

Indian Poetry in English
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Lecture - 08
Nissim Ezekiel

Good morning, and welcome back to NPTEL online certification course on Indian Poetry in English. Till now, you have been listening to the lectures on poets who started writing or who practiced their hand in pre independent India. The last lecture that you listened on Sarojini Naidu actually was a sort of eye opener, that one cannot be confined or kept under control for a long time. Even, women poets also, tried to show through their poetic initiatives and through their poetic oeuvres.

In this regard, one thing that is quite important to note here is, that after we got independence. there were so many things that came and that brought a sort of change. And so was it, in the world of Indian poetry in English as well. Not only at the level of India, but around the world also, several developments took place: the two World Wars which had already been fought and were over, could have a catastrophic effect on mankind.


And then, the poetic world also witnessed all these, and the poets tried to bring all the all these experiences into their own field of writing, and their own ambit of writing. And that is why the lecture that we are going to start now, this lecture is going to be a bit changed from what we have learned earlier. Till now, we could see that Indian poetry in English was a sort of imitative affair, but now we had our own air, we had our own government, we had our own system, we had our own writing, we had our own press.

We had many people who had taken to journalism, many people who had taken to editing, many people who had taken to publishing. So, there were numerous opportunities waiting now. And, that is why the sociopolitical conditions in India, socio political conditions in India. were quite favorable even to poets.

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Socio-Political Conditions

- ❖ Post-Independence and Post-colonial poet
- ❖ Riots were being raged all over the country.
- ❖ Poets, artists, writers were trying to locate the identity of the country.



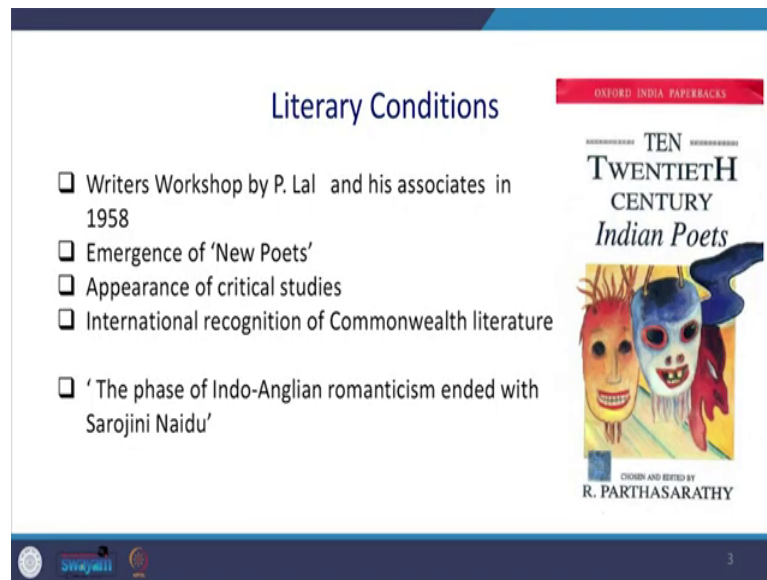
The slide features a title 'Socio-Political Conditions' at the top. Below it is a bulleted list with three items, each preceded by a diamond symbol. To the right of the list is a photograph showing a dense, multi-story urban landscape, possibly a slum or a city in a developing country. At the bottom of the slide, there is a dark blue footer containing a small logo on the left and the number '2' on the right.

But, the experiences that were there, because these poets who came are to write in independent India or after independence they could have myriad experiences. The colonial period being over, now the hangovers of the colonial days, could not haunt people. Now, they had a new thing, and they had a new experience and they wanted to follow what was going on in the outside world, in the neighboring countries.

And of course, this actually helped a great deal to the poets who came to write. In this regard, I mean even in India also, we could witness several incidents, which we found that they were not pretty, rather very ugly experiences one could have, fine? And the poet poets, artists, writers all these people were actually trying to locate not only their own identity, but the identity of their country as well.

So, this affected the new poets also, or the early modern poets. So, today in this lecture we are going to start with oh one such modern poet who is Nissim Ezekiel. It is said that after India got independence Indian poetry writing in English also felt a different sort of change and there were many poets who got opportunities as I told you earlier.

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The slide is titled "Literary Conditions" and features a list of five bullet points on the left and a book cover on the right. The book cover is for "TEN TWENTIETH CENTURY Indian Poets" by R. Parthasarathy, published by Oxford India Paperbacks. The cover art depicts two stylized faces, one red and one blue, with expressive features. The slide also includes logos for Swajathi and a small number '3' in the bottom right corner.

Literary Conditions

- ❑ Writers Workshop by P. Lal and his associates in 1958
- ❑ Emergence of 'New Poets'
- ❑ Appearance of critical studies
- ❑ International recognition of Commonwealth literature
- ❑ 'The phase of Indo-Anglian romanticism ended with Sarojini Naidu'

TEN TWENTIETH CENTURY Indian Poets
CHOSEN AND EDITED BY R. PARTHASARATHY

Because of some people who had started their own Writers Workshop namely Purushotam Lal we have been talking about, who started along with some of his friends Purushotam Lal then Kamala Das, and then Anita Desai and many others. They actually associated, and they started publishing poems of the contemporary poets who were practicing their hands at writing poetry.

So, the emergence of these new poets, provided readers with new themes, new experiences. Now, they were not confined only to sing the traditional glory, the splendor of the past, or their poems were not soaked only in sentimentality. They were actually trying to have a new experience, and they were also being influenced by the poets, who were writing either in England or in some other countries.

So, the appearance of critical studies that also helped; many new journals came in India you know some of the journals namely *Illustrated Weekly of India* some of the poetry workshops namely Writers Workshop. Then, PEN also started publishing many poets. So, international recognition of Commonwealth literature, that also added a new flavor to Indian poetry writing in English.

