawn is not far-off.” The use of the litotes rightly projects the diplomatic language that politicians usually use in their speech, and they design their sentences in such an intriguing manner that they always have the scope of turning down their own statements. The poet addresses the followers of the leader as “The early risers” in an ironical sense, as it inherently suggests that the early risers, in the context of the poem, are dumb and fools. Here, “The early risers” refers to those people who blindly trust the call of a cock and leave their bed early, without applying their wit and sense to find out whether the call is made at the right time or not. In their rush to see the rising sun first, they stumble but are surprised to find that the very leader who wanted them to view the dawn was walking “with his back towards them to hide “the rising sun.” This metaphorically suggests that he (leader) never allows his followers to gain wisdom and knowledge, or to enjoy the fruit of development. In other words, the leader stands in front of the sun, and thus, projects himself as the ‘Almighty’ and the most powerful, and an embodiment of ‘Truth’ and ‘Knowledge’. The use of the vibrant metaphors such as “lane”, “dawn”, “risers”, “stumbled”, “back”, and “sun” make up the discourse of satire.

Thus, it is found that Maha Nand Sharma is more direct in his attack, as he directly refers to the politicians as “Gods” in an ironical and sarcastic vein; whereas I.K. Sharma constructs his discourse of satire in an implied manner with the use of metaphors.

5.3.1.6. 'A Tale of Freedom's Tears'

Maha Nand Sharma's usage of language is stunning in some of his poems as he uses very strong words to create striking mental images for the reader about everyday common things. The poem titled 'A Tale of Freedom's Tears' displays his unique handling of the language to depict common observation. The poem is a satire on the different forms of government and the rampant corruption and hypocrisy all around. It implicitly raises a serious question about the system in which a few people 'rule' or 'govern' the entire population, be it monarchy, communism, dictatorship, or democracy. One finds a rich blending of wit, irony, humour, satire, and sarcasm in the poem. For example, Stanza no. 39 describes the dressing of a legislator thus:

They talked of legislators dressed
In handloom *dhoties*, shirts so white
That in its whiteness, purity too
Could hardly match a dress so white. ⁸²

The legislators project themselves in such a way that they are the idols of honesty and perfection, as the metaphors "handloom *dhoties*" and 'white shirts' indicate. The "whiteness" of "purity" is exaggerated to convey the "purity" of legislators mind and behavior. Satirically, the whiteness of their shirt is in absolute contrast to their real nature, which is deceitful, selfish, and cunning. The repetition of the /t/ and /d/ sounds for eleven and eight times respectively constructs a harsh tone to produce a sarcastic affect. Again, the repetition of the /u:/ and /ou/ sounds hints at the exaggerated tone of the speaker that facilitates the discourse of satire. The repetition of the noun/adjective, "white", not only provides rhyme and rhythm, but also calls to mind it's opposite, i.e. 'black/dark' aspects of peoples' elected representatives who swear by truth:

Of honest bosses they would talk
Who touched not pelf beyond their due,
Who talked of conscience day and night
And said, they never spoke but true. ⁸³

The speaker induces a subtle sarcasm alongwith humour in the second line, where he talks of the “honest bosses” who keep themselves away from corruption. The satire lies in the use of the word “honest” in a different sense and context, i.e. to suggest that the bosses are fair and reliable where the distribution of money earned through corrupt, or unfair, means is concerned. It is the juxtaposition of the word “honest” with the phrase “touched not pelf beyond their due” that constructs the discourse of satire.

The succeeding twenty-three stanzas that seem to have been recreated from the poet’s personal observations and experiences of the academia underscore the deeply rooted corruption and game of money, sex, and fraud, especially in academic research. Through his sarcastic portrayal of the university scene and attitude of senior faculty and researchers, he seeks to attack the nexus of politicians, academic administrators, and researchers in colleges and universities:

From Chancellor to the lowest clerk
The drains of sly corruption flowed;
The white-capped leaders pulled the strings
Official puppets straight kowtowed. ⁸⁴

He has been aware how “professors great” ⁸⁵ have been “Inventing numerous ‘ologies”” ⁸⁶, i.e. apparently new areas/subjects out of “small” ⁸⁷ topics, “Exhausting all morphologies.” ⁸⁸ The punch of the line lends a sarcastic colour to the argument.

Stanza no. 49 of the poem unveils the poet’s moral strain in relationship between girls and boys in the ‘temples of high learning’:

In temples large of learning high
Where girls and boys together read,
So well was Aphrodite adored
That muses, quite ignored, had fled. ⁸⁹

The narrator sarcastically questions their attitude of entertainment, fun, and frolic. The use of the phrases “Aphrodite adored” and “muses, quite ignored, had fled” reflect his quite

bitterness and internal distress. In fact, the poet exposes his vision more critically in the next stanza:

‘Enjoy and be enjoyed’, said dons
To damsels for research degree,
‘ ’Tis double profit you will reap—
Enjoyment and the Ph.D.’ ⁹⁰

The statement “Enjoy and be enjoyed” is the philosophy being pursued by both the faculty and the researcher. The use of the expressions such as “double profit” and “reap” in a metaphorical sense constructs the discourse of sarcasm. Stanza no.53 adds to the critical observation:

No less was Mammon worshipped there.
The guides charged too heavy fees,
And shared them with conveners sly
And got for pupils, Ph. D.’s ⁹¹

The use of the phrases such as “Mammon worshipped there”, “heavy fees”, and “conveners sly” evokes a sarcastic affect. The anguish of the poet is further reflected in his use of expressions such as “toughs” ⁹² (for research scholars), “dunce” ⁹³ (research scholars in terms of their knowledge), “dons” ⁹⁴ (professors), “learned slaves” ⁹⁵ (teaching fraternity), “masters” ⁹⁶ (seniors), “danced attendance” ⁹⁷ (presence), “frowning eye-brow” ⁹⁸, “scales” ⁹⁹ (contempt), “seniors smart” ¹⁰⁰ (cunning), “dogs” ¹⁰¹ (teaching fraternity), “battered bread” ¹⁰² (personal materialistic gains), “tempting sinecures” ¹⁰³ (displays their unwillingness to work), “wily overtures” ¹⁰⁴ (general temperament), “conscience cheap” ¹⁰⁵ (immoral), “swelling vanities” ¹⁰⁶ (false pride), “jealousies deep” ¹⁰⁷ (attitude towards their colleagues), “Ambitions high” ¹⁰⁸ (hope to enjoy high posts, although they are incompetent), “lusts for pow’r” ¹⁰⁹ (promotion and post), “clashed” ¹¹⁰, “dons’ intrigues” ¹¹¹, “drains” ¹¹², “official puppets” ¹¹³ (people in administration, i.e. high positions in a university), “straight kowtowed” ¹¹⁴ (meek obedience), etc. in other stanzas of the poem.

Maha Nand Sharma seems to be very dissatisfied at each and every front of life, be it judiciary, legislature, or government and its representatives:

The judge's table was the bridge
 Whereunder flowed from clients to clerk
 The bribes which bought for judges' wives
 The 'broided *saris*, frocks and shirts.

A lawyer helped alike for pelf
 His clients and their foes in court.
 The loser he then ably soothed;
 From winner won his glass of port. ¹¹⁵

The speaker satirically projects the judiciary, which is supposed to promote justice, as it has become a breeding centre for corruption and injustice. The lawyers and judges, who are supposed to fight for the cause of 'truth' and 'justice', have turned into hypocrites promoting injustice and lawlessness for their personal materialistic gains.

