

## NATURE, CLIMATE AND SELF: READING SELECT TEXTS OF AWADHI BARAMASA

---

**Dr Ravindra Pratap Singh**

Professor of English

Department of English and Modern European Languages

University of Lucknow-226007

---

### Abstract:

The graceful and magnanimous environment sighs and sings in folklore, and folklore finds inspiration from the nature around. The raw is real and the real is genuine, uncut and boisterous, and has its own thumping, flickering and thud. This is all true and contextually fit for the equation of the Awadhi folklore and environment. In Baramasa the characteristics of the seasons work as the catalyst in affecting the psyche of the woman protagonist, and towards associating herself with nature, she translates her anxiety, separation and the good past days spent in union with the lover (of course, husband in our socio-cultural context) through the rhymes of Baramasa. Sanskrit texts have their own mention on Baramasa. Baramasa is a poetic representation of such a state in association with the emotions of love, togetherness and separation. We can find more than hundred texts of Baramasa in Awadhi folklore. Their trajectories are from personal to universal. Exceptionally some texts in Baramasa tradition also reflect on the state of association i.e. the meeting of the lover and the beloved but most of them explain the phase of separation. Awadhi Baramasa in comparison with other Baramasa traditions in Hindi folklore is more intense and comprehensive showing varied connotations. The beloved pines for the lover. The longing, anxiety and pain affect the psyche. She begins with the personal pain that spreads on the universal canvas, and here comes the general tale of personal pain being political. By the close reading of the texts of Baramasa, we find that the personal pain, longing or *virah* culminates into the realization of eternity. It associates with the society and nature around. The protagonist feels sad and lonely, and tries to associate with the environment and society. She wants to find emotional protection there but that too is in the same state. Ultimately the association with the universe gives the state of realization of the eternity.

Keywords: nature, climate, self, Sanskrit etc

The relationship between folklore and environment is that of interesting soul mates. The graceful and magnanimous environment sighs and sings in folklore, and folklore finds inspiration from the nature around. The raw is real and the real is genuine, uncut and boisterous, and has its own thumping, flickering and thud. This is all true and contextually fit for the equation of the Awadhi folklore and environment. The folklore of Hindi speaking north India is very rich and colorful. Its manifestation is visible in the forms of Folk Drama (Lok Natya), Folk Songs/ Lyrics (Lok Geet), Folk Ballads (Lok Gatha), Folk Tales ,(Lok Katha) and Folk Sayings (Lok Subhashita). Baramasa is a popular form in the category of Folk songs . Songs in form of Baramasa are found both in classical and folk traditions, and it is equally popular in both the traditions. In the present discussion I have considered the folk version of it. Generally, in Baramasa we see the separation of the lovers as the theme. The effect of this separation further adds to the themes and subthemes . In Indian literatures, season is depicted generally in two forms –Rituvarnana and Baramasa. The condition of togetherness and union of a lover and beloved is depicted in Rituvarnan and that of separation in the Baramasa. In the Rituvarnan the poet divides the year in three or six time slots as different *Ritu* (seasons), and in Baramasa, the year is analysed in twelve months. The co-relation of season and sensibility is reflected through the narrations of Baramasa.

In Baramasa the characteristics of the seasons work as the catalyst in affecting the psyche of the woman protagonist , and towards associating herself with nature, she translates her anxiety ,separation and the good past days spent in union with the lover (of course ,husband in our socio-cultural context) through the rhymes of Baramasa. Sanskrit texts have their own mention on Baramasa. I infer that the Baramasa has its origin in folk and oral tradition .From the folk culture it has crept into the elite or sublime/standard writings as a genre. As a note worthy tradition in Indian *Vangamaya* , it suggests the impact of the base on the ideological superstructure.

As mentioned earlier, in folk sensibility, Baramasa lasts since time immemorial . Whenever the lovers separate , the longing is natural , and the record of the longing can prepare the texts for Baramasa. But in the history of literature , we do not find a note on its origin and development .However ,in documented literature the beginning of this genre may be traced in *Bisal Deo Raso* in the early *Aadi Kaal* of the history of Hindi literature. “According to *Nahata*, a 13<sup>th</sup> century *Apabhransha* work *Baharan Khand* is the first Baramasa like work .”(qtd. In “Barahmasa”, Richa Upadhyay.) . The narration of Baramasa depicts the circularity of the Indian concept of time.

