

Two Lady Rams

Mulk Raj Anand

Two Lady Ram is a story with wonder futile. Ram in English means male sheep. But here it is not about sheep but about two women married to Lord Ram. His wife is called Lady Ram as he was called Lalall Jhinda Lord Ram. It is another humorous story about how rich Indian married woman and gets into a strange and awkward situation. Both Lady Rams are beautiful but there is difference of age. One does not like the other. Even their servant stare different and they work in opposite groups. Both women struggle to master Lord Ram in every day life. Both ladies love both Ram most. A serious quarrel takes place between the two lady rams on who hold go with Lallah Ram, The younger wife Sakuntala and elder is old wife is Sukhi. The quarrel took the form a battle also. Lord Ram returns home in the evening and decides to take both. A situation arises when he has to go the Queen's party on the occasion of winning an award for his sundry services to the British empire. He was very happy and proud on 168 this occasions the he was invited by the queen it was an Award giving ceremony. But the problem is which of the Lady Rams should be taken to the party. At last he decides to take both of his wives to the party and he actually takes them. Later he began to take his both wives to all parties, horse races, cricket matches and etc. That was a great matter of amusement to the people. All big people in the party become surprised. They secretly enjoy the awkward situation of Lord Ram in front of the Queen. It is full of fun and humor.

Mulk Raj Anand is known for his realistic portrayals of the social and economic problems suffered by Indians because of the caste system and British colonial rule, Anand is considered by many critics to be one of India's best writers In Two Lady Rams, Anand presents witty narrative of **Lalla Jhinda Ram's** household which is at a constant state of cold war between the two lady of the house Sukhi, the elder wife and Shakuntala, the younger.

The plotline is based upon the mayhem that occurs in **Lalla Jhinda Ram's** house hold. The plot revolves around the two wives of Lalla Jhinda Ram who are at tug of war with each other for their husband's attention. Since the two wives were incessantly quarreling with each other Lalla Jhinda Ram decides to divide his house into two separate wings, one for each wife to manage. He divided his household chores among the two wives so as to keep them at distant with each other.

The two lady rams (short story) by mulk raj Anand.

The first wife Sukhi consider the **second wife Shakuntala** as only a substitute since Sukhi turned out to be barren. Gradually, along with the division of the house hold the chaos was under control. An unsaid routine was followed among Lalla Jhinda Ram and his two wives. He used to sleep with each of his wives on alternate days and showered both with equal attention. The mayhem started uprising once again when Lalla Jhinda Ram was awarded Knighthood and was invited to the garden party along with Lady Ram.

Since the invitation card read "Lady Ram" instead of "Two Lady Rams" Lalla Jhinda Ram had to choose one of his wives to take along with him to the garden party. In those days it was not officially notified that among the wives of a person awarded Knighthood, which of his wife or wives would be entitled to be called as Lady. It was only a matter of time before the household was filled with gossip about Lallaji choosing his second wife Shakuntala to take along with him. Sukhi was filled with rage as she learned about Lallaji asking Shakuntala to be ready for the party.

Summary of two lady rams.

This decision of his made her feel like a discarded woman who was no longer required by her husband. Choosing one wife over the other disturbed Lalla Jhinda Ram's peace of mind. He was in a state of confusion where he did not know what to do. Then it dawned upon him that since she is a person of high regard he can easily alter the invitation "Two Lady Rams" from "Lady Ram". Lalla Jhinda Ram ordered the staff to inform both his wife to be ready for the garden party. In the evening Lalla Jhinda Ram was introduced along with "Two Lady Rams" and both were equally acknowledged and praised for their beautiful saris.

Critical Analysis the short story "the two lady rams" by mulk raj Anand.

The above **story by Mulk Raj Anand** points out the bigamy that was accepted in the society. While criticizing the social standards there is also a clear undercurrent of comedy and hilarity in the story. The men were free to marry multiple times if their wife is unable to provide them with a child. This highlights the discrimination against women gender that existed in the society. It also highlights the fact that women did not have their own identity in a society instead they were defined by their husbands name and occupation.

In the above story, the first wife of Lalla Jhinda Ram accepted the harsh truth about his husband's second marriage without protesting against the injustice that was being done towards her. She numbly acknowledged the truth since she was discovered to be barren. She as an individual was valued only on the bases of her ability to produce an heir for the family. The story portrays a certain double standards that existed within the Indian society where women were defined according to their spouse. The story shows a constant struggle between the two wives to gain their husbands attention.

At one point the readers witness the injustice done towards the first wife, the readers often miss to notice that the second wife too has been deprived in certain ways. It is astonishing to imagine that a woman would be willing to marry an already married man. Another thing that ought to be noticed is the fact that Lalla Jhinda Ram is able to bend rules according to his will because he possessed the power and money to do so. This factor points out that irrespective of the era or time power always holds the highest position.