In the similar vein, the poet constructs the discourse of satire and sarcasm on the parliamentary proceedings in Stanza no.69:

In parliaments the paper-weights
 Were flying, whizzing; mikes were hurled;
 The clothes were torn to shreds; to fight
 The M.P.'s their moustaches twirled. ¹¹⁶

The stanza satirically presents the parliamentary proceedings during a strong debate between the ruling party and the opposition. The scene evokes irony, satire, and sarcasm. The last line of the stanza adds to the inherent sarcasm as twirling of moustaches communicates the notion of taking pride in one's deeds, and one twirls one's moustaches only when one is proud of his action, as per the cultural considerations. Thus, the stanza communicates that the parliamentarians are proud of themselves instead of being ashamed for assaulting the dignity of the Parliament.

Similarly, in a number of other stanzas of the narrative poem 'A Tale of Freedom's Tears', one finds Maha Nand Sharma constructing the discourse of satire and sarcasm in order to communicate his personal observations of the contemporary society. Thus, the poem communicates Sharma's quest for 'Freedom'. He explores 'Freedom', as an individual; in

all different forms of political set-ups; but in vain. He finally turns towards religion, and hopes that it would end his quest:

As a drowning man attempts to catch
At straws, I thought their view would, sure,
Restore to me my primitive self,
Effulgent, blooming, natural, pure. ¹¹⁷

He is more astonished to find that even religion beguiles these days as it forces a lot more restrictions, instead of the bliss of freedom:

They brought new faith, new God, new gods
For faith and God and gods of yore.
Reducing men to soulless clods,
New faith was blinder, forced much more. ¹¹⁸

Ultimately, he realizes that ‘Freedom’ stands to be an abstract and unattainable entity, if searched for in the external world; and therefore, he turns inward to discover “Eternal vigilance” ¹¹⁹, “struggle hard” ¹²⁰ (against the materialistic urges), “self-restraint” ¹²¹, and “sacrifice” ¹²² (of materialistic pursuits, all urges and desires, ego, lust, etc.) to be the only means to attain ‘freedom’. In other words, the poem suggests that freedom can only be attained by turning ‘inwards’, i.e. towards the realization of the Self (God within/Soul), than looking for it in the ‘outside’, i.e. world. The poem, implicitly, projects the poet’s philosophy that ‘Spiritualization’ is the only medium of achieving freedom. Thus, the poem is yet another example that displays Sharma sticking to his prime objective of bringing a wave of resurrection/reformation in the society as the end result of his poetic communication.

5.3.1.7. Conclusion

Maha Nand Sharma, thus, believes in retaining the traditional mode, i.e. ‘Form’ and ‘Structure’, of poetry writing. He claims in one of his papers that “The present day poetry, mostly in free-verse, fails to elevate the readers permanently and thus mould their character because it totally lacks the permanently elevating or character-moulding quality that metrical

poetry has.”¹²³ Therefore, one observes uniform rhyme-scheme, smooth rhythm, a standard metrical pattern, and high tone in most of the poems discussed in the present chapter. M.K. Naik appreciates the poetic craftsmanship of Maha Nand Sharma in the words: “...your narratives are, on the whole, well told and the Blank Verse competently managed....”¹²⁴ A similar opinion sounds in Prema Nandakumar’s comment: “Dr. Sharma’s handling of the ten-syllabled blank verse is pleasing to the ear.”¹²⁵ Another critic of Indian English Literature, K.R. Srinivasa Iyenger opines: “The satirical/political pieces – with their literary echoes – are enjoyable. And generally your command over phrasing and rhythm compels the reader’s approbation.”¹²⁶

The satire in Maha Nand Sharma tilts towards or paves the way for sarcasm reflecting the poet’s hopelessness about seeing a change. Additionally, most of the poems end with some kind of moral lesson or didactic message often in two lines. When a number of other poems of Maha Nand Sharma are studied and analyzed, pragmatically and socio-linguistically, one finds that in the pace of literary communication, satire shifts to sarcasm and back. He creates an impeccable blend of wit, irony, humour, satire, and sarcasm in most of his long narrative poems and handles all of them remarkably well, but the overall effect on the reader is mostly satiric or sarcastic. Robert A. Hall Jr. stamps the use of satire and sarcasm in Sharma’s poetry saying: “A somewhat bitter but justified satire is evident in such poems as In ‘A Tale of Freedom’s Tears’, Dr. Sharma embodies that goddess’s lament for her abject condition resulting from the corruption of modern intellectual and economic life.”¹²⁷ Prema Nandakumar comments on the amplitude of Sharma’s satire and says: “... Sharma is particularly powerful and successful when attacking the moral turpitude of academics.”¹²⁸

Maha Nand Sharma’s poems display that he is conscious of the special strength of the human soul and will power to come-over all the hardships of the contemporary society in spite of all inconveniences and encumbrances, and therefore, with the aid of satire and sarcasm he tries to stimulate that hidden human potential to action. Sharma’s disappointment with the contemporary Indian life is satirically and sarcastically articulated in many of his poems that project the difficulty of living amidst multiple inconveniences, foolishnesses,

inefficiencies, hypocrisy, rampant corruption, exploitation, and inadequacies. Kalika Ranjan Chatterjee rightly points: “Dr Maha Nand Sharma reveals himself as a crusader for protection of fundamental human rights and his poetry is aflame with righteous indignation when he contemplates the basis of our caste-dominated Hindu society.”¹²⁹ Such poems communicate the shocking awareness of the triumph of opportunism over idealism, ignorance over knowledge, and sensuousness over spirituality. A number of poems attacking the degradation of moral conscience and ethical values in the contemporary humans are universal in its applicability, as it is not confined only to India, but extends over to the entire world.

Maha Nand Sharma’s poetic communication projects that he is very displeased and discontented with the society. His pragmatics of sarcasm also reflects that there is little hope of resurrection in the society. I.K. Sharma, on the other hand, demonstrates his trust in the society and he is hopeful that all the evils of the society that disturb Maha Nand Sharma will gradually disappear.

5.3.2. Satire and Sarcasm in I.K. Sharma

R.K. Singh and Mitali De Sarkar opine: “I.K. Sharma’s essential poetic sensibility – satirical, ironical, and sometimes amusing and witty – does not approve of socio-economic exploitation, political thuggery, discrimination, dishonesty, duplicity, dehumanization and assault on human dignity at any level and, therefore, a large number of his poems tend to create a mood which is characteristic of protest and anger, “real and not just a trick of the mind”, as he would himself point out.... His strong views emanate from a vision of healthy society which is creative, loving and friendly.”¹³⁰ To quote H.S. Bhatia: “... Prof. I.K. Sharma appeals to me as probably the foremost political satirist in the history of Indian English Poetry, equalled, if at all, only by O.P. Bhatnagar... it must be borne in mind that Sharma’s political satires are not comparable to those of Dryden or Pope in the sense that Sharma does not undertake to project the viewpoint of any particular political party or group by endeavoring to cut to size any member of a rival party or group.”¹³¹

The way/manner in which satire oozes out of I.K. Sharma's poetic lines, and most often, as a result of the promiscuous blend of political and social realities mark his distinctive poetic style. In most of his poems, one finds his satire to be gentle in nature and not directed towards a particular person or group; instead they attack the folly/vice, misdeed, or the wrong act. In his poetic communication, satire serves as a detergent as well as a deterrent. In other words, satire in I.K. Sharma acts as a cleansing agent. Writing mostly on social and political themes, he has established himself as a poet of political and social reality. Explaining his thematic concerns, I.K. Sharma himself reveals, "I have criticized socio-economic conditions of our society and also politicians. A sensitive person will surely react when he sees all around him certain vital sections of civilization, weakened if not destroyed altogether."¹³² A major section of Sharma's poetry entertains certain themes that are deeply associated with the contemporary social and political situation. Although his satirical poems give a vent to his dissatisfaction and protest, yet these create a harmonious effect without didacticism. Unlike Maha Nand Sharma, who tries to enforce reformation, I.K. Sharma's sense of social reality prompts him to leave it to the readers. His satirical poems rather present the inverse side of an ideal, turned inside out, or upside down with subtle or implied suggestions.