The circle of time moves in its own pace , ,having all the pleasure ,pains ,fun and frolic. It is *Kaal* as described in Indian *Pauranic* literature. Human beings get affected, they have their own pleasure and pain .The flow of time is eternal , and it does not move at their pace .Here occurs the clash, the favourable pace of time at certain instance may create fun

and joy and during the other span ,when the self and situation undergoes certain trails and travails ,it may create unwarranted and unpleasant feelings in human lives .

Baramasa is a poetic representation of such a state in association with the emotions of love ,togetherness and separation . We can find more than hundred texts of Baramasa in Awadhi folklore .Their trajectories are from personal to universal . Exceptionally some texts in Baramasa tradition also reflect on the state of association i.e. the meeting of the lover and the beloved but most of them explain the phase of separation. These texts offer an infinite canvas of nostalgia, longing, anxiety and mal-adjustment. It emerges as a *sui generis* poetic narrative which culminates into rainbow colours of emotions .

Towards an attempt of defining it ,Krishna Dev Upadhyay writes that it , “ is a type of folk songs which express the anxiety and longing of any love lorn woman in every month of a year. Since these songs contain the feelings of grief in all the twelve months through, these are called Baramasa.”(qtd.in “Baramasa”, Richa Upadhyay.)In a way , Baramasa is more a woman narrative. The texts of Baramasa offer many narratives within the narratives , and offer many associated details as well.

Awadhi Baramasa in comparison with other Baramasa traditions in Hindi folklore is more intense and comprehensive showing varied connotations .The beloved pines for the lover .The longing, anxiety and pain affect the psyche .She begins with the personal pain that spreads on the universal canvas , and here comes the general tale of personal pain being political. This chain makes the songs of Baramasa as a classic tale of human heart. The instances given in the texts of Baramasa put forward valid issues.Nature is a major catalyst in *Shringar* and also in the state of *Viyog* . Nature comes forth as an alliance in the association of self with the lover .The beloved recalls and imagines the proximity with the lover .She tries to recreate the same situation as that in the phase of union. The time and clime do not favour it , and it does not turn the same as it was. She looks beyond the window and across the threshold .The climate and environment is also creates hindrances in the desired meeting.

The present paper studies the references of the environment and ecology in the sensibilities of the narrator in select folk Baramasa texts . These are taken from the collection of a budding folklorist Mahendra Pratap Singh, who has recorded them from the northern part of the Awadh region . The texts are unconventional in tone. The disassociation from the usually established characteristics of the season affects the rhythm and rhyme too, and it is truly in conjugation with the emotionally shattered state of the protagonist.

Text 1

*Saavan aava manabhaavan*

*piv kee yaad sataave*

*tevarus saal lage rahe baalam*

*manava huain ant jaave.*

*Barakha hoyatai kahe jaiti  
boyati hinyai phasal tarakaari  
dekhav dayiv kay kop baadhi bha  
jhoor bhain talava au phulavaari .*

*Dharati sookhi jera sookha  
ansuvan baadhi bhayee, mul khaali  
ansuvan seni kahaan piritiya  
sabhui satavayai hiy ki nayi.*

*Jeyaara preetam khani dhadake  
aankhiya phadake manava tarase  
dharati pyaasi badara khaatir  
neer aankhi se jhar jhar barasai.  
Piya mor paradesh sidhaare !  
piya mor paradesh sidhaare!*

**English Rendition :**

Beautiful month of Saawan arrived  
the remembrances of my man are on.  
He was here with me , the previous year  
my senses recall the same!

Had it rained well, would he move so far  
he would have grown crops and vegetation here.  
The rage of nature , see it grows,  
the ponds are parched , the garden too.

The earth got parched and so the heart  
the tears bring flood but for what?  
For what ,the bonhomie with tears ,  
they also hurt like others.

The heart throbs for my man,  
eyes quiver and the longing galores,  
The earth is longing for the rain  
And , just see it,  
the showers from eyes come forth!