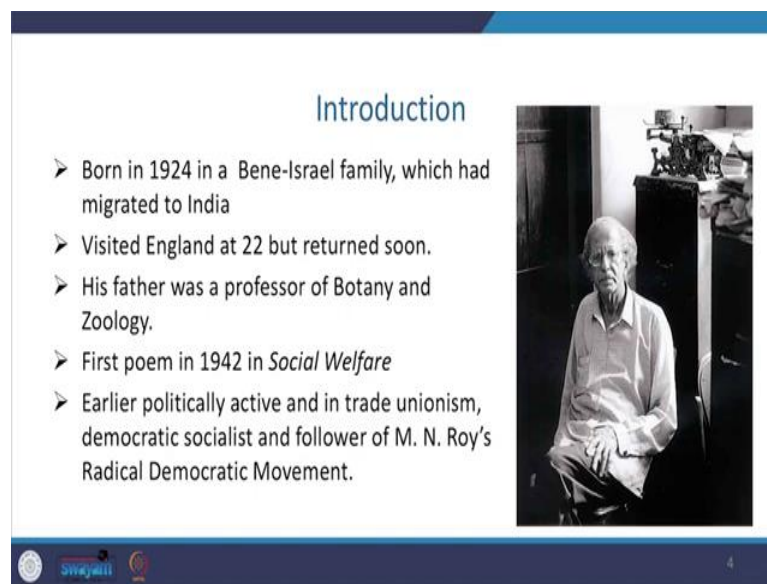
It is said, actually in one of the editorials, P Lal himself had said, "the phase of Indo-Anglian romanticism ended with Sarojini Naidu". Now my dear friend, still one could say that it was an era of romanticism. Because many of these poets who were writing they were since they were influenced and they were influenced in a different manner

they were imitating. So, there was a tendency towards romanticism, but now as P Lal says, it ended with Sarojini Naidu.

And, so the new poets who came--- they had before them many new challenges. Here, on the right hand side, you can find a book entitled *Ten Twentieth Century Indian Poetry* which is edited and compiled by R Parthasarathy who himself was a great poet. We will talk about him also as we proceed further. So, what happens when we talk about the new poets?


No discussion can be complete without the introduction, and without the discussion of Nissim Ezekiel. It is said that no Indian English poet could be as perfect, when we talk about the modern Indian English poetry as Nassim Ezekiel. Now, let us also come to have some background information about Ezekiel.


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Introduction

- Born in 1924 in a Bene-Israel family, which had migrated to India
- Visited England at 22 but returned soon.
- His father was a professor of Botany and Zoology.
- First poem in 1942 in *Social Welfare*
- Earlier politically active and in trade unionism, democratic socialist and follower of M. N. Roy's Radical Democratic Movement.





Ezekiel was actually born in 1924 in a Bene-Israel family. Now, see this also has a story. So, he was actually a Jew, but then his family members, I mean his forefathers had migrated to India, and he considered India to be his home. So, the question of identity that will come across in majority of his poems, that comes to haunt at times, and you know the poet also responds to it, because the new poetry is not a poetry of sentimentality, but it is actually a poetry of rationality.

It is actually a poetry which talks about the new experience of new ages, the how the wind blows not only in India, but in outside world also; so, they were influenced. Now, Ezekiel's father was a professor of Botany and Zoology. Ezekiel actually had so many friends, majority of them were editors, one such was Ebrahim Alkazi who actually told Ezekiel to visit England, so that he could actually be educated properly.

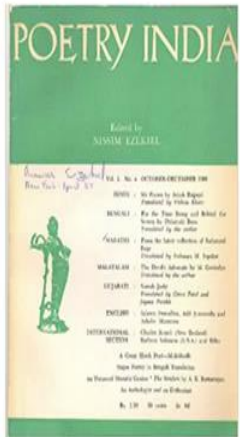
But, Ezikiel did not have much money and Alkazi paid the boat ticket for one side and so Ezekiel could go to England for some time. And then, his first poem, and you know, he had the experiences of becoming an editor, he had also been associated with several presses. And you know, we have already talked about C R Mandi, who actually found in Ezikiel a sort of a spark.

And there was a time when poets should flood to Ezekiel, as poets would flood to Hopkins in England. And Ezekiel would actually advise them, because technically speaking, Ezekiel had that finesse of a poet who he was actually perfect in terms of prosody. Not only the traditional prosody, but also the free stanzas, and then the themes of her poems were also varied. There is a very famous book by Bruce King which is entitled Modern Indian English Poetry, where Bruce King says that while others wrote poems, Ezekiel wrote poetry.

And there are good many volumes by Ezikiel which we will come across. So, Ezekiel in the beginning was highly influenced by the radical views of M N Roy, and that is why he was a little bit active in terms of the political happenings. But then, he could not continue for a long time; and he dedicated himself to poetry writing, because he considered that poetry was a way of life. And he had to answer so many things through his poetry.

And he cannot be considered to be a poet of the fixed category, because he had ample experiences and different sort of experiences. Sometimes you can find Ezekiel talking between his own self and the other self. He is sometimes struggling with his own mind and he actually wanted to say what he really wanted to say, because by poems he believed that it was not simply a philosophy, but it was also a sort of rationality, it was also a sort of experience, which in everyday lives we come across.

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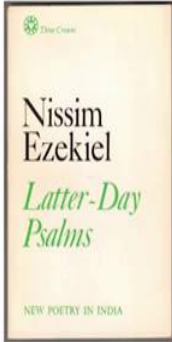
The image shows the cover of the magazine 'POETRY INDIA'. The title is in large, bold, green letters at the top. Below the title, it says 'Edited by NISSIM EZEKIEL'. The cover features a green background with a white border. There is a small illustration of a person in the center. The text on the cover includes 'Vol. 1, No. 4 OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1966' and a list of contents.

Contd...

- ❖ Edited: *Poetry India* (1966-7)
 - ❖ (Articles, reviews and translations)
- ❖ Evolution of contemporary Indian English Poetry.
- ❖ Published in *Illustrated Weekly*, *Thought*, *Literary Half-Yearly*.
- ❖ Philosophy about life and poetry

Now, Ezekiel also got the opportunity of editing *Poetry India* for a year 1966 to 67 and he came across many articles, reviews, and translations which also sharpened his poetic sensibility. So, it is said that it was with Nissim Ezekiel that contemporary Indian English poetry evolved. Many of his poems were published and *Illustrated Weekly*, then he also contributed to *Thought* and then also to *Literary, Half Yearly*, and he had a different notion about poetry, his philosophy of poetry was different.

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The image shows the cover of the book 'Latter-Day Psalms' by Nissim Ezekiel. The title is in large, bold, green letters. The author's name 'Nissim Ezekiel' is in black. Below the title, it says 'NEW POETRY IN INDIA'. The cover is white with a green border.

