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## PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF RUSKIN BOND'S POETRY

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### ABSTRACT:

*It is said that, "it is simple to be happy, but it is difficult to be simple." Bond through his poems tries to bring out the simple philosophy of life which would make man happy. It is believed that real happiness comes through material things and money. It is true to some extent; to fulfill one's basic needs, they have to depend upon money, but according to Ruskin Bond that is not the sole thing and the ultimate aim of human life. There are so many things which without paying a single penny can bring happiness. Things like fresh air, water, greenery, blue sky, rain, good health and all the things given to us by nature do not claim money; but these things make us happy. Most of the time, these things remain unnoticed; as we remain so much indulged in material amusement and working for money. Bond believes in the disciplined and well defined nature of ecology. He tries to convey this belief through his poetry. In the present paper an attempt has been made to trace philosophical implications of Bond's poetry especially through his nature poetry.*

**Keywords:** Happiness, Discipline, Philosophy

### Introduction:

Human civilizations begin and flourish on the banks of various rivers. Man has come hitherto by maintaining balance and harmony with the various forces of nature. But today as he is becoming a superpower; due to technological advancement; he forgot all about the ecological balance and its importance. In nature everything has some sort of function and significance. Bond believes in a simple way of human life, which takes into account ecological balance. He religiously practices this belief in his life. So in his "The Lamp is Lit: Leaves from a Journal", he mentioned that he is one and the same as a writer and as a person, they are not two things. "I live through my writing, just my writing lives through me."<sup>1</sup> Therefore through his poems he tries to convey the significance of every human and non-human thing. Running after money and material pleasures man has forgotten about mental peace and satisfaction. Therefore in the poem like "A Quiet Mind" he pleads with the Lord for spiritual concord.

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*Lord, give me a quiet mind,*

*That I might listen;*

*A gentle tone of voice,*

*That I might comfort others;*

*A sound and healthy body,*

*That I might share*

*In the joy of walking*

*And leaping and running;*

*And a good sense of direction*

*So I might know just where I'm going! (Rain in the mountains 121)*

In this poem, Ruskin Bond pleads to the Almighty to give him a 'quiet mind'. By quiet mind he means to have an opportunity for self-realization and self-actualization; through which he can listen to the gentle tone of his inner voice. In the next line his passion for writing is highlighted, he pleads for 'a gentle tone of voice' to comfort others through his writings. Here he describes the process of creative writing, how the emotions/ thoughts recollected in tranquility come through the words on the paper. After having contemplation on common things, how they can be translated into writing the beautiful piece of literature.

In modern times, due to technological advancements; man has every material thing at his feet, but he lost mental peace. Bond through his poem desires to have a quiet and peaceful mind. Bond himself never ran after money; he only earns enough to fulfill his basic needs. In the next line he says he requests the lord to give a sound and healthy body to explore nature through walking and experiencing. Now due to Covid; we understand the importance of a healthy body. We may scale the mountains of success, but good health is an asset to human life. And in the last line he beseeches god to give him a good sense of direction so that he would understand where he is going. Here he wants to add meaning to his life by heading in the right direction in the cause of humanity. He wishes to do something for humanity's lack of direction.

It is a small poem packed with simple philosophy of human life as propagated by our ancient sages. He reiterated the fact that small things can give tremendous happiness to man. So in the poem "*Boy in a Blue Pullover*" he presented a win-win situation for both- 'the boy' and the poet himself.

*Boy in a faded blue pullover,*

*Poor boy, thin, smiling boy,*

*Ran down the road*

*Singing, flinging his arm wide.*

*I stood in the way and stopped him.*





*'What's up?' I said. 'Why are you happy?'*

*He showed me the nickel rupee-coin.*

*And he held it to the light*

*That he might see it shining bright.*

*'And how will you spend it,*

*Small boy in a blue pullover?'*

*I'll buy-*

*I'll buy a buckle for my belt!*

*Slim boy, smart boy,*

*Would buy a buckle for his belt*

*Coin clutched in his hot hand,*

*He ran off laughing, bright.*

*The coin I'd lost an hour ago;*

*But better his that night. (156)*

In this poem Ruskin Bond brings out how a very small thing can also make a person happy. The poet sees a boy in a faded blue pullover full of happiness, smiling and singing, as if he found something precious. Here the words 'faded blue pullover' shows that the boy does not belong to a rich family but a poor one. The poet stops the boy and asks him the reason behind his happiness. The boy replies that he found a nickel rupee coin, which is precious to him. It was surprising for the writer; that just finding a coin made the boy so happy. It shows the poverty stricken society in India during those times. Today, though the situation has changed to some extent, there is still a very wide gap between the super-rich and the poor in India. According to the World Inequality Report 2022, 'India stands out as a "poor and very unequal country, with an affluent elite", where the top 10% holds 57% of the total national income, including 22% held by the top 1%, while the bottom 50% holds just 13% in 2021.'<sup>2</sup>

Afterwards the poet asks the boy what he would do with that coin; the boy replied that he would buy a buckle for his belt. It was astonishing for the poet; how buying a buckle makes one so happy. Here Bond propounded the simple philosophy of life that you do not need big things to be happy, but a small thing which satiates your emotional fulfillment can make you happy. But men always run after their endless desires. In this poem Bond shows how a coin can bring happiness when it falls in the hand of one who really needs it. In the last line the poet's humanitarian attitude is highlighted. That coin actually belongs to the poet; which he lost just before, but he never tells the boy it was his to keep the boy happy.