The song begins with the arrival of the month of Sawan .The Hindi month of Sawan (July August) is here. Sawan is considered as a month of greenery, drizzling rain and pleasure. It enkindle the feeling of love and romance. Now the situation is different . The husband of the narrator is not there with her , and the month of Sawan augments the pining for the husband in the heart of the wife. The husband has gone to some far off place in search of employment. The woman recalls the good old days –three years back , her man was here. Later , the rain was not good in the region concerned . Awadh region is agrarian, and the prosperity in agriculture depends mostly on the arrival of good monsoon . Good rain brings fortune but no or less rain simply distress and famine. Perhaps it is a famine like condition. The man had to leave the place hunting for some employment away from the home .The woman sees it like the blow of fate. The heart and the environment both are perplexed and parched. Paradoxically there is a flood of tears from the eyes but the heart is dry. The heart beats for the longings alone. Perhaps the Earth too longs for the cloud and rain in the same way. The song refers to the issues of climate change , environmental imbalances and dislocation .It also shows how the environment and climate affect the human psyche.

Text 2

*Poos maah tohika ka hoyiga  
yaad satavat preetam jee ki  
jab rahen uy hiyan hamare teer  
raat raat bhar chapak ke sovai  
ang maan ang sataaye  
duin haath kee chhotakee kamaree  
shitiya dey bhagaay.*

*Jiyara kerī dhak dhake garamiya  
sheet kahaan lag paye.  
shitiya ab sautan ban thaadhi  
ee ka ham ab ka dau boli  
deyi ka ham gaari..  
garamee shitiya maan lag jaaye  
chhatiya bichch jau bani nahariya  
Jiyara neer jas huan utaraay.*

*Ka maalum ab parakrita hu pyaasi  
apane piya milaan hit rasi  
yahi kaaran vyaakul hoye jae  
bhoollee thand ki ya marajada  
Poos maan garmi parat jyon aagi  
jiyara hu paathar jas aaju.*

English Rendition :

Hey , the month of Poos,  
what happened to you !  
I , here, pine for my man .  
We enjoyed union the all night through  
Even a small quilt was enough to clad,  
the unison, so, turned us a ball.

Throbbing heart brought crazy warmth  
no coldness ever we felt .  
Now cold too is in rival's role ,  
I say it good or evil to proclaim.

The cold weather scorches,  
the bosom in cleavage flows  
sweating and seating off!

Who knows ,  
the nature too feels thirst  
craves for meeting of a kind ,  
and so it anxious , so it concerned.

The season of cold is almost derailed ,  
the month of Poos shows cinders, see!  
The heart turns stoic  
just like stone !

The second text is more on climate change .Like the description in the first text it binds the personal and political concerns .The Hindi calendar month Paush (December-January) is conventionally known for bringing intense cold. It is also the time of physical and emotional union. The married girls are fetched to the in laws with joyous celebration as *Gauna* ceremony. The situation is not that in the present narration. The protagonist longing for love finds the cold weather like her rival in love .The effect of climate change is so intense that the season's characteristics have lost the traits.

Text 3

*Garmi maheena lekin peev aihain  
kahee na sakun sakhi mor.*

*kahe kerī garmi kahe kara barkha  
mausam bana barjor.*

*Jab jab rahe more piya jee gharama  
thandi garmi au barakha bahaar  
ab tav na jaani shitiya maja ham  
nahin suni barakha malhaar.*

*More piya base bides ho  
dharatee maata ka hai janav kales ho  
bhool gayin sab ritu dagariy  
mausam -a- hu barazor*

*Man maan bhava tav aaen hiyan uy  
na man maan tav kahu aur .*

*Kahat rahen kachhu pariyavaran hai  
vahee kai sara parkop  
vahee kara saara parkop.*

English Rendition:

Although this is the season of summer  
but can't say, my friend, about his arrival.  
What for summer , and what for rain  
the seasons derail to bring just pain.  
As long he was with us  
we enjoyed seasons in unison  
Now we don't even mark the seasons' hark  
be it the winter or the music of the rain.

