



STUDY ON THE POETRY OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TRINITY OF NATURE, MAN AND GOD

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Abstract: Tagore's poems on God, Nature, and Man are bound together by the individual chord of love and by Tagore's 'Vedantic Advaita'. The three major themes can be fruitfully termed Godscape, Naturescape and Manscape and their common bond as Lovescape. The poems making the bed-rock of Tagore's thoughts, feelings and visionary concepts not only teach humankind to live in harmony fulfilling God's purpose in creating the universe, Nature, and Man, but also reveal that every atom of this cosmos is His manifestation. The overall message is that man should have a compassionate heart and serving hands, to know His presence in all the objects of nature and in all human beings. Love for God, for Nature, and for Man is the towering theme of Tagore's poetry. He has sung in praise of God and Love; and he has vouchsafed that life and world have purpose. Men have to go on lighting lamps where there is 4 darkness. God has created man in this universe to dispel darkness; he is not to be enveloped in it. He has to fulfil his duty to God, to Nature, and to his own self.

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Introduction:

Rabindranath Tagore was born on 7 May, 1861. At some time towards the end of the seventeenth century, his forefathers had migrated from their native lands to Govindpur, one of the three villages which later came to constitute Calcutta. In the course of time, the family came to acquire property and considerable business interests through the pursuit of commercial and banking activities. They had particularly benefited from the growing power of the British East India Company. Rabindranath's grandfather, Dwarkanath Tagore, lived lavishly and broke the Hindu religious ban of those times by travelling to Europe, just like his contemporary, Rammohan Roy, the nineteenth century social and religious reformer. Roy started a religious reform movement in 1828 that came to be known as the Brahma Samaj Movement.²

Rabindranath's grandfather supported Roy in his attempts at reforming Hindu society. Dwarkanath's son, Devendranath Tagore, also became a staunch supporter of the Brahma Samaj Movement. In order to encourage its spread, in 1863 he established a meditation centre and guest house on some land about 100 miles from Calcutta at a place called 'Santiniketan', the Abode of Peace. Although deeply steeped in Hindu and Islamic traditions, Tagore's family contributed large sums of money for the introduction of Western education, including colleges

for the study of science and medicine. This peculiar situation explains the combination of tradition and experiment that came to characterize Rabindranath Tagore's attitude to life.³

Rabindranath's father was one of the leading figures of the newly awakened phase of Bengali society. He had been educated at one stage in Rammohan Roy's Anglo-Hindu school and had been greatly influenced by Roy's character, ideals and religious devotion. Devendranath Tagore was well versed in European philosophy and, though deeply religious, did not accept all aspects of Hinduism. He was to have a profound influence on his son's mental and practical attitudes. Rabindranath was the fourteenth child of his parents. His brothers and sisters were poets, musicians, playwrights and novelists and the Tagore home was thus filled with musical, literary and dramatic pursuits. The family was also involved with diverse activities at the national level. Important changes were taking place in Bengal at the time Rabindranath was born. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar had been attempting to reform the position of women in society. Schools using English as the language of teaching were being established, alongside the traditional Sanskrit schools. Vidyasagar had established Bengali-medium schools at different places in Bengal with little or limited government support. He had also established a centre to train

teachers for these schools. Rabindranath attended this school and, as he says himself, owed his love of Bengali language and literature to it. He was also sent to a number of English-speaking schools, but he did not like their teaching style and had no wish to be taught in a foreign language. He gradually withdrew from formal schooling when he was around 14 years old. The remainder of his education was carried out at home through his own personal efforts and with the help of tutors in various subjects.⁴

He also had lessons from professionals in wrestling, music and drawing. The manner of his early schooling was to leave a deep impression on him. When Rabindranath was 12, his father took him to Santiniketan, the meditation centre established in 1863. During their brief stay there, Devendranath gave his son lessons in Sanskrit, astronomy and the scriptures that formed the basis of his reformed religion. After these lessons were over, Rabindranath was free to roam among the fields and forests. This routine continued when father and son journeyed on and stayed at Dalhousie in the Himalayan foothills. After lessons in Sanskrit, English literature and religion, the would-be poet explored the mountains and forests. Life in close proximity to nature was unknown to him in the urban surroundings of Calcutta.