Ezekiel's Poetic Corpus

- Founded *Quest* (1955) which ceased publication with the Emergency and was superseded by *New Quest* concerned with problems of modern India.
- ✓ Free verse to traditional prosody
- ✓ *Quest* helped make modern Indian poetry part of contemporary Indian culture

A Time to Change(1952)
Sixty Poems(1953)
The Third (1959)
The Unfinished Man(1960)
The Exact Name(1965)
Hymns in Darkness(1976)
Latter Day Psalms(1982)



The image shows two awards: a silver cup and a gold medal.

You can find the variety of poems that he has written, Ezekiel also got an opportunity to found another journal named *Quest* in 1955 which of course, because of some unavoidable reasons came to be set off, I mean it could not continue, but then with it, so many things came into picture. The free verse to traditional prosody which was actually his own fault, he not only tried to bring musicality, but wherever he needed, he also started writing in free verses.

And then, the imagery is that, he brought in his own poetry since he was a Jew. So, some of the imagers you will find from the bible, then some from you will find from the everyday life experiences and all. So, *Quest* actually not only helped Nissim Ezekiel, but also helped many of his associates like Dom Moraes then Adil Jussawalla then Arun Kolatkar and all these names which are also very famous, we will come across then Daruwalla and all these people got the opportunity are to write through these journals.

Now, while we talk about Ezekiel's poetic corpus, of the world of poetry, there are some of the volumes which are actually very important, the very first to come into force was a *Time to Change*. And this was the, actually this was published first outside and then Writers Workshop also gave him so many opportunities when in 1953 he published *Sixty Poems*.

And then he published *The Third*, then *The Unfinished Man*, *The Exact Name*, *Hymns in Darkness*, and *Latter Day Psalms*. Now, if you have a look at the title of his poems you will find that this poet is searching for his own identity because he and you know about his own identity he says that my background is where I belong to, is not it? So, majority of his poems revolve around the poet's way of answering so many questions which other people could have raised a time to change.

Now, this is itself very symbolical then *Sixty Poems*, then *The Third*, and then comes *The Unfinished Man* in Ezekiel's world, you will not only find poems, which are actually modeled after what the new world is thinking about, but he is also answering certain challenges.

Challenges of sexuality, challenges of marriage, challenges of everyday, challenges which a common man also feels, challenges which a common man's identity at times when it is questioned, and then there are some which he also talks about a contemporary Indian culture.

So, we will when we come across many some of his poems we will find. So, in *Time to Change*, fine and you know what is one of the greatest weapons of this poet I mean Nissim Ezekiel is, that he is not only intellectually aware, but morally very intelligent. He will actually, he is morally very intelligent, intelligent in the sense that majority of his poems have a have a sort of ironic tone.

If we read some of the lines of some of the poems we will find, that there is a sort of ironic tone and this ironic tone, this irony is served in such a manner, one poem all of you might be familiar with, the *Night of the Scorpion*. Because it is prescribed not only at school level, but at college level and at sometimes in university level also. So, Night of the Scorpion, which is a very common you know it is a very common event a lady is being stung by a scorpion.

And then how you know people around her, and even her own husband how all of them have different versions, how you know the some of them talk about tradition, some of them talk about superstition. And finally, when it comes to the lady, the lady only says one thing, and she says, “It was actually good that the scorpion left my children and bit me”. So, when we come to see that what a sort of irony, the lady is not concerned about her own pains, rather the lady is concerned about her own child’s welfare.

So, the Indian ethos that we are talking about, my dear friend. In many of the poems by Ezekiel, you will find that there is a personal story which has been served in such a manner. Because you know there is a persona, and the persona’s point of view is quite different.

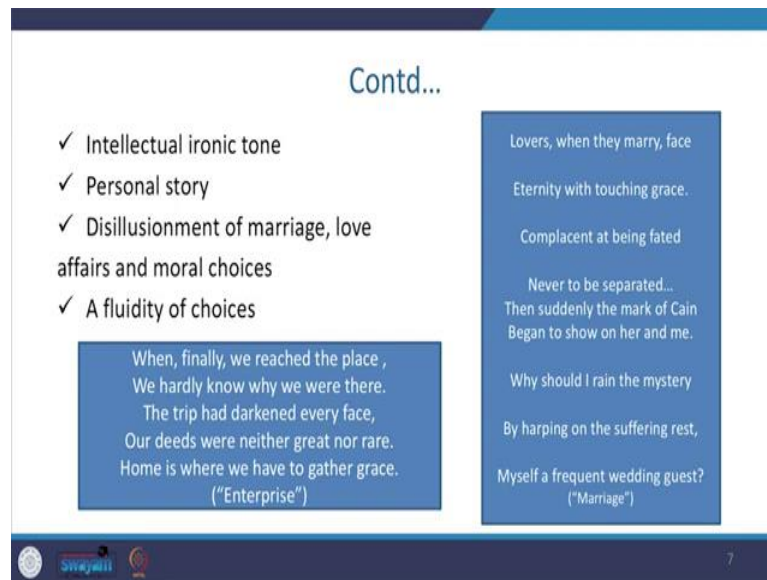
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- ✓ Intellectual ironic tone
- ✓ Personal story
- ✓ Disillusionment of marriage, love affairs and moral choices
- ✓ A fluidity of choices

When, finally, we reached the place,
We hardly know why we were there.
The trip had darkened every face,
Our deeds were neither great nor rare.
Home is where we have to gather grace.
("Enterprise")

Lovers, when they marry, face
Eternity with touching grace.
Complacent at being fated
Never to be separated...
Then suddenly the mark of Cain
Began to show on her and me.
Why should I rain the mystery
By harping on the suffering rest,
Myself a frequent wedding guest?
("Marriage")



Let us take some lines from one very significant poem by Ezekiel entitled *Enterprise*. And you know, in this poem the poet actually talks about how when we start making an enterprise or a project, how we actually think, how different people have different notions, how you do not stand together. And finally, when it comes to one's own you know, day by day we find people distancing, leaving your own company. And so the poet in a very ironic tone says,

When finally, we reached the place
We hardly know why we were there
The trip had darkened every face,
Our deeds were neither great nor rare,
Home is where we have to gather grace.

My dear friends, through this poem, what actually he wants to say is--- that all of us must stay united. So, by saying this, he gives a different lesson now every day or the other we are involved in certain strife, certain dividedness, sometimes physically, sometimes mentally, sometimes religiously, sometimes on certain grounds the grounds of cast, colour, nationality whatsoever.

So, the poet actually tries to give lesson. And then he says, home is. So, by home here he means peace, harmony, joy and integrity. So, home is where we have to gather grace.

