

# **CHAPTER-5**

## **ANALOGY AND JUXTAPOSITION BETWEEN AKKAMAHADEVI AND EMILY DICKINSON**

In the present multicultural and cross cultural contests the comparative study of two writers belonging to two different nationalities hold significant. Akkamahadevi of south India launched a new renaissance the main motive of which was to claim equality and liberty for women in matters of social, cultural and religious positions in the state. Converting the idiom of the common people into a medium of culture and literature.

She began to reach with her empirical and mystic thoughts, the ordinary people with an intention of mending the animosity in the individuals and making them true disciples of a newly re-enforced culture Lingayatism. She also used the ordinary idiom for expressing what she has realised after a great exploration of her internal world. It was her odyssey' in the vast expansion of both mundane and mystic worlds. She was a romanticist going against the established orthodoxy and historical tradition. She was not anti-religious or anti-social, but an un-usual lady, who

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along with the contemporary Sharanas contributed showing a new and alternative path to reach the other and be one with it. It was the path of freedom, duty, and mysticism quite admirably her path is still in practice.

Emily Dickinson could be studied along-with Akkamahadevi because Dickinson, being herself a romantic and an ardent admirer of the romantic poets of England, started a new path of realisation. A comparative study determines the intrinsic value of literary works. Naturally it helps to understand the mythical structures of two cultures or two nations.

The social saga of India during twelfth century was complex. It had consisted of various cultural practices. The tribal and rural the people were untouched with the civil senses. But the Basava movement, within a span of twelve years created the wonders. The dominant among them was the famous aphorism – Enlightenment is by itself spiritual teacher (Arive Guru). It is the self awareness or self realisation that paves the way to gain the universal knowledge. Akkamahadevi like all other Sharanas , was the embodiment of enlightenment. The renaissance spirit of enlightening the people with new knowledge, making them

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the spirited patriots and upholders of local cultures and the local languages, had kept these Sharanas on the south corridor of India.

The real romantic attitude became a new religion, because any religion is not only a noble way of life but also an attitude. Basavanna, like Martin Luther of Germany protested the superstitions practices of the conventionalists and brought a reformation. Akkamahadevi is an identity with the reformation marks the beginning of feminist struggle for liberty and equality. Akkamahadevi, in her Secular stand, may be studied and considered the first female writer who has stamped her femaleness in her vachanas.

The intrinsic structure of American society with the birth of the nation has many layers phase of the native the colonial and the slaves. The historical documents on the principles of freedom and equality influenced the people like the clarions of the French revolution.

The statement "That men are created free and equal , that they inherit inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that government must be by consent of the governed. " (spiller),

became a foundation for building a system of democracy which emerged as a superior force in the recent history of mankind. One cannot imagine any writer of America whose writing is not grounded in the new space of democracy. The colonial, who later are the white race in America, needed one common religion. They naturally accepted Puritanism, in its reframed form. These historical imprints can also be traced in Emily Dickinsons poetry, the main aim of which is not only an expression, but also to enlighten the people of the new nation. The renaissance of signifying the local culture as against the conviction and rooting it in folk history can be seen in Dickenson's poems. She does not interpret only the meaning of death and immortality but records at the deeper structures the evolution of democracy in America and hence becomes mystic as well as historical.

The great ascetics in Europe and India forced to understand the meaning of death. History is nothing but understanding death itself. The binary opposition of death is life. The understanding of death leads to the understanding life itself. One leads to the other or one is the other also. Metaphorically speaking, Death is the meaning of life, and life is the meaning of death. The

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poems of Emily Dickinson record this assimilated metaphor. There is America and beyond. The beyond refers to the world of mysticism where component of the physical reality is found in spiritual reality. If life is the physical and mundane reality, Death is the spiritual reality.

Both Akkamahadevi and Emily Dickinson can be comparable considering the way they deal with life for attaining the immortality. They live in society, amidst people, amidst the web of human affairs, being caught by the complexities of life. They have the crude experience but they have succeeded in transforming the crudity into Divine. The passage of transformation from crudity to Divine is the same for both Akka & Emily in the process of transformation. They do not ignore the social reality that exists around.

The concept of Negative capability of the English Romantics is not explained by Emily Dickinson or Akkamahadevi. It is not to mentally negating the nature and the natural embellishment around while focusing the centre or the object of concentration, but to analyzing every bit seen and experienced. They combine the rational and the intuitive faculties in the creation of something new and

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something socially acceptable and adaptable. It is the way they practice realizing the ultimate and purging the self to make it hit for the union with the ultimate. This in fact is the mysticism being one with the ultimate reality.