My man settles a far .  
Mother Earth too feels pangs, I guess .  
The seasons change their circular move  
stoic and careless they stand.  
They come to go at their whims and stands.

They root it in environment  
the effect of environmental imbalances.  
Yes , the effect of environmental imbalances!

We find that the third text offers a blend of protagonist's pains and longing with that of the universe. In the Awadh region, generally the migrant employees come back their home in the months of summer. The protagonist is not sure about the arrival of her husband. Perhaps the husband too behaves like the season. The seasons have left their chores. They have lost their characteristic features. The protagonist had enjoyed the proximity with the husband, and in that state even the minutest move of the season was felt and observed but now it is not so. In the state of separation neither winter nor rain shows the real characteristics and effects. She associates her pain with that of the Earth. The earth is also observing environmental imbalances and different other hazardous effects.

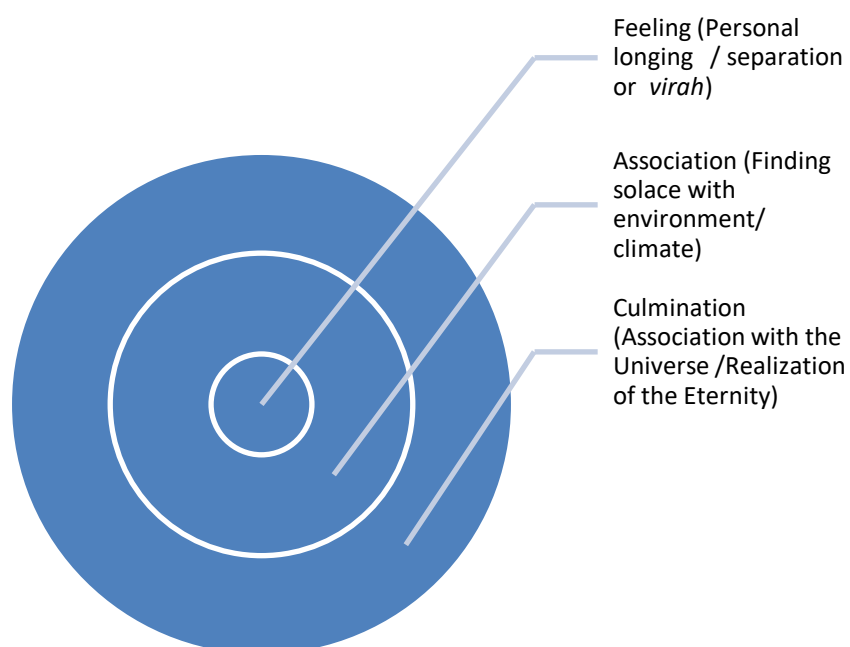


Illustration 1: State of personal being political in Awadhi Baramasa

By the close reading of the texts of Baramasa, we find that the personal pain, longing or *virah* culminates into the realization of eternity. It associates with the society and nature around. The protagonist feels sad and lonely, and tries to associate with the environment and society. She wants to find emotional protection there but that too is in the same state. Ultimately the association with the universe gives the state of realization of the eternity. The state of women in the society concerned reminds us the patterns of ecofeminism. Because so many women's lives are intimately involved in trying to sustain and conserve water, land and forests, they understand in an immediate way the costs of technologies that pillage the Earth's natural riches. By contrast, in the industrialized world, the connections between women's concerns and ecological concerns were not immediately apparent to many feminists."( Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein, 'Introduction'). Baramasa texts are so well tuned



with the sensibility of the narrator that the inner world comes in sync with the environment and the outer world.

References:

- Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein .*Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.1990.
- Kumar Sukrita Paul etal.*Cultural Diversity,Linguistic Plurality and Literary Tradition,*\_ cit.in “Editorial” *Indian Literature,*\_ Nov.-Dec.2006,New Delhi:Sahitya Akademi.
- Singh, R.P. “Representative Folk Literature of Hindi Speaking North India” *Spark International Online Journal*, Vol. IV, Issue VIII, August 2012,pp.34-45.
- Upadhyay Richa . “Baramasa” .Lucknow:*Dainik Jagaran*..June,09,2006.