I.K. Sharma is very cautious in his choice of words and his imagery is rich and evocative. This feature in conjunction with the syntactic structure, punctuation, and tone makes the satire more subtle, as well as sharp and effective. Though most of his poems are in unrhymed lines of varying lengths, they often have an inner rhythm based on alliteration, assonance, or even the portrayal of emotions and ideas.

5.3.2.1. 'The Roundworms'

For example, the poem 'The Roundworms', like 'The Leader' (mentioned earlier) is a satire on the contemporary politicians:

The doc examined me and said :
 You look jaded and starved,
 for in your steady stomach
 ---the capital of the human body---

sit the members of a hungry phylum
looking innocuous, but injurious.

I yielded to his suggestion.
He administered a dose of decaris
followed by a laxative,
and lo! all the sitting members of my stomach
well-fed, and each 25 centimetres long
eating my sap in gastro-galleries,
paralysed, and flushed out in one motion.
Soon I regained my hunger and health.

I then realized :
When the limit is crossed
parasites deserve this treatment. 133

The poem is ironic in terms of individual human body, but turns sarcastic in terms of nation's body. The whole poem may be viewed as an organic image, where an implied comparison is drawn between the human body and the country. Organically, the centre is represented by the nation's "capital", New Delhi, and other parts, "gastro-galleries" stands for the various states, or administrative bodies. Here, the word "capital" functions as a metonymy for the country, and the noun "roundworms" stands as a metaphor for the politicians, especially the members of parliament, in the political context. If the context of the poem is changed from political to religious, then, the term "roundworm" would refer to the orthodox priests, *sadhus* and *munis*, preachers, etc. who claim themselves to be the people who safeguard the interests of a religion, or maintain the sanctity of a religion, but in fact, they promote orthodoxy that feeds upon religious tolerance. Similarly, the poem may be decoded in a number of other contexts as well, each constructing a different discourse, but each one of them would reflect satire and sarcasm.

An analysis of the poem reveals that the fourth line of the first stanza is 'foregrounded' with the use of a dash at both of its end, asking for special attention and a second thought. The parenthetical phrase creates a pun over the word "capital" as it also points to the capital of the country or state. In the political context, the word "members" for the persons sitting in

the capital, sarcastically, refers to the ‘Members of Parliament’ or Legislative Assemblies. The use of the expression “hungry phylum” to describe the nature of these members constructs the discourse of sarcasm as “phylum” is used to denote a group of animals and plants, but never humans. The phrase “looking innocuous, but injurious” seems to be an antithetical statement that projects the real nature of the politicians, and thus, adds strength to the sarcastic affect.

The use of the words “decaris”, which is a drug used to restore the immune system, and “laxative”, which is a drug used to empty the bowels, in the context of the poem is quite effective in developing the discourse at both the levels, i.e. at the ‘explicit’ as well as the ‘implicit’ level. At the explicit level, it suggests that the use of such drugs become essential to get rid of the worms which are the sitting members of the stomach and suck the body’s nutrients to disturb the health. Implicitly, it communicates that such parasites (M.P.’s and M.L.A.’s), who look “innocuous,” but are actually “injurious” in that they suck the blood and eat into one’s “sap in gastro-galleries”, have nothing else to do; and therefore, they deserve a harsh treatment and should be “paralysed” and “flushed out in one motion”, i.e. eliminated in one go, in order to gain a healthy state. The use of the phrases “well-fed” and “each 25 centimetres long” depicts the stature of these parasites that cause bad health to the human body, i.e. the country/state in the implicit context, and such depiction is indeed ironically sarcastic and amusing at the same time. The word “sap” in metaphorical sense suggests ‘the resources of the country’, and then, the compound word “gastro-galleries” also hints at the deep roots of corruption, i.e. the depth to which corruption has widespread its tentacles in the present society. The poem communicates that as soon as these parasites are flushed out; a capital (metonymy for the country or state) regains its objective of growth and development. The use of the words such as “paralysed”, “flushed”, and the exclamation “lo!” constructs the tone of satire.

The final stanza communicates that when the parasites have crossed their limits, i.e. when they have become very disturbing, they should be immediately flushed out of the body, so that they do not cause any further damage. The phrases “limit is crossed” and “deserve this treatment” suggest the end of one’s patience, and hence, the need for their elimination. The

use of two semi-colons, two hyphens, one exclamation mark, six commas, two dashes, and five full stops in a poem of seventeen lines not only provides a smooth rhythm to the poem but also the pauses help in creating a strong sense of irony which, as the poem progresses turns into satire.

5.3.2.2. 'The Quest for Mother'

Another poem 'The Quest for Mother' portrays, compares, and contrasts the present day values related to child rearing, or the attitude of the contemporary women towards their children, and the values of motherhood upheld in the past. The speaker in the poem is a new-born child, who is not taken care of by its mother:

I was born in a hospital
brought up in a crèche, fed by
women who didn't feed their own,
cleaned by experts who clean for money,
looked after in morn and night
by a woman who saddles in economic freedom,
cooks for husband, works for herself,
moves for society. I, out of mind,
out of sight.

Where is mother ? No. No. No.
Only a woman who carried me
helplessly in a part of her body
to find me in a hospital
with the aid of a nurse
who works there for no will of her own.
Mother is an old word. Archaic.
Out of tune and time.
Mother has breast, the woman
who bore me had none
because she never gave me one.

In the birth before, the breast had no rest,
the child's nest, the lover's rest,
and endlessly flowed the milk

of love and life,
of kindness and humanity.
Now, a soother for subtle barbarians,
a dead, dry, dehumanized
symbol of self-pity and publicity,
geometrically draped, arithmetically calculated,
and socialised in capitalist waters. 134

The poem contrasts ‘Womanhood’ and ‘Motherhood’, as it implicitly constructs a discourse that communicates the widening gulf between a ‘woman’ and a ‘mother’, in the contemporary times. Satirically, all women have the potential to give birth to offspring, but all do not have the ability to step into the role of a mother. A woman should always be a mother, but sarcastically, here (the poem) a mother is just a woman. The child is born not because it was wanted, but because the birth, just happened, out of sexual intercourse. The very title of the poem ‘The Quest for Mother’ is sarcastic, because the woman (who gives birth to the child) is not necessarily the mother but just a person, a professional woman, who has no sense of bondage with the child. In fact, it is the narration of the experience of the child which makes a serious comment on ‘motherhood’ raising questions that justify the quest of the child. The poem, thus, asserts a child’s basic right. Incidentally, this is the only poem in contemporary Indian Poetry in English where a new-born child appears as a speaker and presents a serious viewpoint for adults to rethink about their relationship with babies they bring into the world.