But in both Akka & Emily one can notice the negation of the human body in the sense that for them their body is merely a capsule of flesh and blood. They see something that exists beyond human body. They do not wish to lead an ordinary womanly life, embracing the domestic affairs. They do not worry to be in the family bondage. They experience, both of them human bondage and later the mystic bondage. Akkamahadevi seeks a husband in Chennamalli Karjuna, the Supreme Being of creation and destruction. Akka remains unaware of being naked while entering into Anubhava Mantap. Her thought on mysticism is generated out of the dialogue. She holds with Allamaprabhu she spiritually accepts a union only with god Channamallikarjuna.

Emily Dickinson loves and remains disappointed but turns her emotions into ascetic experiences. She brings in human images of death and immortal in her poems and

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she assumes herself a beloved and death, her lover and companion.

In this way in their personal experiences both Akka and Dickinson appear at the surface level, similar. But they differ very much in their approaches and aims. One spiritual another secular; one renouncing another empirically puritan.

Emily Dickinson has two sources one Puritanism and one transcendentalism. As a puritan she as disciplined her routine and normal life. It has placed her at sharanatva from which her Divine song has been sung to reach immortality. It is her own own song and song of Puritanism. Personal pronoun 'I' loses it's strength and recognition when it takes socio religions context. Nature celebrates the merge. Puritanism in America develops scientific debt and reason. It gives liberty practicing any religious canon, it has internal freedom. Hence one can notice an inner world expansion from mundane to the mystic; it has doubt and speculations on doubt. It has belief also. It confirms the belief only after either experiencing or getting some substantiations.

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I have seen dying eye

Run round and round a room

In search of something as it seemed

They \_\_\_\_\_ became...

And then – obscure with fog --

She melts into the universal – an obscure with fog. She wisely says the universe is obscure. She levels the definite vision. Moreover any vision cannot be definite and cristle puritan mind has it's own desertion selecting and incorporating. Her disbelief on heaven does not hesitate to say that the image of heaven is only a self deception or a protection. Her practice of Puritanism goes with what E.M.Foster declares “Belief of dis-belief”

I' am glad I don't believe it

for it we'd stop my breath

And I'd like to look a little more

At such a curious earth.

Her debt certifies love for the earth and little more than the earthly. It does not negate immortality. On the other hand

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there is a search for truth of higher order. The disbelief attains faith and certainty. A historical tradition has been drawn with the advent of industry and newly developed scientific knowledge to show the disintegration of man, especially the western man. A lot of literature both fictional and poetic has come on the theme of disintegration. Emily Dickinson is not apart. Keeping in view the growing break down in the name of race, creed and colour, she has been attempting a study of man's disintegration. As a puritan, though the medium of her poetry she recommends, against the split, a Unitarians between the material and the mental, between the phenomenal and nonmenal. The internal and the external are to be integrated on the basis of the puritan values, if not conventional values of Christianity. In fact this is the state of a Bhakta or a disciple. Akkamahadevi and Emily Dickinson have this basis of being a sharana or a Bhakta or a simple devotee. In their regard her doubts are not be miscarried. The catalogue of her poems divides American democracy into materialism and mysticism.

Puritan structure of the nation deals with spiritual democracy which may also be called Mysticism. Her puritan belief does not exclude the tiny objects. Her America is unheroic and average. Hence common things

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like a 'fly buzzing' become sediments of her belief. All these things together give an image of the new nation. Her puritan thinking, in this connection begins with the mundane and gets itself exalted through nature and love perhaps, to the mystic. She celebrates her surrounding that is nothing but American and she also celebrate herself.

A color stands abroad

On solitary fields

That science cannot overtake

The trends of colour is ephemeral and but is changes itself into the depth of the human soul. Some of her poems such as "A light exists in spring" emphasize the religious value which provide the source for realization of mystic truth. In fact her mystic truth cannot be analyzed by the national faculty of man or by science.

She has another puritan enterprise of transforming the objective reality into subjective. Though the personal experiences are depressive she does not loose hope. She translates the depression into hope that springs from human heart. An ordinary consciousness is expanded universal. Her Puritanism can be seen summarized in the lines :

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Thou safest earthquake in the south

And heals form in the sea

Say Jesus Christ of Nazareth

Has thou no arm for me.

The reference paves the way to her transcendental thoughts or philosophy.

The transcendentalism of Emily Dickinson is originated in Emerson's "Nature" and Thoreau's "Walden". In fact the philosophy of transcendental cult of America is generated from these parental works. They together shape American mind.