The close and affectionate contact between teacher and pupil that he felt when his father taught him was also completely absent in Calcutta. It was this childhood experience of the willing pupil enthusiastically following lessons given by his father in the manner of a noble teacher among agreeable surroundings that guided Rabindranath in establishing a school at Santiniketan in 1901. In 1878, when he was 17, he was sent to London by his father to qualify for the Indian Civil Service or as a lawyer. He took his matriculation examination and then joined University College, London. He came to like his lessons in English literature, and became exposed to British social life and Western music, both of which he enjoyed. But he returned home suddenly after some eighteen months without completing his education. However, he did gain the impression that human nature was perhaps the same everywhere. Back in India he continued with his personal education and his creative writing and music.⁵

Review of Literature

Tagore always considers women as social agents to transform society. The women in his poems challenge the male dominated society. "Woman is imaged as a human being in the process of full humanization and man finds in this image the creative principle of growth" 9. According to Tagore, the human world is also the woman's world. He had in mind the sufferings of the young brides in the joint

families of Bengal. Tagore never wanted women to waste their talents, time and energy in the endless tedium of cooking and washing. Woman should extend their radiance beyond the boundaries of the family. He had a great concern for the women employed in cheap labour (Joseph Thomas, 2013).

Much has been said about the way Tagore views his women in his poems, essays, novels and drama. Yet it is the dance dramas of Tagore, a genre quite unique in his time and milieu, which portray the radical nature of Tagore's conception of women and the maturation of their selfhood. The dance dramas illustrate Tagore's bold and perceptive experimentation with various literary forms and techniques and the radical nature of his ideological orientation. Among the dancedramas of Tagore, Chandalika has a special place as it foregrounds the theme of female desire in an untouchable girl, a tabooed subject in his times, indeed even now in Bengali writings. This paper tries to show how Tagore uses the nuances of the dance form to showcase the intersections of caste, class and gender as well as the evolution of selfhood in Prakriti, the Chandal girl (Sutapa Chaudhary, 2010).

Rabindranath Tagore's plays like Chitra, Karana and Kunti and Gandhari's Praye are being inspired from Mahabharat. In Chitra, transformation of Arjun comes from physical to spiritual life. Chitrangadha has got the supernatural power with that she gets the attraction of Arjun. And then, when the beauty of Chitra decrease, Arjun negates Chitra. Later Arjun comes back to the sense. In Karna and Kunti, both the characters are thinking for their salvage at the last hour of the war from its wreckage. In Gandhari's prayer, Gandhari knows the truth of Duryodhana's bad things, whereas his father Dritarashtra supported him. Gandhari knew that the Duryodhana will be doomed for his bad thing (Nagraja, 2012).

Rabindranath Tagore is the well known philosopher, educationist, musician, story writer, humanist, novelist, social reformer, patriot, who wrote the national anthem of the nation. Though he is a genius in many fields of intellect, his dramatic genre is not fully explored. The study under taken is an honest and humble attempt to discover him as a well versed playwright. The playwright himself translated from the Bengali originals. Such are the following plays Sanyasi or The Ascetic, Malini, Sacrifice, The King and The Queen, Kacha and Devyani, The Mother's Prayer, Karna and Kunti, Ama and Vinayaka, Somaka and Ritvika, Chitra, Autumn Festival, The Waterfall or Muktheadhara, Natir Puja and Chandalika. Tagore's plays are theme oriented and symbolical. His themes are different and the treatment is unique and well suited to the them (Pathan M.D., 2012).

He was very much concerned with women's education. His educational institutions have almost always been co-educational and the number of female students is conspicuously large at Santiniketan. He wanted women and men to be offered similar theoretical courses with separate practical courses for women, since their roles in life differed from those of men (Jha, N., 1994).

Rabindranath Tagore has described the journey of his women characters from ignorance to knowledge. Self-consciousness in all the characters play vital role in their development. As far as Chitra had no consciousness as woman, she was just the princess of the land. When she sees Arjuna, she realizes for the first time her womanhood (Pathan M.D., 2011).