In the first stanza of the poem, the child-narrator, born in a hospital rather than at home as it used to be in not too distant a past unveils its pathetic tale and provides a portrait of its mother. The child-narrator avoids calling the lady, who delivered it, its mother; and instead addresses her as a common modern woman, and this provides the discourse its satiric impulse. The speaker projects its mother as a lady who has a very busy professional schedule and social commitments, and therefore, she is unable to pay attention to her offspring right from the day one. The phrase “brought up in a crèche” satirically points to the absence of home (and in the Indian context - joint family), which forces a working woman to leave the child at a crèche. The sentence “fed by / women who didn’t feed their

own” depicts the nurse, who too, being a working lady could not feed her own baby; but is feeding another woman’s baby for money. The context is ironical and is basic to the construct of satire from the viewpoint of the narrator, satirically, questing for mother. In the similar vein, the next line communicates that the child was cleaned by those who are hired professionals in the job, and implicitly suggests that no one cared for it as a parent. Here, both the women, the mother and the nurse, are working women who seek economic freedom and consider social identity as their prime concern. The use of the word “saddles” (which is generally used as a metonymy to refer to ‘horse’ that in turn reminds one of a race or the concept of speed and stamina) in the role of a verb communicates, implicitly, that in the race of economic freedom, the present day women have lost their emotional bond with the child they give birth to. Their responsibility is limited to cooking for husband, working for themselves, and acting for society. The baby in such a situation is naturally “out of mind” and also “out of sight.” The poet inverts the idiom ‘Out of sight, Out of mind’ to intensify the satiric effect, and it also leads to the child’s quest for mother in the second stanza.

The narrator’s basic question, “Where is mother?”, with an answer “No. No. No.” reminds one of the Biblical denial of Christ by Peter thrice. The three “No’s” also expresses the child’s doubt about the sincerity of the woman who “cooks for husband, works for herself” and “moves for society.” The repetition also denotes the child’s bitterness about the very idea of mother as the next few lines suggest. The child-narrator denies its identity with its mother, who considers child-rearing an unpleasant task, and therefore, tags her only as a lady who carried it helplessly. The lines implicitly communicates that these days, child is produced by a woman, whereas previously, it was given birth to by a mother. The female helplessness is satirically emphasized by the use of the expression of carrying the baby “in a part of her body”, and getting rid of it “in a hospital / with the aid of a nurse / who works there for no will of her own.” The complete absence of punctuation mark in the five lines (lines 2-6) of the second stanza imparts a distinct prosaic tone (that reflects the intensity of dejection experienced by the narrator) adding to the satiric impact which culminates in the sentence and fragments “Mother is an old word. Archaic. / Out of tune and time.” The syntactical arrangement of the words along with the peculiarity of the lexical elements in the

stanza imparts a heavy tone that facilitates the discourse of satire and sarcasm. The statement “Mother has breast, the woman, / who bore me had none” is paradoxical in nature and evokes sympathy for the narrator who had no privilege of sucking milk from its mother’s breast. One also notices the use of enjambment as the poetic technique to intensify the sarcastic affect in the poem.

The third stanza of the poem seems to idolize the image of woman who glorified her role as a mother in the past. The narrator compares the age old maternal figure of woman from whose breasts “endlessly flowed the milk / of love and life, / of kindness and humanity” with the society-woman of today, who are more concerned about their figure, and whose breasts are “geometrically draped, arithmetically calculated” rather than feeding their children. The contrast between the concept and role of breasts, which is used as a metaphor for ‘motherhood’ and as a metonymy for ‘woman’ in the poem, in the previous days and the contemporary times is sarcastically communicated in order to make them (contemporary women) conscious about the child’s right to be cared and breast-fed.

The design of the poem with a new born baby, who cannot speak, as the narrator is not only fresh but also critical as it speaks about issues of its interest which needs to be considered by the entire womenfolk everywhere. The metaphorical use of the language that is evident through the use of the words such as “birth”, “breast”, “rest”, “nest”, “milk”, “barbarians”, “dead”, “dry”, “dehumanized”, “publicity”, “draped”, “socialized”, and “waters” facilitates in the construction of the discourse of satire and sarcasm.

5.3.2.3. ‘The Death of Atlas’

The poem ‘The Death of Atlas’ is another subtle satire on the politics at the international level. It communicates that the base politics of the eminent political leaders (of International repute) is turning this beautiful world into a hell by tearing it apart:

The Atlas contains all
from Alaska to Australia
lies snug in a box
whose key is
with my curious son.

He unlocks, opens the lid,
 turns over the sleek surfaces
 of coloured lands,
 ---a tree laden with luxuriant fruits---
 tears them off one by one
 from their bound text.
 Soon all crumpled lie at his feet.

Now he stands aghast
 knows not
 how to reassemble them all. ¹³⁵

Here, 'Atlas' is used as a symbol to denote the whole world. The third line, "lies snug in a box", metaphorically suggests that the world is a very comfortable, safe, and cozy place; where each corner/end of the world, "Alaska to Australia", is within the reach of humans, as it is the age of globalization. The expression "curious son" is used satirically in a metaphorical sense to refer to the contemporary politicians, who are very ambitious and hence, unpredictable in nature.

In the second stanza of the poem, the foregrounded image of "—a tree laden with luxuriant fruits—" represents the whole world with all of its rich resources. The last three lines (Stanza 2) implicitly communicate that the politicians are no better than a "curious" child, as they tear the world apart into fragments, and satirically, they are devoid of the ability of reuniting the same fragments into a whole. The use of the words and phrases such as "tears them off", "bound text", "crumpled", and "at his feet" are deeply suggestive because of their metaphorical use, and construct the discourse of satire.

The expressions "stands aghast", "knows not", and "how to reassemble" in the last stanza of the poem highlights the bewilderment of the contemporary politicians who design certain policies that display their immaturity and foolishness. The last stanza re-emphasizes on the stupidity of the politicians, thus, intensifying the satiric effect.

5.3.2.4. 'The Pink City'

In the poem 'The Pink City', the speaker presents his reminiscences of the city of Jaipur in the beginning of the first stanza, and then, displays the present state of the same in a sarcastic vein. The contrast between the two: what the ancient glory of the town was, and what it has degenerated to in the present, constructs the discourse of sarcasm:

This is a very unfortunate city.
 Conceived as a red rose
 in the hot sands
 in the distant dreams of a royal master
 counted, calculated, master-planned
 with precision of a modern mind
 has patterned into a handsome hell,
 peopled by pathetic passengers
 of all faiths.
 A lurid caravan !

Here pigs with muddy eyes
 sniff at man in tereylene.
 Both cross their common ideals freely :
 the deep trenches of dark water
 in famous streets. They jostle
 and obstruct your vision—
 a shameless request to look below
 lest pumped-up pride corrupt
 your conscience. Man's mind
 chained by pigs and tied to them.
 They, the only free and untaxed
 citizens of this dream city.
 A vast glorious pasture in the mud !

Tax-payers are full of levity.
 They ply and multiply, their billowy flesh
 drives and thrives on its roads
 in a self-congratulatory manner
 with their uncorrugated souls pinned far away.
 They live here, don't belong to it.

