

# **Raja Rao's — The Serpent and the Rope : A quest for Metaphysics**

**Dr. Mahima Bansal**

*Smt. B.D. Jain Girls Degree College. Agra(India)*

## **ABSTRACT**

*Raja Rao is incontestably one of the major novelist writing in the English language today. A Sahitya Akademi winner for his novel The Serpent and the Rope. Raja Rao is undoubtedly one of the most widely acclaimed Indian-English novelist by virtue of his wide range of thought content philosophical intellectual, political and social and his command of the fictional form, language and technique. Raja Rao has a very significant role in altering the scene of the modern Indian-English novel So there is a variety in Raja Rao's novel- The Serpent and the Rope. Prof. M.K. Naik rightly remarks about the significant contribution of Raja Rao to Indian novel in English. A blend of metaphysical tradition and his susceptibility to western culture has made his novels philosophically complex. The Serpent and the Rope is Mahapurana. Raja Rao has used myths and symbols to convey the profound view of life and has made a part of the central framework of his novels.*

## **I.RAJA RAO'S - THE SERPENT AND THE ROPE : A QUEST FOR METAPHYSICS**

Raja Rao is incontestably one of the major novelist - writing in the English language today. As a novelist his main focus has been on the indian social reality Raja Rao is concerned more with man's spiritual quest for liberty. Most of the books of Raja Rao deals with his ideas and his artistic achievements can not be ignored. He deviates from the traditional path and gives a new form of fiction writing. His innovations as a novelist are significant. A Sahitya Akademi winner for his novel The Serpent and the Rope, Raja Rao is undoubtedly one of the most widely acclaimed Indian-English novelist by virtue of his wide range of thought content -philosophical intellectual, political and social and his command of the fictional form, language and technique.

Raja Rao has a very significant role in altering the scene of the modern Indian-English novel. He has contributed a lot in highlighting the spiritual aspect in the life of man. The modern man is lost in the spiritual quest for Truth and Almighty in order to find out the real meaning of life. It is this spiritual quest which Raja Rao has tried to delineate authentically in his novel. Raja Rao has highlighted the philosophical, intellectual, political and social aspects in his novel The Serpent and the Rope.

Raja Rao is undoubtedly one of the most widely acclaimed Indian-English novelist by virtue of his wide range of 'thought content' philosophical, intellectual, political and social and his command of the fictional form, language and narrative technique. He is incontestably one of the major novelist, writing in English language today. He is strikingly original by virtue of his themes and techniques. Deeply rooted in Indian culture and tradition he has made various successful experiments and innovations in the technique of the novel R.S. Iyenger rightly observes.

**"Raja Rao hails from Mysore state and the action of his novel strays for a field as far indeed as France, England and Moscow - his art is effectively tethered to his immutable ancient mornings with strong invisible strings of his traditional Hindu Culture!" 1-**

1. K.R.S. Iyengar, "Raja Rao", Indian Writing in English (Bombay : Asia Publishing House, 1973), P.386

So there is a variety in Raja Rao's novel-The Serpent and the Rope. Prof. M.K. Naik rightly remarks about the significant contribution of Raja Rao to Indian novel in English.

"Raja Rao has also brought to **The Indian Novel in English many elements in which it has been previously deficient an epic breadth of vision, a metaphysical rigour and philosophical depth, a symbolic richness, lyrical fervour and essential Indianness of style .** "1

A blend of metaphysical tradition and his susceptibility of western culture has made his novels philosophically complex. A close survey of his novels reveals the fact that Raja Rao has been conscious of evolving a new form for his novels from the very beginning of his literacy career. He got remarkable success in his attempt by re-orienting the traditional Indian art of story telling as found in **The Mahabharata, The Ramayana, The Puranas and the Panchtantra** in the light of modern experiments in the art of novel writing in Europe. This suggests his keenness for innovations.

Raja Rao's novel **The Serpent and the Rope (1960)** established him as a great writer of philosophically complex novel and a true artist. This novel is regarded and as the greatest metaphysical novel ever written in English Language. The theme is overwhelmingly serious-and Indian quest for truth in his encounter with one patio-temporal reality, growing into and acute crisis of identity because the hero and orthodox Brahmin who claims to belong to a timeless ethos, is found however, immersed in the modern western culture dominated by historicity. The theme of true marriage leading to self-knowledge is the core of this novel. Man's life is barren and futile, if he does not make effort for the quest of the Absolute. This novel is complex, massive, subtle and mature work.

**The Serpent and the Rope** is a Mahapurana, having a wonderful sweep like the Puranas, the novel has the element of history and is saturated with stories, fables and legends. He deals with a vast panorama of human experience.

1. M.K. Naik, Raja Rao (Bombay : Blackie & Sons Pvt. Ltd., 1982) P.160

The binary relationship of Radha-Krishna, Shiva-Parvati, Satyavan-Savitri, Tistan-Iseult forms the dominant motif in the relationship between Ramaswamy and Savior. Then there is the myth of Gautam Buddha, explaining the meaning of renunciation. There are some rituals like touching head with Kumkum, offering arthi and rakhi.

Raja Rao has used myths and symbols to convey the profound view of life and has made a part of the central framework of his novels. Raja Rao finds myths for communicating his metaphysical concerns as he is gifted with encyclopedic knowledge of Indian mythology, history and culture of Europes, he successfully draws material from these sources. Thus, myths and symbols emerge as a significant mode of technique to convey his view of human reality.

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