THE TRINITY OF NATURE, MAN AND GOD IN POETRY

Tagore had by then become thirty years old. From 1891 to 1895, he devoted five years of his life to the magazine Sadhana, and revealed his journalistic talents. He gave place to latest scientific news, developments and discoveries, and trite social traditions in the magazine. In 1895, Chaitali replaced Sadhana. Now Tagore had outgrown his social welfare interest and started patriotic and nation-building activities. He delivered public lectures on political and educational affairs. He established his ashram near Bolpur which later on was known as Shantiniketan. It was the result of his reaction to the British system of education, which he considered, afflicted Bengal. Tagore's greatest novel in Bengali Gora came out between 1901 and 1907 - a period when he became a serious writer. Bengal was divided in 1905. Tagore fought and proved to be the most powerful voice in the whole of India. This period also saw his mightiest and most effective prose works. In 1910 Tagore composed Gitanjali, and w

"I felt that I had found my religion at last the religion of man, in which the infinite became defined in humanity and came close to me do as to need my love and co-operation"

"Where the mind is without fear and
the head Where knowledge is free, is held
high;

Where the world has not been broken
Up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of
truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms
towards perfection

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost
it way into the dreary desert sand of dead
habit;

Where the mind is led forward by thee

into ever widening thought and action.
Into that heaven of freedom, my
Father, let my country awake¹."

In the above-given poem, we have an ideal man of Tagore's conception such a person is fearless and holds his head high; that is, he is and does not live in slavery. He is all-loving, he does not breach the unity of the members of his own family or the people of his country. He speaks the truth and never resorts to telling lies. He is a non-stop worker, he knows no tiresomeness. He is always hopefully travelling towards the destination of his perfection. He is constantly making use of his reason; he does not allow habit and customs the clear stream of his mind to block its free and smooth flow. He listens to the command of God, his Lord, who is there present in his body as soul. He is not narrow-minded in his thoughts, words and deeds. A community of such persons makes heaven on earth.

In the hierarchy of God's plan Man comes last, Nature and God precede him, but God has created man in his own image. He is God's last creation. To begin with, He created lifeless inanimate objects, then He made things that are stationary but have life and are animate, they however, lack power of reason, will and creative action. Man above is blessed with unique gifts— power, will-power, reason, sensitivity and sensibility, laughter, sarcasm and humour, on the one hand, and on the other hand, he has some vices unknown to the world of fauna and flora; he is full of feelings of revenge, cruelty, scandal-mongering, hatred, temptation, anger, greed, jealousy, sexuality, selfishness, fraud, blind in rage and fury, he can kill his kith and kin, his intimate friend, may, even his own parent. Blind in sexual hunger, he rates the old as well as young, may even the under one year of age baby.

Closely related to the main theme - Salutation to God, other notes, too, deserve attention and study; prominent of these subsidiary notes are - love of nature, love of humanity and world and love of the motherland. Like Wordsworth, Tagore considered child the father of man the perceived in childhood a grandeur and a mystery and secret sources of spiritual strength and power not to be found in grown up men. Man has been called the lord of the universe, the measure of all things; but in God's plan, his place is in significant and negligible. In the map of the universe, man does not make even a dot/point: even the poet occupies only a 'corner seat' in world's vast audience hall. Rabindranath's poetry is culmination of his worldly empirical and other worldly mystic experiences, of his inherent faith in the fundamental unity of all creation. He disapproved of all fragmentation and segregation in the name of religion, caste, nationality and false sense of superiority.

Every individual's soul (Conscience) is divided into two parts: upper self and lower self. Man faces a conflict between these two parts of his nature. Lower self can be described as an ego and imperfection in man because it forces him to crave for pleasure and to satisfy his wishes, this makes man oblivious of his real-self. Higher self which is termed as consciousness within man, is greater than his mere-self. It prompts Man to evolve out of his obscurity and ego and to try, to attain perfection. These higher objectives are made obligatory by his greater self, because of this conflict between the higher and lower self. Man is considered to be imperfect. Tagore always felt this struggle within himself. The higher self within him exclaims:

"I am restless, I am atheist for far away things
My soul goes out in a longing
to touch skirt of the dim distance O Great
Beyond,
O the keen call of the flute!
I forget, I ever, that I have no wings to fly,
that I am bound in this spot ever more!"