The poet at times also shows his disillusionment with certain traditional modes, with certain systems that are imposed upon us because there is a new beginning, there is a new light. which he comes to see from the outside.

So, even though being an outsider. the poet he actually feels the tinge and the pangs. And in one poem named *Marriage* you know you will find a biting sharp attack is there all of us want to be married.

But then the poet actually what he says is: when we marry we find that we are made for each other. So, there is a comment on it, if we read the lines we will find there is a comment on it and then what he says is that life is not simply something that is repetitive. And, how he says is--

Lovers when they marry face

Eternity with touching grace.

Complacent at being fated

Never to be separated.

So, when you get married you feel that you are bound for ever, but my dear friend you should be aware of the modern ways of life the new modes of life.

Life is changing fast. So, you cannot say that it is forever, it is not only for now, but forever. And then he says towards the end the last stanza the poet says that when we have had all sorts of experiences, all sorts of union, all sorts of intimacies, then perhaps we forget that the prime of fall is also there. Here he actually refers to the story of Adam and Eve and then temptation and then he talks about

Then suddenly the mark of Cain began to show on her and me,

Why should I rain the mystery by harping on the suffering rest,

Myself a frequent wedding guest?

So, he says perhaps we forget that this situation is not forever, at any point of time anything may happen. So, life is not about simply taking the vows and understanding that this is going to be forever. So, through this poem marriage also, he actually tries to give us a lesson. And then there is an irony that having said all the prayers and promises

and all you know, what happens is towards the end we feel that this is only repetitive and then we must change.

So, from time to change and then life is full of choices. Now, here you can find that unlike the traditional poets Ezekiel is completely different and he says that at in life anything may happen any moment. So, we must be ready to see and to face it is not that we are made for each other. Now, what are actually the characteristic features of an Ezekiel's world.

Ezekiel was highly influenced by Austrian poet Rilke, and the British poets Eliot and Auden, and you will find that how changes were taking place, how in Eliot also how we could say April is the cruellest month, breeding lilacs out of the dead. And in one poem, he also says he also writes I mean Nissim Ezekiel writes that when we come in April how can we return home, I mean there is again an irony in it.

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Characteristic Features

- ✓ Influenced by Rilke, Eliot, and Auden
- ✓ Quest for physical, social and spiritual integration of the self.
- ✓ Viewed poetry as a way of life, an expression of a life as a poet.
- ✓ Alienation and a sense of 'poet in exile'.
- ✓ Poems on animals

Everything is coming-
Regeneration, Remuneration,
Contraception...
Be patiently, brothers and sisters.
You are going?
But you will visit again
Any time, any day,
I am not believing in ceremony.
Always I am enjoying your
company.

("Very Indian Poem in Indian
English")

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So, in majority of his poems you can find a quest for physical, social and spiritual integration of the self, integration of the self. And you know, Ezekiel was not confined only to one style rather, he was also trying to bring some experiment in terms of language. And the experiment that you will find, the experiment is very beautiful, where like Sarojini Naidu.

Sarojini Naidu was making use of Indian words frequently, but here also, by making a sort of linguistic experience what he tries to say is, because once upon a time he was said that oh you are writing poetry and in a very prosodic manner. But how come are you aware of how English is being spoken outside, or how English is being spoken by other people who do not have the knowledge of English. And on the basis of that he wrote a poem, where he experimented.

So, this experimentation with the language was also sort of experimentation and it was a sort of rejection of all these traditional manners that there should be a complete prosodic features and all that. So, in one of the poems entitled “Very Indian Poem in Indian English” what he says you will find,

Everything is coming---

See he actually makes us all aware of the impending reality everything is coming

‘regeneration, remuneration, contraception.’

So, the voice of modernity, now you are not confined to be together to one person tied for as with vows of marriage and all, but then there are several other changes taking place and we have to adopt to those changing also changes also. And then he says, but sorry and then he says towards the end he says

‘you are going?’

Now, you see structurally this is not English here there is actually a sort of you know breaking off rules of grammar

‘you are going’.

But you will visit again

any time, any day you know as we often say you know this is just a sort of translation you know any time any day

‘I am not believing in ceremony always’

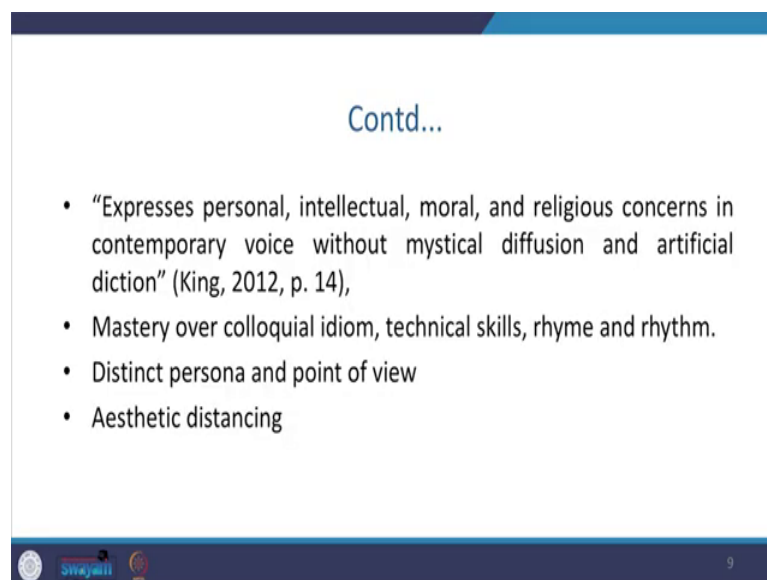
I am enjoying your company. So, now, through this poem and he titles this poem as “Very Indian Poem in Indian English”, Very Indian Poem in Indian English. So, this is

actually the language of the common masses. And you know in Ezekiel's poem, one can also find a profound sense of alienation, as one as the poet who is always in exile, there is some poems on animals also.

Ezekiel believed, that poetry was a way of life, and we cannot keep ourselves confined or we cannot keep ourselves sheltered always, we also have to open up to new possibilities because the outside world you cannot remain aloof, the outside world, the changing realities and one must change oneself according to the changing realities.

So, the marriage that you take vows with, is that marriage going to be permanent and what he has said today, we can find a glimpse of it if we have a look at what is happening all around the world my dear friends.

