



Philosophy And Divinity: A Study Of Vision Of Ideas In Tagore's Gitanjali

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Abstract

Rabindranath Tagore, a famous Indian novel laureate. He was one of the greatest poet, dramatist, novelist and story writers of twentieth century. Tagore is well recognised and celebrated author of worldly significance. The writings of Tagore especially his poetical works have a deep much influenced by the Indian culture of Divinity and philosophy. His poetry also deals with the essence of ancient religious books that are highly featured with the description of divinity and many other sacred sources. Tagore is ahumanist and his Gitanjali is steeped in deep sense of humanism. Undoubtedly the Gitanjali is a religious and didactic poem of humanity that shows the appeal to humanity and love. The poet has imbibed a good deal of sense and sacred ideas with a vision to refine the spirit with sincerity honesty and truth which is the exclusive feature of Tagore's poetry. The divine element in human is considered as a part of soul that has come to humanity with the grace of Almighty God.

Keywords: Divinity,Philosophy, Humanism, Didactic, Essence

Introduction:Rabindra NathTagore, as we acquaint with the name, was not only a poet; butalso a novelist, a short story writer, a dramatist, a painter, a musician and a critic of distinct field. He wrote a large number of poems originally in Bengali language, and translated some of them into English, but it is also on record that he wrote a few poems originally in English. The novels, Dramas and short stories of Tagore are rightly looked upon as divine and inspirational contents in their theme because what the poet wants to give us through them is an image of the contemporary human life. Despite of the elements of romantic concerns those we get in them are described the realistic approach of their own right. His poetical works however, belong to a different level of divine concerns and full of experience, and, as such, Tagore, the poet seems t different from his contemporaries, the novelist and short story writer. We find him as a person who is rated high for his divine literature. We find him with a reasonable degree of high confidence and that he is one of the great pioneers of the literary movement pre-Independence India. Tagore's poetry is a

structure form of a unite part writings that has high spirit that infuses his verse writings does inspire his dramatic compositions too.

Tagore wrote Gitanjali originally in Bengali and translated it into English himself and, in this way he contributed a lot to the twentieth century Indian English literature.

The introduction to his collection of poems was written by W. B. Yeats who was deeply influenced by the devotional theme of his poems. It was the poet himself who credits Tagore of his famous divine poetry of widely renowned known throughout the world. This does not mean however, Tagore's Popularity or reputation as a poet widely depends upon on what the other poets have written about him.

W.B. Yeats got fascinated towards his poetry because in it he saw the full and perhaps the finest flowering of Indian or Oriental genius. There are certain striking qualities in Tagore's poetry which have their own peculiar appeal or charm to the readers even today. It is really surprising that this Nobel Laureate did not write any epic poem as Milton did in his own time. It is absurd to say that Tagore was not capable of writing epic poetry, and the explanation that he offers in this connection is both informative and enlightening. Instead of writing a massive and composite epic poem he wrote hundreds and hundreds of beautiful lyrics which cast their own spell and magic on the readers. Rabindranath is not an ordinary poet; he has created a cult in the music world. All his poetry is in the nature of a melting melody, and has a sense of touch of philosophical concern and therefore he stands here as a maestro of music in poetry in a land of lyricism, a land where the Supreme reveals Himself in the élan of elating rhyme, and where devotion is not duty, but love which is itself the thrill of the soul passed into music.

As a poet Tagore seems to have been influenced by the ancient Indian texts such as the Gita and Ramayana to add some philosophical content in writing. It is natural that he construct a great fact from these sacred and valuable writings, and the kind of cosmic vision, spiritual concern and a sincere search for truth that we get in them may very well be associated with Tagore's poetry. It is rightly pointed out to us that Tagore was influenced to a great extent by such philosophical poets as Chandidas, Nanak, Kabir and Meera, and there are positive traces of their influence in his poetry. Significant poets like Jaidev, Chandidas, Kabir, Tukaram and Surdas made lots of contribution to the growth and development of Bhakti or devotional poetry and Gitanjali is written in this tradition. Tagore is a humanist and his Gitanjali is steeped in humanism. No doubt, Gitanjali is a religious poem, but the greatness of this religious poem lies in its humanistic appeal. The present paper aims at finding out the elements of divinity and humanity in the songs of Gitanjali. As W.B. Yeats rightly observes, the lyrics of Gitanjali are "the work of a supreme culture, and they yet appear as much the growth of the common soil as the grass and the bushes."¹

As and when we go through the poems collected in Gitanjali, we come to realize that here is a collection of poems which may be looked upon as an expression of an illuminated human soul, of a continuous and sincere quest Of the truth, and of a deep awareness of the fundamental values of life. It is no wonder, therefore, that Tagore is regarded primarily as a philosophical poet whose real and main domain of exploration is human soul. The poet's vision is quite simple and he receives whispers from the God, and gets pleasure of life in response. Gitanjali is full of such poetic elements of philosophy. Let us find in the song four

Life of my life, I shall ever try to keep my body pure, knowing that thy living touch is upon all my limbs. I shall ever try to keep all untruths out from my thoughts, knowing that thou art that truth which has kindled the light of reason in my mind. I shall ever try to drive all evils away from my heart and keep my love in flower, knowing that thou hast thy seat in the inmost shrine of my heart. And it shall be my endeavour to reveal thee in my actions, knowing it is thy power gives me strength to act. (Song-IV)

Gitanjali is a new song of the soul of the universe, the song of regeneration as well as of thanks giving. God is at the very centre of the poem as the creator of creators. It is to Him that the spontaneous songs of the God-intoxicated poet are offered and to whom he surrenders himself completely. The poet says:

O Fool, try to carry thyself upon thy own shoulders! O beggar, to come beg at thy own door! Leave all thy burdens on his hands who can bear all, and never look behind in regret. Thy desire at once puts out the light from the lamp it touches with its breath. It is unholy---take not thy gifts through its unclean hands. Accept only what is offered by sacred love. (Song-IX)

These philosophical sentimental ideas same of self-surrender is expressed more explicitly a little latter when the poet sings with full-throated ease: poem after poem Tagore keeps on telling us in a highly formal manner that there exists an essential kind of link between man and god, the visible and the invisible, humanity and divinity. In the modern world of tension and turmoil, logical derivations and scientific rationalism the poet tries to transport us to the serene world of supreme peace and joy. His first major achievement as an Indo-Anglian poet is to make his contemporaries painfully aware of the cramping limitations that surround them and at the same time to impress upon them the absolute necessity of discovering and realizing the transcendental glory of over soul. The songs of Gitanjali are songs mainly of the closest personal relationship between the poet and the Eternal. They present the ups and downs in the drama of the human soul in its progress from the finite to the infinite.

Gitanjali is not a Waste Land or a Sailing to Byzantium; it is not the Bible, nor exactly its Gospel; it is a true picture of India only through the poet's single-minded evocation. The Bible presents the all-seeing Lord and God the Son; there is the Father and also the Son. The scheme is that of a spiritual government, which Milton has sensed in Book III of Paradise Lost. To implement the scheme of the Revelation, the Father sends His Son with a Sealed Book to reclaim the lost world. Rabindranath does not plan it in Gitanjali, nor does he sense it like Milton. What he does is the excellence of Gitanjali and his contribution to world literature. The Bible does not present God as an everyday playmate, but Gitanjali presents God as an everyday playmate with the barrier demolished at once between man and his God, all the curtains withdrawn, God brought down not only to this earth but to every creek and corner of human existence, in loving contact and awful suspense of separation, as a friend as well as an enemy, in the sweetest songs as well as in the saddest sobs. The communion of a man with God and a new understanding of man's relation to the world are conveyed to us in

masterly efforts which are intensely mystic. Thus, Tagore appeals to our inmost feelings of love and longing for the supreme creator as our beloved who transcends this world of man and nature and yet remains immanent in it. The songs in Gitanjali form a mighty piece of prayer and pleading and exultation. Integral with the main musical theme, other notes too are occasionally heard. Idolatry and blind worship are castigated and the poet says:

I am here to sing thee songs. In this hall of thine I have a corner seat. In thy world I have no work to do; my useless life can only break out in tunes without a purpose. When the hour strikes for thy silent worship at the dark temple of midnight, command me, my master, to stand before thee to sing. When in the morning air the golden harp is tuned, honour me, commanding my presence. (Song-15)

The poet is a sincere humanist and in tune with his humanistic creed he does not wish to bid farewell to the world. He does not want to seek salvation or deliverance through renunciation. He makes this very clear when he says he firmly believes that he can establish relationship with God by union through love with humanity itself. He sincerely realizes that God is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones. He is of the opinion that it is by being mingled with such laborers that we can truly mingle with God. He is also fully aware that God is above all.

As a humanist Tagore appeals to us that faith from humanity and benediction from divinity are needed to end the waywardness of man and human wretchedness of his country, praying to God to let his country awake into that heaven of humanism and freedom.

It is equally remarkable that in his poems Tagore presents to us beautiful pictures of Nature that are available to us in India. In this respect he invites comparison with Sarojini Naidu for the simple reason that she too describes the charms and splendour of the Indian scenery in her poems. The difference between the two, however, is deep and wide ranging. In spite of all her descriptive brilliance Sarojini Naidu seems to be confined only to the visible; all that is seen constitutes the beginning and the end of her rapture. Tagore, in his own turn, makes this amply clear to us that the glory of the Indian scene is only a garment, a manifestation of the supreme beauty that informs every particle of the universe. There is necessarily a journey from the outer to the inner, from the circumference to the center in Tagore's poetry with the result that even his descriptive poems acquire well-defined philosophical and spiritual overtones. As S. Radhakrishnan points out, Tagore uses "the visible world as a means of shadowing forth the invisible and he touches the temporal with the light of the eternal."⁴ In many songs of Gitanjali Tagore explores the relationship of God, man and nature. Nature is the manifestation of the divine. Perfect joy reigns supreme in the realm of nature. The poet expresses his mystical vision of the union of God, man and nature through highly suggestive and picturesque symbols and images. Birds, flowers, sky, stars, sun, moon, sea, river, stream, light, darkness, Indian seasons, clouds, rain, and several others occur again and again in the Gitanjali and are suggestive of spirituality and mysticism.

Tagore uses metaphors; imagery, diction and association of ideas are colored by his spiritual attitude. He culls metaphor of uncharted ever-speeding voyage, a sailing boat, a pilot who strikes a high bargain beyond his means for ferrying the river he would cross to reach the shore of his beloved, just in the Vrindaban tradition of bewitching price to pay; the

nature imagery too thoroughly Indian yet universal, of sunshine and darkness, lights and shade, night and day, earth and sky, flowers and leaves, plants and foliage, friends and dales, hills and heaths, and of all kinds of everyday emanations of this life and world, all made use of to form the frail delicate link between his solitary soul and that awaited supreme source of solace. The message that constantly comes either awakes him to a soft music or keeps him in eternal alertness of eager impatience. So, the original diction of his language reflects a part of grace to him.

Conclusion:

Tagore is, indeed, a great poet first because of his philosophical and spiritual quest, secondly because of his meaningful love for God, man and nature, thirdly for his artistic skill and poetic craftsmanship, fourthly for his scrupulous and happy choice of idioms, images and symbols, fifthly for the evocation of music in his poetry, and lastly for the kind of transcendental atmosphere that he seeks to create in his poetical writings.

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