They pay tax to the government
 filth to the public, for its easy consumption
 every moment, for nose and eyes :
 ecology and economics merged into one.
 A vile reward for the red rose
 that has no thorns ! 136

The speaker defines the city of Jaipur as “a very unfortunate city” in the very first line of the poem, and this sets the ground for the evolution of satire and sarcasm. One finds a rich use of metaphorical language in the first stanza of the poem itself with the use of the words and expressions such as “red rose”, “hot sands”, “distant dreams”, “modern mind”, “handsome hell”, “pathetic passengers”, and “lurid caravan”, where the first word of each phrase functions as a modifier to qualify the second. The stanza communicates that the city which was conceived as a “red rose”, i.e. a metaphor/symbol of beauty, elegance, and fragrance, and was artistically developed by the people of royal lineage taking into account/consideration the modern taste, i.e. designs and developments, has been ruined by the present/contemporary people to such an extent that it has become a “handsome hell.” The use of the oxymoron “handsome hell” to describe the present condition of the city, which was previously a “red rose”, constructs the discourse of satire. Again, the use of the term “pathetic passengers” to refer to the tourists visiting the city evokes satire as it suggests, implicitly, that the tourists are not received well, i.e. with honour and respect, by the people making business in Jaipur in the present times. The inhabitants of the city, especially the business class, cheat and exploit the visitors/tourists. The last line of the first stanza suggests that the city has lost its royal beauty, stability, and honour because of the influx of a lot of people who do not belong to the place, and as a result, the city has become “A lurid caravan !” The contrast between the two faces of the city: “counted, calculated, master-planned” in its architecture and outlook, and “lurid caravan” evokes sarcasm.

The second stanza unveils the present status of the city, where pollution and mismanagement reigns. The pigs are free to roam around at their wish. The use of the word “terelyne” as a metonymy to refer to the upcoming middle class and the visitors adds to the inherent sarcasm. The speaker addresses both, the humans and the pigs, jointly as it is

observed that they “cross their common ideal freely.” It sarcastically communicates that there lies no distinction between the pigs and the people of the city as they live in the same gutter. Again, the ninth and the tenth lines, with an enjambment, adds strength to the same thought by claiming “Man’s mind / chained by pigs and tied to them.” The lines communicate that it is not only the living conditions that bring humans and pigs to the same plane but even their thinking lies at par, and thus, intensifies the sarcastic affect. The use of the word “citizens” for the pigs of the city, and the expression “dream city” for the city depicted in the stanza intensifies the inherent sarcasm. Again, the use of the hyperbolic expression “A vast glorious pasture” for the city, and then, culminating the idea in “the mud” adds strength to the discourse of sarcasm. The use of the words and phrases such as “muddy eyes”, “deep trenches”, “dark water”, “jostle”, “shameless request”, “pumped-up pride”, and “free and untaxed” imparts deeper suggestiveness to the poem, and also sets the ground for the construction of the discourse of sarcasm.

The last stanza of the poem reflects the non-serious, or irresponsible, and ungrateful attitude of the inhabitants of the city as they worsen the conditions of the city although it has always offered its best to them. Satirically, the people who pay tax to the government assume that they have the license to pollute the environment and disturb the ecological balance of the place without being concerned of its adverse effects on the common people. The use of the expressions such as “full of levity”, “ply and multiply”, “billyow flesh”, “self-congratulatory”, “uncorrugated souls”, and “vile reward” in the discourse of the poem constructs the tone of sarcasm.

5.3.2.5. ‘An Old Palace Revisited’

In the similar vein, the poem ‘An Old Palace Revisited’ presents a gloomy picture of a palace which had a glorious past, and finally, states the reason behind the downfall of its glory. The poem is a satire on the pursuit of power, glory, and dynastic permanency. The old royal palace stands for seat of power. The monument has lost its glory. The first stanza recreates the historical past, and the next satirically reflect on the present:

Now every Ramlal holds a key to the gate.
 He can have an easy date with its negative face.
 He can go up the shoe-beaten staircase
 and fathom the height of the palace
 from its rooftop. There, he can hear the sob
 of the flagpole screaming for escape. 137

In the absence of the royal rulers, the building has lost its old grace, and now, “every Ramlal” can enter it and move anywhere without any restriction. One can reach its rooftop and “can hear the sob / of the flagpole screaming for escape.” This suggests the plight of the palace itself. The narrator sarcastically views the loss of identity of the royal family itself. So much so that visitors inside “scratch the walls / to know whether any royal odour persists there. / Without fear he can fondle royal beauties / in pictures, and leave / joyous marks of his brave deeds.” ¹³⁸ This is a sarcastic comment on many a people disfiguring historical monuments, and thus, insulting the historical heritage.

On the one hand, the freedom to move inside the palace without restriction has degenerated one’s sense of respect for the nation’s heritage; and on the other hand, the history of the palace itself has degenerated into emptiness. While the visitors to the old neglected palace briskly push through creaky doors to escape “droppings of bats and pigeons” ¹³⁹, the school children eat their “midday meal” ¹⁴⁰ on the “milk-white terrace.” ¹⁴¹ The narrator recalls the romantic past of the “Sun family” ¹⁴² and wonders how the last living inheritor “is fighting with history / by sleeping / with the daughter of his grandpa’s cook / in her house.” ¹⁴³ By juxtaposing the ‘royalty’ with ‘commonality’, the narrator presents a sarcastic view of history which has made such an old palace without a sentry and flag. The palace is not maintainable and so the inheritor of the royalty can no longer maintain the past traditions or glory of the palace. In fact, the decline is so much that he has himself to find shelter in the house of the daughter of his grandfather’s cook. Sarcastically, he has become an unknown entity over the years.

5.3.2.6. 'Light'

The poet criticizes the philosophy of development which benefits only an individual or a privileged few rather than all the people. The metaphors of 'bulb' and 'earthen lamp' point to the divisive approach which keeps the poor from "light." The narrator sarcastically points out that an earthen lamp can light another earthen lamp, but a bulb cannot light another bulb. This is also a commentary on 'tradition' and 'modernity' or the concepts of 'old' and 'new' in the implicit design:

I go to my new house,
switch the table –lamp on,
the table is all effulgence,
streams of light flow on its sides.

I take the living lamp to other rooms
to see if the bright bulb kindles its kind,
bulb after bulb I try at every site,
no bulb wakes up from its sleep.

Tired, I turn to my old house
and light my earthen lamp,
with it I pass to neighbours
and light many a meanest lamp,

Each house glows with a happy fire.
Each head turns into a walking spire.
'I' goes out the door,
'We' comes in the front door. ¹⁴⁴

The electric bulb in the new house confines light to only one room, i.e. it benefits only the individual, and cannot kindle another bulb; while a candle or an earthen lamp can kindle another lamp, i.e. it benefits the neighbours too. If the neighbours' house cannot be lighted with a bulb, then, an earthen lamp is preferable to bulb because it ensures collective lighting with happiness for all. The last two lines of the poem is a veiled criticism of the policy that ignores the interests of the larger masses.

The satire lies in the revelation that the traditional earthen lamps, which is out of tune and time as nobody uses it anymore, in the present age of electric lamps still retains its virtue of lighting even “a meanest lamp”; whereas the modern ‘electric lamp’ cannot even wake up “its kind”, and thus, remains alone, even though placed in a group.