Mulk Raj Anand: Indian-ness in Two Lady Ram

The English language has become to the Indian Subcontinent as a 'reminiscent' and much prized reward of the British Colonial experience which spans nearly all of the 'History of India in Becoming a Unified nation'. And it is in the same understanding that one cannot refuse to accept that English as a language has played a pivotal role in igniting the nationalist spirit in the minds of the Indian citizens who were divided on the basis of regional identities. Quoting from the famous essay of A. K. Ramanujan- 'Is there an Indian Way of Thinking?' the parable as told by Buddha and reiterated by Ramanujan in the same context goes as follows: "...Once a man was drowning in a sudden flood. Just as he was about to drown, he found a raft. He clung to it, and it carried him safely to dry land. And he was so grateful to the raft that he carried it on his back for the rest of his life". Thus, it is agreeable that invasively so, but the English Writing has been the rescuer of the Indian Civilisation after the Partition in 1947 and ever since has become the reflection of the 'Voice of the (New) Formed Nation'. Amongst all the writings in English the short story form enjoys a special affection amongst the members of the 'Intelligentsia' like Mulk Raj Anand to the modern day writers like Salman Rushdie. After all, the short story is an art form staunchly Indian in origin of which the examples are the Vedic texts like the

Puranas to the epics like Mahabharata. Yet the paradox remains that Indian short story in English is but a product of Western Influences (M.K.Naik). But remarkably so, even then “English is borrowed into (or imposed on) Indian contexts” (A. K. Ramanujan) which subdues the existence of English as an alien language and makes it all the more “Indian”. And when issues concerning the Indian Nation form the core of the Writing in English the product is but an expression of the lives of the Indian common folk in a more universally read medium.

Such colourful “Indianism permeates in the diction, idiom and imagery in dialogue” of Mulk Raj Anand. One of the ‘triumvirate’ in the 1930s who established the Indian English Novel, Anand has since then written eleven novels alongside many short stories that reflect on the issues that were prevalent in then India, suitably justifying the Indian English short stories as the “Breath in the Mirror”. The short story: Two Lady Rams (part of the short story collection *The Tractor and the Corn Goddess*) is typically what Anand defined as “highly developed form of folk tale” that included “psychological understanding of the contemporary period”. The short story comes as a social satire on the “Angrezi Sarkar of India” and highlights the tussle between the colonial subject and the colonial master. The story follows the same theme at two levels, where for one, Lalla Jhinda Ram is the colonial subject to the “department that acted on His Majesty’s Behalf” and the second are the wives, Sukhi and Sakuntala who are the colonial subjects to (the agent of the patriarchal society) i.e. Sir Jhinda. As the story unfolds one can understand the satire that stands to highlight how poorly the ‘colonial master’ governed over its subjects of whom he knew and cared the least. The apparent honour of Knighthood which is cunningly bestowed on Jhinda Ram (mark of his sly ‘sundry’ services to the Empire) and supposed to raise his social status helps to bring forth this negligence of the British State; and as for the wives the selfish decision of Lalla Jhinda to take the second wife to his investiture ceremony because otherwise she would abstain from entertaining him, shows the lack of regard and respect towards wives that were then treated as mere objects of the household. Another theme shadily addressed in the story is the tuft between on setting modernity and fading traditions. Thus even when Jhinda Ram enjoys a siesta and his mansion had an “English style gol kamara or, living room” he was acquitted to marry two wives on the grounds of Hindu Mitakshara Law and demanded for his wives to dress in a traditional sari for the Ceremony. In all, the household of Jhinda Ram was on the margins of traditional and the cusp of modern. And when the Modern (the Knighthood) merged with the Traditional (the two wives of Sir Jhinda) (amusingly enough) the Colonial Anxiety is surfaced. It is in the same

light that one can imagine the last gravely serious comment “the three staunch pillars” said with respect to Jhinda Ram and the Lady Rams as a drawing its symbolism to the state of the Indian common folk (Jhinda Ram) which struggled to obtain an identity through the modern (Sakuntala) but could not afford to lose the traditional (Sukhi) that had formed the whole truth of their survival. Another facet of the issue of Identity comes through the tussle of Sakuntala and Sukhi both of whom wish to be Lady Ram since the women of colonial India were recognised by the name of their husband, Anand comments on the lack of individual identity of women in marriage and through his female characters attempts to inspire revolution in women to fight for their ‘rights’. The Two Lady Rams runs as a comical account of the day of a shopkeeper’s life who is bestowed the highest honour in British Raj, only to add misery to his life. A misery which does not come from poverty or exploitation (as in the other short stories of Anand) but whose cause is ‘over abundance of undue credibility’. Thus, even when the story is not the whole truth yet it is derived from the truth of the lives of the ‘Indians’. In addition the story places a satire on the ‘sleeping Indian spirit’ and the so called ‘collaborators’ of the British Raj who out of selfish motives served the Colonial Master. By extension, the story therefore, comes with the hidden message of the agony involved in the service of the British than the ‘Homeland’ which came with the loss of one’s integrity and common sense which Jhinda Ram idolises when he seeks the advice of his Chauffeur.