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- “Expresses personal, intellectual, moral, and religious concerns in contemporary voice without mystical diffusion and artificial diction” (King, 2012, p. 14),
- Mastery over colloquial idiom, technical skills, rhyme and rhythm.
- Distinct persona and point of view
- Aesthetic distancing

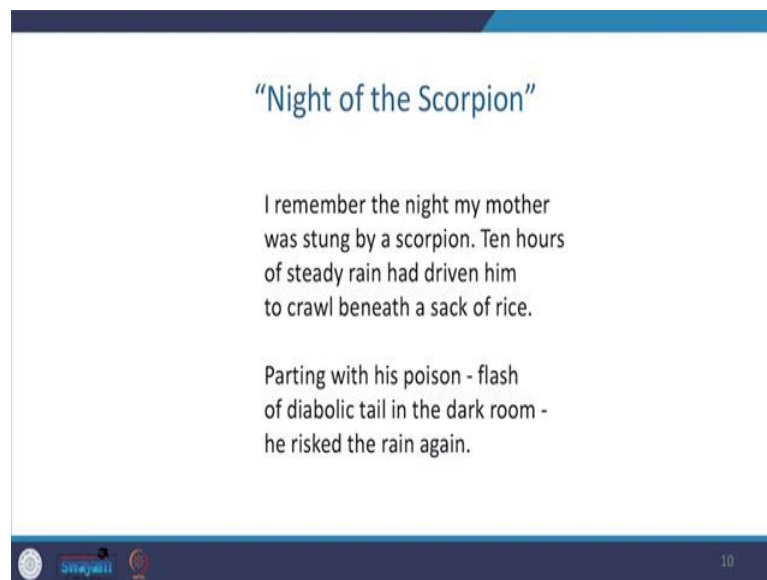
He also expresses in the words of a Bruce King. He also “expresses personal, intellectual, moral and religious concerns in contemporary voice without mystical diffusion and artificial diction.” He does not go after artificial diction, I mean by artificial diction, I mean the rhyming, imposing a rhyme he does not go after, if it is rhymed it is ok, otherwise he can also take recourse to blank verses.

The poet maintains a sort of distinct persona and a point of view, which we can find are through his poems like “Philosophy,” through his poems like “Enterprise”, through his poems like there is one poem not only entitled *Marriage* but then there are other poems

“True Love” like there are many such poems where you can find that in every poem the poet, and what is significant about him is, the concluding lines, the concluding lines provide you with a message, if you read any of the poems the concluding lines are very powerful because Ezekiel has a command over colloquial idiom, colloquial idiom.

Technically, he is a poet who has perfected himself in the art of writing, and that is why many poets would often throng to him for correction. It is said that even Dom Moraes used to go to him, but as we when we compare the language of Dom Moraes and Ezekiel, Ezekiel’s language was very simple of course, and majority of the poems you can find rhyme and rhythm as well.

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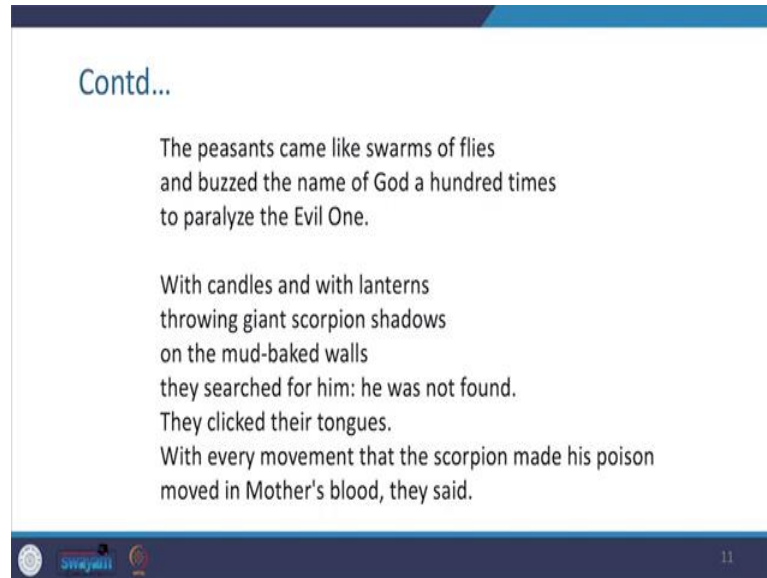
“Night of the Scorpion” as I had been telling you, I would simply read some of the lines to tell you how a common experience is converted into a beautiful poem. Only, when the scorpion came across, when the scorpion bit lady --a mother what were the reactions of the people who are surrounding.

I remember the night my mother
was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours
Of steady rain had driven him
to crawl beneath a sack of rice.

So, he very minutely delineates it where the scorpion was-

Parting with his poison--- flash
of diabolic tail in the dark room—
he risked the rain again.

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And now the villagers came.

‘The peasants came like swarms of flies.’

So, many people came you know, a very common incident and so many people came. So, here on the one hand, we find that how people all around, how they are very cooperative, but then we also find how a very a little affair, a trifle is made very uncommon.

‘And buzzed the name of god a hundred times
to paralyze the evil one.

So, superstition here

‘ With candles and with lanterns’

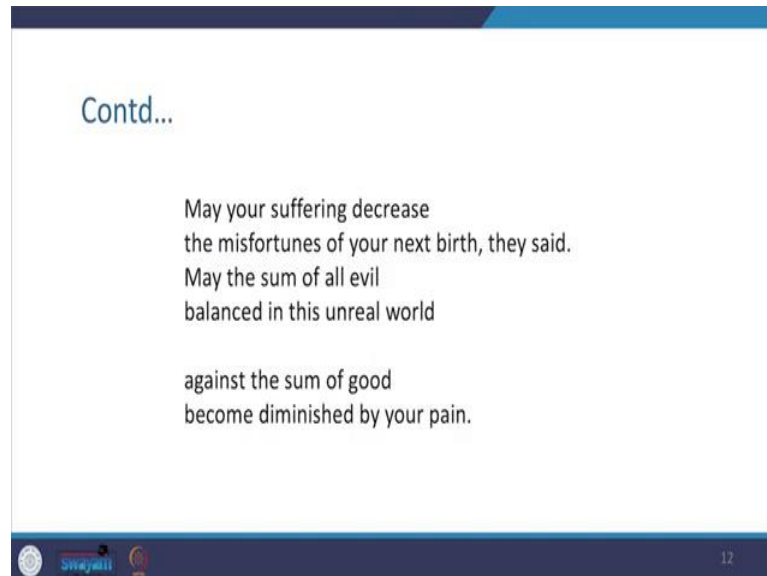
and then the father I mean the poet’s father who was actually rational. So, he thought that he will bring a something that can actually burn

‘They searched for him: he was not found.