There are a number of such poems in which I.K. Sharma ridicules the ways of the world in a manner that leaves a satiric effect over the readers, but the impact is gentle rather than being caustic like that of the poems of Maha Nand Sharma.

5.3.2.7. ‘Analysis’

Another fine example of the type is ‘Analysis’, where the speaker highlights the attitude/behavior of the contemporary people towards their neighbours:

Even at your age
you do not know
how to live with people next door.
Your stones and cigarette-ends
have scorched
a big patch of my lawns. 145

The first line of the poem communicates in a suggestive manner that the speaker is addressing to his neighbor who is mature (age-wise), and therefore, he expects him to behave responsibly and maintain a warm relationship. But, surprisingly, he (the neighbor) throws “stones and cigarette-ends” into the lawn of the speaker. Not only this, his children “throw excreta” ¹⁴⁶, sneak in his house, and “at night, pluck flowers / and uproot trees.” ¹⁴⁷

The wall between the two plots, i.e. the speaker’s and the neighbor’s addressed, has lost its significance or function, as it is no more “a civil curtain” ¹⁴⁸, and has failed in providing “privacy and freedom” ¹⁴⁹ to the speaker. It is beyond the understanding of the speaker that why his neighbor is in the habit of creating troubles for him. The speaker suggests in a satirical vein that one should always treat others as one likes oneself to be treated, and should also make it a habit of rectifying one’s fault as soon as one finds it:

Warts of heart no god can cure,
 not certainly the grave diggers.
 Be a mirror to yourself, and a surgeon. ¹⁵⁰

The comment that nothing can cure one, who is suffering from an ailment of heart, i.e. cunningness and jealousy in particular, heightens the satirical affect. The speaker continues in the similar vein, and finally, suggests a treatment for the diseased heart: “Breathe the language of lips, / not of incisors and molars” ¹⁵¹, which metaphorically suggests that one should be soft-spoken and avoid using harsh or abusive language, and this would surely initiate a healthy change in the social scenario. The poem ends with an implied warning that comes in the form of a suggestion: “Turn on the light, dear. / Smoke reigns if light dies.” ¹⁵²

5.3.2.8. ‘A Shadow on Your Face’

The long poem ‘A Shadow on Your Face’, composed in four sections, unveils the unhappy state of the speaker as he finds: “Not April / every month of the year / is unmerciful.” ¹⁵³ The poem highlights the modern ways of living and the practices of the contemporary age in a satirical vein. The speaker observes “spanking disorder” ¹⁵⁴ all around, and “Stalkers, snipers, scamsters” ¹⁵⁵ ruling the streets and “the secretary’s office.” ¹⁵⁶ It implicitly suggests that the politicians and the bureaucrats are “Stalkers, snipers, scamsters” in the present age. The scientific and technological advancements have proved to be a bane instead of a boon for the humans as “Unseen hands / chop a wallet with computer” ¹⁵⁷, and “Scientists are new moms / longing for newer bombs and babies.” ¹⁵⁸ The younger generation gets exposed to vulgarity and violence via the medium of televisions, cinemas, and the internet:

Sons terrorize parents with their new wealth.
 TV shows instruct the young
 to make love
 beyond the walls of conformity. ¹⁵⁹

The speaker further reveals that the women of the contemporary age have forgotten their glorious role, i.e. to act as a faithful daughter, wife, and mother, and instead they “hitch their affections” ¹⁶⁰, and encourage obscenity by being found “in a net / between the weak-souled

and the soulless.”¹⁶¹ The use of the expression “Draupadi in a net”¹⁶² implies that the contemporary women no longer entertain ‘Sita’, ‘Devi Ahilya’, or ‘Savitri’ as their role model, but behave like ‘Draupadi’, who had multiple husbands. The word “net” may be decoded literally as well as metaphorically to give a new meaning in the context: literally, it suggests that the women, who call themselves ‘modern’ and ‘fashionable’, do not cover themselves properly, i.e. expose their body; and metaphorically, it suggests that they are trapped in a vicious plot laid down by their male counterparts. Again, in the use of the terms “weak-souled” and “soulless” for the males of the contemporary age adds to the satirical affect.

The poem presents a very sad picture of the sprawling violence all around and evokes a satire on all such people, so-called ‘eminent’ personalities, who instigate, initiate, encourage, and fuel violence in order to reap personal profits. These people hire a set of “authors of grave”¹⁶³, who belong to the poorer sections of the society, and then, exploit their needs and requirements to meet their vicious desires:

Sir, they asked us to sharpen knives
and spears on stone-slab.
With zeal we did it
to feed our kids. ¹⁶⁴

The hired violence-mongers further disclose:

We gave ourselves to their will.
Later, we found ourselves in a house
where all lamps had been put out.
By and by we delinked ourselves
from the lively chain of humanity,
and set out gladly to cut throats
of our kind. ¹⁶⁵

The pathetic contemporary scene is further described in the words:

Illwind blows across the earth.
The old order has changed,

changed twice, thrice,
each time giving place to gun, gun, **gun**.¹⁶⁶

The increasing font size of the term “gun” and its repetition thrice communicates the daunting aspect of the ever increasing violence in the contemporary age.

The speaker is not even hopeful of the future as he finds: “In such times hell enlarges its area / till paradise shrinks to a pin.”¹⁶⁷ The advancements/development made in the sphere of science and technology catalyses the deterioration further: “Child, Science is *Viskanya* :/ she hides a viper beneath her skin.”¹⁶⁸ And again:

She has her mansion in the sky
where she sucks away one eye at a time.
Then inch by inch
she de-clutches you smilingly
for the Grand Canyon.¹⁶⁹

Here, the image of “Grand Canyon” is used to suggest the plight which is irreparable, or cannot be conquered. The speaker is even doubtful that whether God would come to the rescue of the contemporary world or not: “Will God ever come to such uncatholic earth ?”¹⁷⁰ The use of the expression “uncatholic earth” adds a tinge of sarcasm to the present discourse of satire.

The narration continues in the similar vein, i.e. satirical/sarcastic vein, to highlight a number of idiosyncrasies of the present world and its ways/manners. The poem ends with a strong criticism on the nature of the humans: “Sad to say:/ mountains melt, / not man.”¹⁷¹

5.3.2.9. ‘The Clerk’

‘The Clerk’ is another poem that displays an inextricable blending of wit, irony, humour, and satire. It presents the lifestyle, attitude, and daily routine of a government clerk. The speaker introduces/addresses the clerk as “The master of maze”¹⁷² and maker of grooves.”¹⁷³ The expressions communicate that a clerk is never simple in his approach. He intentionally complicates a process in such a way that it is only him who has the solution to

the problem, and thereby, one (client) needs to fulfill his demands, mostly paying him bribe, to get one's work done. It depicts the present situation of the government offices where no one can get a job done without taking the clerk into confidence. The clerk "wears no sentiments" ¹⁷⁴ and "Half-truths and apologies / renew his wit each day." ¹⁷⁵ It communicates that he entertains no sentiments, whatever it be, and is used to hearing and speaking diplomatic language. He is always ready with his apologies, mostly because he never gets a work done on right/scheduled time, to display his feigned humbleness. The use of diplomatic language and humble apologies are only a part of his daily routine and professional conduct, as he never cares for any client in real sense. His opportunist temperament, which exploits the needs and weaknesses of his clients to gain materialistically, is well communicated through the lines: "His face flashes light / when he sees holy cows / aching for a child / round his table." ¹⁷⁶ The revelation of such cunningness and hypocrisy on the part of the clerk sets the platform for the construction of the discourse of satire.