Ruskin Bond reveals his philosophy of life through the harmony between all natural beings. In the poem "So Beautiful the Night" He emphasises the importance of every living creature.

*I love the night, Lord.*

*After the sun's heat and day's work,*

*It's good to close my eyes and rest my body.*

*It's good time for small creatures:*

*Porcupines come out of their burrows*

*to dig for roots.*

*The night-Jar calls tonk-tonk!*

*The timid owl peeps out of his hole in the tree trunk*

*Where he has been hiding all day.*

*Insects crawl out in thousands.*

*The winds come down the chimney*

*and blows around the room.*

*I'm watching the stars from my window.*

*The trees are stretching their arms in the dark*

*and whispering to the moon.*

*But if the trees could walk, Lord,*

*What a wonderful sight it would be-*

*Armies of pines and firs and oaks*

*Marching over the moonlit mountains. (Rain in the Mountains 152)*

In this poem Bond echoed the disciplined Nature in relation to human life. In the very first line the importance of the cycles in nature is highlighted, he says, 'I love the night, Lord.' And why does he love night? It is because after a day's work a man needs some sort of rest to soothe his mind. It is a very simple thing but it has importance in the circle of life. He further wants to convey that as there is day and night; all living beings have been varied accordingly. So the night for men becomes the day for creatures like porcupine, night-jar, owl, etc. He propagated the philosophy behind the cyclical and disciplined nature of ecology. He worshiped nature as God, so he says, "I find it easier to see God in a raindrop than in a place of worship."<sup>3</sup> He even goes further and visualizes the picture as if trees could walk. He





expresses his wish to the Lord that it would be a wonderful sight to watch armies of pines, firs and oak marching over the moonlit mountains.

Every creature has a place in Bond's poetry, so in a small poem "A Bedbug Gives Thanks" he amusingly writes about a bedbug.

*I'm a child of the Universe*

*Claimed the bug*

*As he crawled out of the woodwork.*

*I've every right*

*To be blight.*

*To Infinite Intelligence I owe*

*My place-*

*Chief pest*

*Upon the human race!*

*I'm here to stay-*

*To feast upon their display,*

*Those luscious thighs...*

*No, no, I don't despise*

*These creatures made for my delight. (Rain in the mountains 165)*

Ruskin Bond claims the importance of every small creature in the environment. Therefore in a poem like 'A Bedbug Gives Thanks' a bedbug shows gratitude towards the Lord for giving him beautiful life. Though the poem appears witty, but it brings out Bond's simple philosophy of life that you are not the only person for whom this universe is created, but every creature has its own importance and existence. In the poem the bug says that it is the child of the universe; hence it has every right to survive like other living beings. It does not feel ashamed being a parasite; moreover it is thankful to the Almighty for creating mankind for its survival. Ruskin Bond humorously writes, "A kind Creator had my needs in mind.... I thank you, Lord, for human-kind."<sup>4</sup>

About this poem Akshaya Kumar a reviewer of Bonds poetry collection writes, "In poems like September Morn, Song of the Cockroach, A Bedbug Gives Thanks, Ruskin Bond tends to evince Keatsian negative capability of discovering the pleasant in the patently unpleasant."<sup>5</sup> So a subject like bedbug can be humorous in the poetry of Bond.

Many of his fans ask Ruskin Bond his intention behind staying in the hills. So in one of his poems titled "Hill-Station" he narrates his philosophy behind staying in the hills. He writes-



*There is nothing to keep me here,  
Only these mountains of silence  
And the gentle reserve of shepherds and woodmen  
Who knows me as one who  
Walks among trees.  
Madman, Misanthropist? They make  
Their guesses, smile and pass slowly  
Down the steep path near the cottage. There is nothing  
To keep me here, walking  
Among old trees. (Rain in the mountains 218)*

Here he tries to identify the reason behind staying in the Garhwal hills. His philosophy to worship nature through his writings kept him in the lap of nature. Shepherds and woodmen make their guesses that the writer might be a madman or a misanthropist; because only these types of people stay in the mountain, without any reason. They think that the writer could have lived a better life in the city but his cynical nature kept him among the mountains.

**Conclusion:**

Ruskin Bond has his own philosophy of looking at the relationship of man with nature. He minutely studies every living and nonliving things in nature and tries to establish man's relation to them. He reiterated the fact that everything has its own standing in this universe; the only thing is that we have to recognize it. According to him if we could understand this simple thing then only it would be possible for us to live a meaningful and healthy life.

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