But Tagore has a firm belief in Man's capability and action. In his poems, there are various examples, which testify his firm belief in Man's capability. He cannot think of man as an imperfect being, though he is always incomplete. He believes that incompleteness results from fact that he has not yet realised his capacity, his innerself and his soul. Tagore, in Sadhana, states:

"The real misery of man is in the fact that he has not full come out, that he is self-obsured, lost in the midst of his own desires. He cannot feel himself beyond his personal surroundings, his greater self is blatted out, his truth is unrealised."

The unique element in man is his _self. Man endeavors to preserve this uniqueness of the self by trying to perfect his self. Man is also aware of his present and future state. He understands his responsibility of being a spiritual being. A man with these qualities can attain his true self. When this moral nature of man gets prominence, he is able to distinguish between his will and wish. It is in man's nature that there is always a conflict between 'what he is' and 'what he is yet to be'. In this depth of man's nature, Man has strong urge to break through the immediate limitation and to realise his real self, an awareness of what he has not attained draws upon him. Then, he realises dream. The infinite, within him, prompts him to achieve, and work for self-realisation. In the process of self-realisation, knowledge plays an important role. It is knowledge that leads to consciousness and makes man realise the _truth', which gives Man broader outlook in all possible fields. The basic step of self-realisation, as per Upanishad,

has a view to 'know thine own soul? When man becomes conscious of other beings and himself; he realises the principles of unity that co-exist in every man. This realization of consciousness allows us to achieve affinity with all human beings. Tagore says:

"This is the bond of union through which
Man
is related to the world in which he lives, and
he feels exceeding joy when he find this act,
for
then he realises himself in his surrounding".

Love, for Tagore, is the highest bliss for man. According to Tagore, Man is free. God's freedom is expressed in his creation. Man struggles so that he may express himself. Man's true nature is revealed in this process. It is the nature of man that he can act, think and imagine better when he is free. Tagore believes that this freedom of man is expressed by him in his selective pursuit, whether it is science or art. It is manifestation of truth, beauty and goodness through which man tries to fulfill his dreams. Man is bestowed with infinite mental capacity helps him realize his dreams. Tagore describes the mental capacity of Man as follows:

"It is there to help a creature who has been left unfinished by his designer undraped, undecorated, unarmoured and without weapons, and, what is worse, ridden by a mind whose energies for most part are not tempered into some difficult ideal of completeness upon a background which is bare."

Man is bound by various types of limitations, such as social, political, material and ethical bindings which are obstructions in his freedom. Yet a creative life transforms Man from a receptive to a creative being. Writing about it, Tagore feels that in creativity lies the glory of Man. He can create his own world by his will-power:

Tagore considers morality to be essential part of human nature, because it differentiates

Man
from animal. Morality helps man in transcending the basic dualism of his nature which consists of animality and spirituality. Tagore says that "in his heart of hearts, man the animal, reaches up-to the world man. There he no longer wants more happiness but something greater, he wants magnificence."

The human personal has both the aspects individual as well as a feeling of unity with the universe. Nature of human personality is to express his internal feeling in all its relation and his creation. The personality of man has finite aspects of nature. It is through his personality that man is able to attain eternal freedom of spirit and freedom of soul. Tagore's man is infinite being, who performs all social and

spiritual deeds on earth. In the above context Tagore's philosophy goes Vedantic; is affected by the Bhagwat Geeta. Tagore's man has all natural and infinite powers. He sees man as the combination of God and Nature. Human body as the product of nature, soul as the part of God, and the combination of both is Man.

The Religion of Man, emphasis of on the Law of Karma, What religion man should keep, what should he think of, what should he concentrate on religion. For Tagore religion Dharm is to attain proper action in an individual situation. Karma means the deeds of human being. The term Man referred in Hindi to Manushya is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Manu'. In Hindu mythology, Manu is the name of traditional progenitor of humankind who survived a deluge and gives mankind laws. American Heritage Dictionary makes connection with other Indian roots 'Man' 'The Thinker' is connected with in word 'Mun'. (Cognate and mind). This etymology presumes that Man is one who thinks, which fits the definition of Man given by Rene Descartes as a "Rational animal". So the man is an animal who has the power to think, to imagine and to produce own views by judging merits and demerits. If he has the power to think, then he can determine the actual reality of this universe which is 'God'.

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