They clicked their tongues.

With every movement that the scorpion made his poison
moved in mother's blood they said.

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May your suffering decrease
the misfortunes of your next birth
You see, the superstitious voice;

May your suffering decrease the misfortunes of your next birth, they said
May the sum of evil balanced in this unreal world
against the sum of good
become diminished by your pain.

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Characteristics of the Poem, "Night of the Scorpion"

- ❖ Setting of a village
- ❖ Demonization of the scorpion
- ❖ Cultural and religious element
- ❖ Superstition
- ❖ Atonement
- ❖ Mother's love
- ❖ Animal Survival vs human survival
- ❖ Father: Sceptic, pragmatic, and rationalist



- ❖ Narrative style

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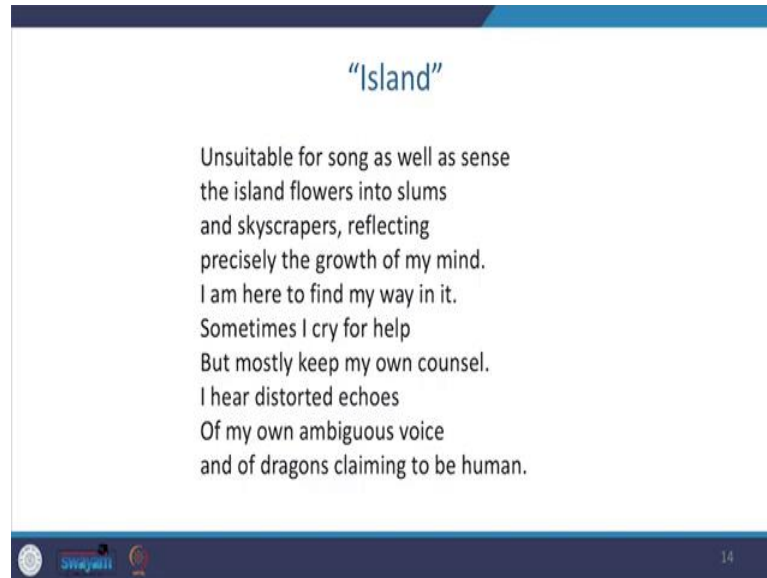
Now, if we have a look at the entire poem, you can find that it is not only, the poem is not only set in a village and the surrounding where the people are of different faiths and beliefs. But the poet's father, who was quite scientific, he also brought some paraffin, so that it may burn and the pain will go off. And when everything is over you know, it also talks about the cultural and the religious element when people say about the suffering, and it was about the past and the coming life and all.

But then finally, as I told you earlier, the mother who finally, says thank god this scorpion left my child, and bit me only, is not it? So, the mother who is undergoing the pain and she is not aware of her own pain or not bothered by her own pain, but she is actually satisfied that, it is good that the scorpion did not come upon my child. So, the poem is in a very narrative style, the poet's father who is also skeptic. Even though he may be considered to be pragmatic and rationalist, yet he does not do what is required, rather he applies that paraffin and all that.

So, there is an ironic tone in the poem, and we can find such instances in other poems also. It is said about Nissim Ezekiel that since he was born in Mumbai and he considered Mumbai to be his own home, but then over the years he could find that Mumbai which was only an island. And how over the years Mumbai became metro, and it actually became a place for people from different areas, different localities, different faiths, different tastes, different habits, different professions they gathered.

And how suddenly this island, but still this island not only provides him a sort of belongingness, but the sort of chaos and the dividedness which is there, the poet is actually pained to see that where he says, that how he himself feels.

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Unsuitable for song as well as sense

the island flowers into slums

and skyscrapers, reflecting

The contraries life is full of contraries my dear friend, on the one hand there are slums, on the other there are skyscrapers.

precisely the growth of my mind.

I am here to find my way in it.

Sometimes I cry for help,

But mostly keep my own counsel.

No! as we live in a metro we find that people are less bothered, least bothered about what happens to others.

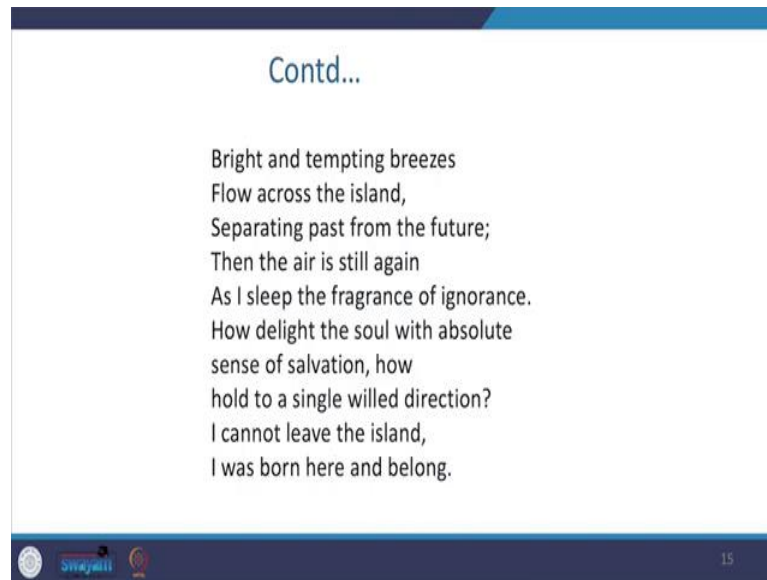
They are so much soaked and confined in their own problems. So, he actually talks about the problem of our city,

‘ I hear distorted echoes

Of my own ambiguous voice

And of dragons claiming to be human.’

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Bright and tempting breezes

Flow across the island,

Separating past from the future;

Separating past from the future

See the beauty.

Then the air is still again

As I sleep the fragrance of ignorance

How delight the soul with absolute

sense of Salvation, how

hold to a single willed direction?