The second stanza of the poem is pregnant with wit, irony, humour, and satire:

Files suck his words of wisdom,
 which for weeks, buzz
 in the crafty air of his room.
 There floats my fate
 like a cigarette-end
 in a cup of tea.
 If I miss a route
 of his cryptogram, I know,
 I will twist my fingers
 in the cold air. ¹⁷⁷

The subtlety in the selection and the use of the words reflects wit, and the witty affect leads to the evolution of humour and satire. The expression "crafty air" gives an impression that the cunningness of the clerk ionizes, or gets dissolved in, the surroundings; and as a result, even the air around him is crafty in nature. The first three lines of the stanza may also be decoded to suggest that a clerk repeatedly uses the same words, phrases, and sentences in the

same style for a longer period of time; and it also hints at the slow pace of the progress of the work. The next three lines present a rich and suggestive image to depict the pitiable status of the person who is caught in the maze and grooves of the clerk. The use of the lexical items such as “floats” and “cigarette-end” communicates the helpless state of the client, whose future lies at the mercy of the clerk. The use of the word “cryptogram” and the phrase “twist my fingers / in the cold air” are deeply loaded: A seasoned clerk with his complex, secret codes can do and undo whatever one’s design. If one follows his secret codes, then things become easier; otherwise, there is only disappointment.

As the “monarch of files” ¹⁷⁸, he is a “worldly animal” ¹⁷⁹, i.e. he has mastery of words to cut through a purported design: “His pen-knife cuts / through the traffic of words” ¹⁸⁰ as soon as his palms are greased. The narrator recognizes the clerk’s skill and wordily power in getting things done:

With ascetic calm
 he recharges the seedy file
 with words that
 stretch
 and
 s
 l
 a
 n
 t
 and give it a new face. 181

The use of the modifier “ascetic” to qualify the “calm” temperament of the clerk evokes irony, humour, and satire, as it is in utter contrast with the sort of addresses levied on him (clerk) in the previous stanzas. The structure of the stanza is a pictorial representation of the writing style of the clerk, and it intensifies the inherent humour and satire in the discourse of the poem. Money makes the clerk re-do the “seedy file”, i.e. an old and probably hopeless case, and make it new: “He refunds my regards / before the day ends.” ¹⁸² Satirically, the narrator is happy with the “refunds” he gets for the bribe he paid, rather unwillingly.

The words and expressions such as “holy cows”, “crafty air”, “cryptogram”, “ashtray”, “traffic of words”, “seedy file”, and “refund” serve as the key to the communication of satire; while the epithets, “master of maze”, “maker of grooves”, “words of wisdom”, “monarch of files”, and “ascetic calm” help in characterizing the clerk.

5.3.2.10. ‘New Heaven of Freedom’

In the poem ‘New Heaven of Freedom’, the poet depicts the journey of the country (India) after its independence. The poem is composed with an apology to Tagore’s famous poem “Where the mind is without fear... Into that heaven of Freedom, my Father, let my country awake.”¹⁸³ Sharma’s poem seems to be in continuity with Tagore’s prayer, as it springs up from the juncture where Tagore ends his prayer for the country to awake:

And my country wakes,
unwinds itself rapturously.
The midnight frenzy lifts its heart
to new heights. 184

Satirically, Sharma’s tone changes to imperative and he becomes instructional in the midst of his poem, and thus, the poem assumes the shape of a parody. The first stanza depicts that the country wakes after a long slumber in an ecstatic manner at the midnight (it was the midnight of 14th August 1947 that the country was declared independent) with all hopes and dreams of achieving great success and growth. While Tagore prays for freedom of mind and spirit, and seeks the awakening of the country; I.K. Sharma begins with the state into which the country has woken up, unwinding itself rapturously: “The midnight frenzy lifts its heart / to new heights.” But with this, God has faded away to his “oceanic home.”¹⁸⁵

Soon after the country has gained independence, the “stars of hope and high command”¹⁸⁶ including capitalists, industrialists, intellectuals, skilled professionals, etc. – “high command” sarcastically evokes the political power vested in the then leadership of the country – instead of following the native or Gandhian model of development “began to go west.”¹⁸⁷ Implicitly, it also sounds critical of all those people who migrated to the West, as they could see good prospects there. To add to the plight, the democratically elected

representatives of people turned into “rodents”¹⁸⁸ and that too, “of many hues, strips and size.”¹⁸⁹ The use of the metaphor “rodents” refers to the politicians and bureaucrats of ‘Independent India’ that have been eating into the body politic of the nation. Again, the phrase “lewd sports”¹⁹⁰ metaphorically suggest the ‘dirty’ game of politics, and also, the unethical and corrupt policies of those in power. The expressions “rodents” and “lewd sports” (naked dance) are reflective of the debased character of peoples’ representatives. The satire is further enhanced in the use of “glittering floor”¹⁹¹ for the parliament and legislative assemblies, which have become a breeding ground of all evil deeds. The “lewd sports” has resulted in the demolition of whatever worthy the country had at the time of independence, and today, “it has no roof.”¹⁹² The phrase “it has no roof” suggests that the country is exposed to all sorts of threats as it lies bare or uncovered. The spirit of freedom has degenerated to the meanest level.

The first three stanzas, thus, depicts the narrator making a negative evaluation of history (since the time of independence). The narrator seems to be very disturbed, which is evident from the tone, with the present turmoil and quests for solution. The speaker cannot rely on human brings anymore, as he has no faith on humans, and so, he pleads God to lead the nation. Sarcastically, he asks God to lead, but takes the initiative of showing the right path to Him (as if God does not know the path to be tread upon!). The narrator prescribes the roadmap (to God) to lead human kind, and the imperative tone with which he addresses Him adds to the sarcastic impulse. Such is the loss of faith in human leadership that the narrator asks for Divine intervention, as he believes that the ‘dehumanized’ country can only be ‘humanized’ by it.

The speaker considers that the people behind the present pathetic state of the country are completely immersed, or badly entrapped in the vicious circle of vices, in corruption and other evil deeds harming the progress and welfare of the country to such an extent that they require undergoing complete re-formation. The speaker seems to be of the opinion that the people who are born in independent India, and have not struggled at all for liberty and freedom, do not realize the price of independence; and therefore, they must be made to realize what it means to be ‘free’. They should experience the hardships that freedom

fighters went through; otherwise, they would not value freedom. The speaker envisages the road to the new heaven of freedom going via thick desert:

Lead forward, my Father, but his way.
 Drive it into some thick desert,
 detach every part of it,
 leave them all open to the gaze of the sun.
 Let them burn in that open hell till
 the riverbed of Ganga is half-dry.
 Let vultures eat without pity their entrails
 and suck the black blood out.
 Listen not to their howls or screams. ¹⁹³