The main point of general consensus is that transcendentalism rests upon the maxim one of all. Though Emily Dickinson has ironic contradictions and doubts, She believes in its broader outlines, that of monism. Monism deals with unity of man and nature; nature and God; one imminence of God in the world external. The in-dwelling divinity in every thing in the world is microcosm cantering within itself all the laws and interpretations of existence. The individual soul is identical with the soul of the worlds or what therein calls

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“Over soul’. The main job of man is to realise that he has Devine potentiality when the human is infused with the Divine, he attains a mystical state Emerson and Thoreau show a path of realisation in nature which is the embodiment of truth beauty, goodness and the invisible anthanity of mystery. The individual soul is an off shoot of the supreme Brahman and it is identical with the Divine authority. It indeed is the Vedantic thought. Akkamahadevi develops the same identification. She does not feel as human entity, different from the Divine. She believe that the Divine is in herself. The Divine lives like the husband. Whom she names Chennamallikarjuna. She also demonstrates the Divine in her vachanas. Her literacy productions are not imaginary creations; they are empirical and intuitive and hence committed to truth. She also became a part of the tradition that disregards the external authority and regards self reliance and individualism. In such a treatment of monism both Akka and Emily are on similar lines.

Emerson’s ‘Nature’ is the authentic text, the Bable of Transcendentalism in Nature; Emerson keeps man in relation to Nature and God. He is at the centre of Nature exploring it to fulfill his higher ends. Nature determines the

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destiny of man. It is commonly believed that human body is made of natural elements. He has mind also The Divine is placed in body. In this way, a human being inculcates in himself both Natural and God. Body the Nature's embellishment, is not only the storage of soul but also a human resource that helps paving the way realizing God. Nature is the reflection mind, as vast as the universe itself. It is one with the internal self. The harmony between mind and nature enables to see something sublime and spiritual. This state of seeing the sublime is transcendental one. The seeing is done by the awakened mind. The beauty of nature is the beauty of the self itself. Emerson infinitude of the private man is the maximum found in Emily Dickinson's poems which deal with the theme of Death and Immortality. When the integrated individual personality fully developed with the nature, it attains the Divine. This process is called Transcendentalism. Dickinson mysticism shows this process of internalizing the Divine. Nature is internalized in the romantic temper. Her mysticism grows further internalizing the divine presence in nature. A mystic ponders on the questions of life and death on the nature of human soul and it's relations with the universe. Dickinson deals with these questions related to God, Death and

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immortality. In such a relationship and cannot see logic but only an intuitive emotion. In her Bridal poems, she affirms the body and needs of the body she acknowledges herself calling these poems sinful. Immediately she turns the sin of Carnival desire into a Divine desire of becoming the bride of Christ. Akka and Emily are of the same attitude in this context. Both the poets renounce the self with a hope of being in union with their objects of Love. Emily's withdrawal from the self is shown in the images of 'door' and 'value'. She seeks a freedom to reach the world of her dreams where she wishes to live with her Lover or the Bridegroom.

"I live with Him

I hear His voice

I stand alive -Today

But she also wishes to play with Yesterday. It means she wants to be with the Timelessness or Immortality.

These and such of these aspirations are mystic. Another course of her 'Transcendentalism' is Thoreau's Walden. The work makes Thoreau a great thinker and also a great man. It is the organic structure of visions and

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thoughts form her been imparted to what was essentially formless. There is the gradual coming out of the pond which is similar to the first stage of Divine comedy. The life disturbed in the pond is elevated to the purgatorial through the Divine laws. The world embodies Thoreau's experiment in living but his focus on simple living in the company of nature has led the critics to believe that Thoreau has been advocating the concept of the noble savage and a return to primitive life. Really he does not turn from the multiplicity of a modern world of medicines, electricity, and radium. He feels that any physical development should correspond to the mental development. If man observes the beauties of nature minutely he feels companionship with it, but man has lost the powers of perception. Walden Pond gives him the essential facts of life. It convinces him that the nature is the face that elevates human soul to experience great happiness. Emily Dickinson's attitude to nature illustrates Thoreau's mystic experience. There is the law of nature. There is authority not of the state but of the supreme conscience. Many of Emily's poems equate natural beauty with the Divine. It is the Divine beauty that makes the sun glow gloriously. Such extensive and all pervading beauty inspires a love which is

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boundless. It brings imminence spiritual riches. The philosophy of Walden can be seen in one poem of Emily Dickinson "Because I cannot stop for death". Her life from cradle to grave is enacted in the poem. Death and immortality wasn't for her to complete her homely affairs. Later death drives her to grave through the school, the paddy fields and there is time of setting sun. Death surprises his companion taking her to the bridal chamber which combines actual mansion and the swelling mound of a tomb. The bond between life and death is finally seen. The image of the houses heads turned towards eternity magnificently conveys the power and beauty of death eternity focuses the separation between man's limited earthly experience and expanse of infinity. Human Endeavour can place man and woman in the neche of infinity. Emily Dickinson is such instances, promptly reproduces the philosophy of Walden.

Mysticism is the technical part of any religion. Religion in practice can lead mankind to the point of great happiness. The Veerashaiva cult has its own mysticism which is recongnized as a path to reach the unreachable Walden is very near to Akkamahadevi's empirical path.