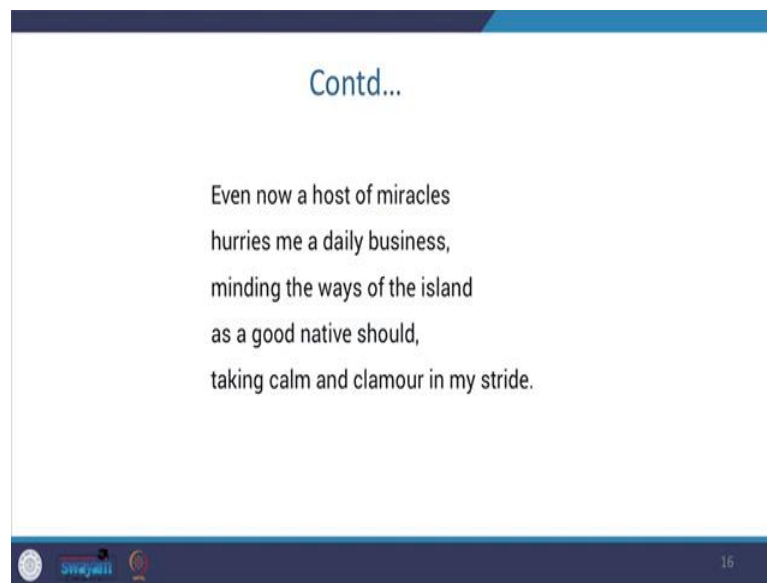
I cannot leave the island,

I was born here and belong.

So, here in the last one, we find that the sense of alienation that he is developing, but then should he, because he had come to live here on an island in order to have a sort of silence.

But now, since it has grown and there are different sorts of chaos, different sort of dividedness, different sorts of conflict, different sorts of problems, anxieties. And people are busy, people are head over heels in their business in order to get some space in this materialistic world, the poet feels himself quite a loner, but then what he says--- I cannot leave the island. So, a cry for identity--- “I cannot leave the island, I was born here and I belong.”

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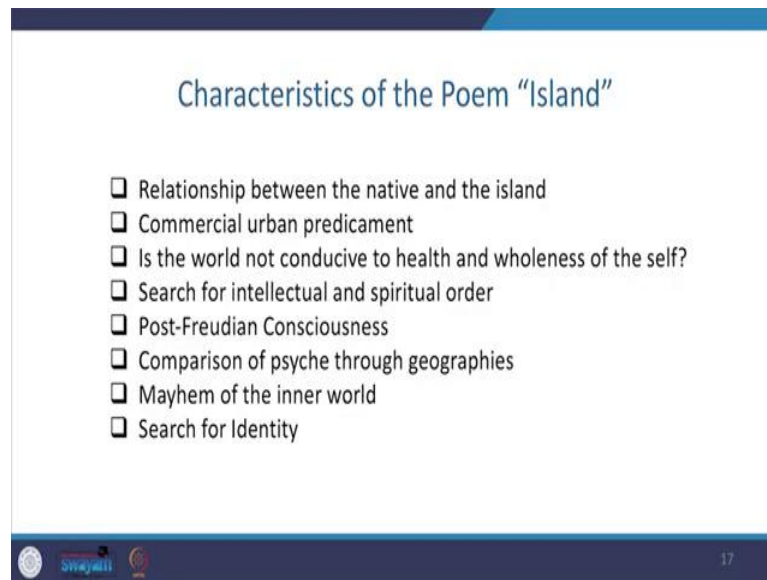


So, the entire poem if you read---

“Even now a host of miracles
hurries me a daily business,
minding the ways of the island
as a good native should,
taking calm and clamour in my stride.”

Taking calm and clamour in my stride, but then, I cannot leave this island. So, even though, now this island has been converted into a different place, should I leave it for silence, for isolation, for the peace of my mind, for tranquility, No.

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So, we find that there is actually a sort of conflicting relationship between the native and the island. The person I mean the poet I mean especially he belongs to the Mumbai group of poets and there were lots of competitions, but then he and since he had also a sort of identity crisis that he feels and that he actually writes in majority of his poems. So, we and you know, in many of his poems because Nissim Ezekiel is considered to be an urban poet, but the landscapes that he has delineated in his poems, do not actually make him only an urban poet, because he has an eye for others as well.

So, there is actually a search for intellectual and spiritual order, because he is thinking of peace and all. And we can also find, that that there is the mayhem of the inner world where the outside world is too busy, the inner world is in conflict, the inner world of the poet, the psyche of the poet, is in conflict. Another poem, which actually, again it is here a search for love, and it is a search for truth. It is a search for the poet's weapon the poet's medium this poem is titled *Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher*. If you read some of the lines which I will mark you will find.

Actually what he tries to say here is that poetry is not such, that simply through numerous efforts you can weave a poem no.. we are actually reminded of Keats also who said that poetry if poetry does not come to me naturally as leaves to a plant, it is better it should not come.

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“Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher”

To force the pace and never to be still Is not the way of those who study birds Or women. The best poets wait for words. The hunt is not an exercise of will But patient love relaxing on a hill To note the movement of a timid wing; Until the one who knows that she is loved No longer waits but risks surrendering - In this the poet finds his moral proved Who never spoke before his spirit moved.	The slow movement seems, somehow, to say much more. To watch the rarer birds, you have to go Along deserted lanes and where the rivers flow In silence near the source, or by a shore Remote and thorny like the heart's dark floor. And there the women slowly turn around, Not only flesh and bone but myths of light With darkness at the core, and sense is found But poets lost in crooked, restless flight, The deaf can hear, the blind recover sight
---	--

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And same is the condition with Nissim Ezekiel who says

To force the pace and never to be still
is not the way of those who study birds.

Here, he actually takes the reference of the bird, and he has given it a title “Poet, Lover and Birdwatcher.” All these three people-- they have actually to wait, they have actually to watch. And when it has to come it will come it will come quite naturally because he says:

to force the pace and never to be still
is not the way of those who study birds
Or women the best poet. The best poets wait for the words.

I am underlining these words-- the best poets wait for words/the hunt is not an exercise of will,/ but patient love relaxing on a hill.

So, best poet will wait for a word and unless that word comes, he cannot write that poem.

Until the one who knows that she is loved
No longer waits, but risks surrendering—
in this the poet finds his moral proved
Who never spoke before his spirit moved.

So, if you simply think that you have to do something perforce whether it is love bird gauging bird watching or writing poetry no, the slow movement seems poetry is a way of life; it is a slow process.

The slow movement seems somehow to say
much more.

To watch the rarer birds, you have to go
along deserted lanes and where the rivers flow
in silence near the source or by a shore.