The speaker is so displeased with the degeneration all around that he hurries to set things right, and he no longer trusts anyone, either it be human or God, and therefore, instructs/commands God to lead the country as per his directions. The use of the imperative verbs such as “Lead”, “Drive”, “detach”, “leave”, “suck”, and “listen” sets the tone of instruction, which in the context of the poem, constructs the discourse of sarcasm. The poem is so true to the conditions in Rajasthan that one feels it has a verbal authenticity. The poet uses “desert” as a metaphor to suggest all hardships, and implicitly convey that the country has turned into a desert, because of the “lewd sports” of the “rodents.” The poet wants the people to experience the existing desert and learn to save the entire country from deteriorating further. At another level, the image of a ‘desert’ also refers to the rural set-up where a person toils hard in order to sustain oneself, especially in a geographical location where the land is barren and resources very limited. One learns to overcome all challenges and hardships when put under extreme pressure or adversities, and one learns the importance or value of available resources. One struggles to derive optimal favourable results under such constraints. It reminds one of the Shakespeare’s famous line, “Sweet are the uses of adversity.” ¹⁹⁴ The poet criticizes the politicians as they never come to experience, or witness, the hardships that people in rural areas encounter, but design policies and projects on the name of eradicating these problems remaining on the “glittering floor”, and satirically, these policies (lewd sports) benefit the policy-makers rather than the rural people. The image of the desert is also used as a centre of purgation or sanctification, where a

person's malicious intentions, temperament, behavior, or attitude burns away to give way to good thoughts and ethical behavior. The way the poet exploits the image of "thick desert" also reminds one of the Biblical incident, where Moses had to cross through the Red Sea and he made way through it, in order to comply with the Divine wish. The use of the words and expressions such as "thick desert", "detach", "gaze", "burn", "open hell", "eat without pity their entrails", "suck", "black blood", and "howls or screams" construct a harsh tone. Again, the expression "Ganga is half-dry" metaphorically suggests that the experience of hardships should be endured for quite a longer duration, may be forever as man's nature is hard to change, so that it completely burns away all the malicious and harmful extracts of the country, i.e. its inhabitants as well as the government machinery. The imagery in the poem reminds one of Robert Frost's poems 'To Earthward', where a similar desire, i.e. of recreation or complete re-formation, is expressed:

When stiff and sore and scarred
I take away my hand
from leaning on it hard
in grass and sand

The hurt is not enough:
I long for weight and strength
to feel the earth as rough
to all my length.

195

In order to redeem the country of all its ailments completely, the speaker instructs God further: "beat each part hard with a handle of granite" ¹⁹⁶, even after being exposed to "the gaze of the sun" in "thick desert" for quite a long duration of time. The term "granite" stands as a symbol of 'hardness', and yet, the use of the word "hard" superimposes the harshness or severity of treatment prescribed. In spite of beating "each part hard with a handle of granite", the speaker is not yet sure that it has shed off all its malice or vices, and therefore, suggests: "give the body a big Turkish bath" ¹⁹⁷ for complete sanctification.

The last line of the poem, "In this heavenly form, my Father, let my country awake" ¹⁹⁸, is a parody of the Tagore's last line, "Into that heaven of Freedom, my Father, let my country

awake.” Tagore’s last line seems to be a very apt ending to his prayer, as it pleads God for His Supreme Bliss; whereas Sharma’s expression, “In this heavenly form”, sounds sarcastic. It is also doubtful that such a prayer, which is a command rather, would be entertained.

The poem reflects Sharma’s humanitarian vision, or ‘universal concern’, as he constructs a discourse which has the vision of reforming man and society. Sharma expresses his design of re-humanizing humans (as they have dehumanized or degenerated totally) through divine intervention, and it is the only hope. The poem, like many of his poems, communicates desert landscape and implicitly suggests that through exposure to real hardships one undergoes in a desert, one comes to learn how to tread upon the thorny path of life, or encounter the challenges posed by life; and thus, desert becomes productive in real sense.

The message communicated through the poem, its sarcastic tone, and the vexation expressed clearly manifests that I.K. Sharma wants to see a complete re-formation and re-creation all around him, like Maha Nand Sharma, but avoids being didactic or moralistic like him. Rita Nath Keshari rightly points out: “Sharma’s poems are not obscure jottings that try to masquerade as outpourings of a sublime kind. He is alert to the reality around him.”¹⁹⁹ To quote R.K. Singh: “... he writes with zeal to reform the world by exposing itself even if occasionally titling towards abstraction or vagueness.”²⁰⁰ The harsh and bitter tone of the poem adds strength to the observations of Mitali De Sarkar and R.K. Singh: “He is unique in that very few contemporary Indian English Poets have experienced the intensity of anger and yet expressed it with potency.”²⁰¹ I.K. Sharma speaks himself out in an interview with Rajani Kalahasthi to assert: “What is generally called ‘Social Reality’ in our context is nothing but the negative forces that have developed in our society. A poet considers them agents of dehumanization and he raises his voice against them.”²⁰²

5.3.2.11. Conclusion

There are a number of such poems in the six collections of I.K. Sharma in which satire and sarcasm are integral to the discourse. It is observed that Wit, Irony, and Humour are thinly spread all over his satiric and sarcastic poems. The poems constructing the discourse of satire and sarcasm communicate the resilient nature of the poet with a view to reforming and

resurrecting the society, although he avoids being didactic. He confines himself only to the extent of projecting, or presenting, and reflecting on the contemporary society and its manners. The satirical and sarcastic poems of I.K. Sharma communicate his social, political, cultural, religious, as well as economic awareness. Most of the poems of this group, or texture, have a universal appeal or applicability, and it bespeaks his poetic genius.

5.4. A Comparison of the Two Poets

When a comparative study of both the poets is made on the basis of their satirical and sarcastic poems, it is found that Maha Nand Sharma is more direct, pungent, and caustic than I.K. Sharma. Maha Nand Sharma forces his didactic messages, philosophical viewpoints, religious beliefs, and ethical standards on his readers; whereas I.K. Sharma never makes any such attempt, and at least, not explicitly as in the case of Maha Nand. Maha Nand Sharma's satire, very often, tends to arouse or lead to a sarcastic effect; whereas in the case of I.K. Sharma, it leads to a witty and humourous effect in most of the poems. Maha Nand Sharma heavily relies on irony to construct the discourse of satire and sarcasm, whereas I.K. Sharma makes use of wit for the same. Maha Nand Sharma constructs his satirical and sarcastic poems as a stimulus to initiate a wave of reformation and resurrection in the society, whereas I.K. Sharma seeks to make people think on the issues he raises and leaves the decision to their conscience. Maha Nand Sharma evokes sarcasm by juxtaposing two contrasting things/ideas/images, etc. together, as well as by the use of certain archetypal social and cultural morals; whereas, I.K. Sharma only uses his language in a succinct and suggestive manner to evoke sarcasm. Maha Nand Sharma employs informal language for the purpose of showing his strong disapproval or contempt; whereas I.K. Sharma does the same by sticking to formal language, and making it a suitable vehicle to carry his thoughts, observations, and experiences, which bespeak his greater linguistic competence and appropriateness of language use.

The fact cannot be denied that both the poets communicate their social and political experiences and observations through their discourse of satire and sarcasm. A close analysis of their poems reveals that Maha Nand Sharma's poetic vision is essentially sarcastic while

I.K. Sharma's vision is essentially ironic. No wonder, therefore, Maha Nand Sharma sounds more displeased and discontented with the society and his hope of seeing a resurrection in the society is dying slowly, but faith in God perseveres his ultimate hope in the essential goodness of the spirit for the survival of humanity. On the other hand, I.K. Sharma believes in the worth of the society and is still hopeful as well as confident that the evils of the society would not last longer. I.K. Sharma appeals to the 'senses' of human beings, while Maha Nand Sharma appeals to the 'divine' (Soul) in human beings that makes him more a spiritual poet.

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