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She seeks in the middle of the wilderness, her God-husband Channamallikarjuna.

The path of Walden can well be comparable to the mystic path of Akkamahadevi. Whose primary means to the attainment of mystic experience is not only devotion but also the love of nature. She is a yogin or a mystic who transcends her mundane experiences, the the achievement of which her concentration and the knowledge of the Universe helps significantly. Many extraordinary acts are attributed to Akkamahadevi. These acts are gifted with supernatural powers commonly associated with the mystics. She believes in only on God, Chennamallikarjuna and realize is that He is in herself and everywhere. In the context of her learning Chennamallikarjuna himself is a great teacher. Just as Emily has found a teacher in a priest who is the embodiment of the Christ himself and just as Thoreau in him .Walden embodies vast expanse of nature as a teacher. These experiences place them as the romantics. Mysticism is the essence of religion. It involves both the path, the knowledge and path of action. This is true to the Indian cult-philosophy. It is in this context that one can notice the difference between the transcendental Puritanism and Veerashaivism. In both the cults there is the

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internal freedom. Akkamahadevi has her own liberty to choose the path of her life and Dickinson has her own way. Walden shows this liberty to every individual.

Akkamahadevi has achieved the mystic state through her experiences from the childhood. It is said in Sunyasampadane that she was a born mystic. In this connection she compared with Channabasavanna.

How at very birth,

Its perfume is so like a ball of scent and again:

Lord, tha a baby born to-day

Should just today have grown to youth

If Chennabasavanna is a born Knower, Akkamahadevi is a born Lover. Emily Dickinson is also a born lover though both of them have their own ways of realizing the Divine. The contrast between them lies in the selection of the path. The path of Akkamahadevi is the path of devotion and path of knowledge combined with action. But the path of Emily Dickinson is seclusion, escaping herself into the privacy. Akkamahadevi does not separate herself from the host of devotees. She becomes one with the surrounding just as a man in the wild forest becomes one with the surrounding.

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Emily Dickinson has a less of an experience and more of the imagination on her search for the Supreme Lover. But Akkamahadevi has an empirical way for attaining the mystic point. She has the integration of body and mind, the outer and the inner when experiencing the world. She resists the material forces and picks up an ascetic path. But Dickinson is not an ascetic. She is more of the world though she is in lack of material experiences. She does not protest; she does not resist but she escapes the external forces of life. The wilderness of Walden is unknown to Dickinson but the path of life to Akkamahadevi is known.

Thoreau suggests three stages for the attainment of mystic status. At the outset both Dickinson and Akkamahadevi pass through these stages, but Akkamahadevi goes even further renouncing the domestic and the material life and entering into acoustic construct.

In her poems Dickinson is not directly a feministic thinker. She is more masculine in her thoughts except in some initial poems on sensuous experiences. She accepts the male dominance as a Driver, a Chariot or a Path shower. She is in subjurvians to the maleness in the form of either death or Christ. Though she speaks about responsibilities

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on this earth yet meekly does her work and submerges in the male power. The male and the female are not exactly brought upon the common platform. They do not undertake their duties on the equal zeal. They do not seek the power in the same corridor. This difference is unconsciously shown by Dickinson.

But Akkamahadevi has the self reliance and the self realization. Herself knowledge goes with herself experience. Knowledge is not acquired reading the previous texts in Akkamahadevi but knowledge is acquired out of the nature and the society directly. It is analyzed in the Anubhava Mantapa by Allamaprabhu himself. Both the higher and lower knowledge's are found in Akkamahadevi. In Veerashaiva thinking the self knowledge (Anubhava) is the supreme kind of knowledge and all other kinds of knowledge are considered low. Akkamahadevi has this noblest thought acceptable by each and everyone. She is the feminist by birth. She does not bring a theory against the masculinity but she claims her individual identity equal to that of the male power. She resists the maleness which is found in form of Kowshika, the Wooer. She does not fear expressing her ideas anywhere either in the court or in the Mantapa. She comes out of the grounded crowd as a

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devotee and as an ascetic resisting every onslaught. Her path of mysticism therefore is the path of resistance in addition to the self knowledge. There is always an experience of mystic delight in Akkamahadevi because of her moral consciousness. But Dickinson hovers upon the moral principles, yet there is a ponder on Christ. The rupture of devotion is essential in Akkamahadevi, where as Dickinson is in lack of it. She is more of secular and democratic assumptions than of ascetic.

One thing is drawn in this work of comparison and contrast that both of them are Monastic and seek great delight not in material experiences but in the elevating experiences. They have common end of seeking a merger into the Divine. Dickinson wishes to merge in Christ, where as Akkamahadevi in Chennamallikarjuna. The end is something higher which is attainable only through the higher laws of life.

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