Remote and thorny like the hearts dark floor
and there the women slowly turn around

Because he is talking about lover beloved also and so he says, it is a slow process love,
poetry writing and bird watching

and there the women slowly turn around
not only flesh and bone, but myths of light.
With darkness at the core and senses found,
but poets lost in crooked restless flight
the deaf can hear the blind recover sight.

Now, see the last line, the deaf can hear, the blind recover sight. So, when finally, you have the inspiration finally, when that word has come finally, when that moment has come, the moment after lots of patient waiting has come, suddenly you will find, that the sort of thing that you are going to say will become so powerful that even the deaf can hear and the blind can also get sight, I mean poetry is also penance, my dear friend.

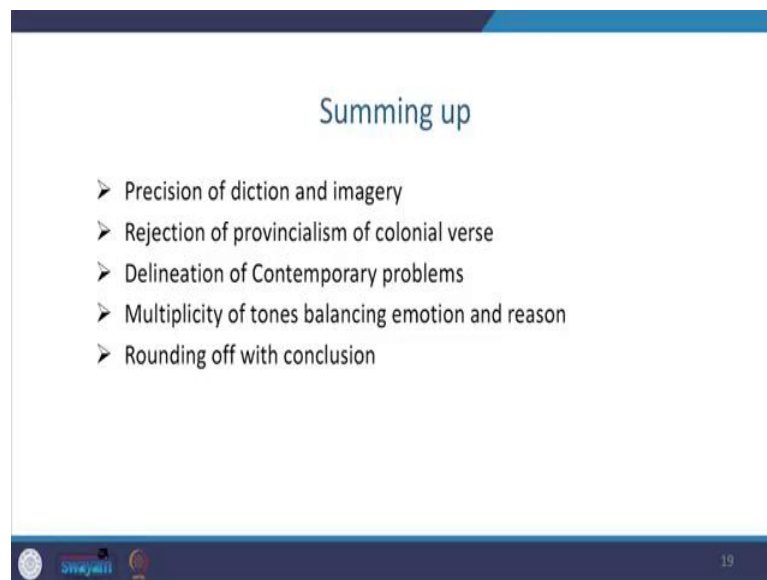
It is also a sort of waiting, and the best poets will wait for words. So, this is actually “Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher.” Now, when we have a look at, I mean, it is very difficult to talk about all the poems. But then I am simply trying to ignite a sort of passion in all my listeners and lovers of poetry so, that they can enter the world of Nissim Ezekiel and many other poets, contemporary poets who are actually waiting to compose their own verses and weave and weave them and serve them for people.

So, finally, when we try to estimate Nissim Ezekiel as an Indian poet because as he himself said, that this is my background. There is a poem named “Background”, also by Nissim Ezekiel that is also very powerful and you can have a look at it whenever time is fit for you to go through the entire corpus of Nissim Ezekiel. But here, when we sum up we can find that there is actually in the world of Nissim Ezekiel a precision of diction and imagery.

The poems may not be very long, my dear friend and the words may not be very difficult, there is a sort of precision of both diction as well of imagery. He is not a poet who will actually be taken in by the colonialism, you know provincialization of colonial empire or whatsoever, he does not write like colonial verse.

He actually believes that he should write in tune with the times whatever is happening, whatever is changing, he must also respond to these changes. And that is why there is a disillusionment even in the wedding, even in the marriage, fine and where he says-- I too like a wedding guest, fine.

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Delineation of contemporary problems that you can also find in many of Nissim Ezekiel’s poem. There are tones, and the tones are multiple. It is not the voice of the poet, rather the poet through his own subtle lines, and subtle imagery tries to give the voice of the persona, and tries to put the point of view. And what is of utmost importance in the poems of Nissim Ezekiel, is that majority of his poems come to an end. It is a sort

of rounding off with conclusion, and the conclusions are so, subtle and there is a lesson in it my dear friend.

So, whenever you happen to get some time, please explore the world of the world of a Nissim Ezekiel and try to find out the elements of modernity, and you know you can find that not only are their conflicts, not only are their barrenness, not only are their emptiness not only there are different voices. But not only there are different traditions, not only new challenges are raging their faces, but then we are living, just like to quote in the words of T S Eliots, where in one of his poems he says:

“Son of a man, I can show you Death in a handful of dust” fine? So, there are poems also which actually revolve round Death in some of the poems of Nissim Ezekiel also and then Eliot has also said there is cry, but no water; I mean talking about the contemporary problem, and today we are watching that. And we can find such, you know, such things having influenced the poets of the new India that is independent India, and they cannot keep their doors shut to all these realities my dear friend.

So, before we sum up, let us quote one line from one of his collection which is entitled *The Third*, because the titles of his poems are also very symbolical there is a one title which is *The Exact Name* I mean it appears as if the poet is trying to find out his own identity.

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Searching for the point of it,
The meaning and the mood, one learns
Over and over again the same thing:
That women, trees, tables, waves and birds,
Buildings, stones, steamrollers,
Cats and clocks
Are here to be enjoyed.
("Conclusion" from The Third)

Thank You

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And here in this poem, entitled *Conclusion from The Third* what he says you see,
Searching for the point of it
the meaning and the mood, the meaning and the mood
one learns over and over again the same thing.

So, when you try to find for meaning and when you try to find the meaning and the mood:

one learns over and over again the same thing
that women, trees, tables, waves and birds,
buildings, stones, steamrollers,
cats and clocks are here to be enjoyed.

What the poet actually tries to give the message is-- you should not confine yourself or shut yourself off from the new realities that are emerging; whether it be the realities of the pleasures of the mind, the pleasures of the body, or the materialistic pleasures, you have to enjoy everything buildings, stones, steamrollers fine? We are not in a world where we are talking simply about the rivers and the silences. We are also here to listen to the voices of the modern world, which actually comprises women, trees, tables, waves birds, buildings, stones, steamrollers, cats and clocks.

I mean, the world is going to be very commercial, very mechanical, but how long can you keep yourself away from all these you have, so long as you have to be here on this earth, you have to enjoy. Meaning, thereby, if you simply say that you should remain ideal no, materialism is also a part of life, and one cannot keep himself away from that. So, having said this let me come to the end of today's lecture on especially early modern poets.

And in the next lecture, we shall again talk about and we shall discuss, again one important modern poet. Till then, thank you very much. I wish you all a good life till then keep searching for meaning, for moods and for the point of your own views and experiences.

Thank you very much.