

RESEARCH ARTICLE



ISSN

INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

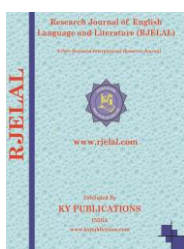
2395-2636 (Print);2321-3108 (online)

TAGORE'S PERCEPTION OF HUMAN LIFE IN "GEETANJALI" AND OTHER POEMS

Dr. RUCHIKA KATIYAR

Guest Faculty, English Language and Literature, APB Government PG College, Agastyamuni,
Rudraprayag,

E-mail: katiyar25ruchika@gmail.com



ABSTRACT

There have been several scholars and philosophers who have tried to explore the mysteries of human life. Tagore, in the same vein, has revealed his outlook depicting his firm faith in the Almighty. His belief and trust in the Divine Spirit leads him to analyze and simplify the complexities of life. The honor of life lies in the freedom of the inner spirit according to him. Tagore is not an ascetic who preaches a renunciation of life, of its joy and its activity. God is within us. One shouldn't neglect his responsibilities and obligations in life in order to attain the Divine. The present paper explores the outlook of Tagore in relation to life.

Keywords: Omnipotent, nature, humanity, mysticism

Rabindranath Tagore is one of the gems of literature, a multi-faceted genius, the philosophy of whom guides the human beings through life. The pilgrim soul of Tagore travels through the myriad ways of life to the region of the timeless. Tagore's unbounded love of human life is expressed in his intense awareness of the delight and sufferings of life. He has always raised his voice whenever he has found the free spirit of a human being blocked by the material forces. His sensitiveness has made him conscious of both the human and the natural world around him. His sight of heaven is the vision of an artist who finds beauty in the midst of nature and human life. Tagore writes:

I believe the vision of paradise is to be seen in the sunlight and the green of the earth, in the beauty of human face and the wealth of human life, even in objects that are seemingly insignificant and unprepossessing. Everywhere in this earth the spirit of paradise is awake and sending forth its voice.-1

The Almighty which is beyond the sensuous perception has never escaped him. Tagore brings in the infinite in the tangible forms of the visible. The poet's search of the infinite is mingled with his deep love of the nature and the earth. He witnesses nature full of wonder and mystery. Rabindranath expresses his intense longing for union with nature. He discovers a deep human significance in the objects and phenomena of the same. For example, nature's shifting beauties symbolize the evanescence of the beauty of his beloved, or the shortness of human life. This half obscure and deep human significance of his nature imagery gives largeness and a peculiar breadth to his poetry. This sense of largeness arises as human life is always viewed in relation to the vaster life of nature. The bright earth with its simple lives is sufficient for his poetry.

Tagore's poetry depicts man's wealth of life. The Omnipotent is to be sought not in churches and temples but in the lives of man. The poet is curious to establish his kinship with the Lord through love. He at first hesitates but wins his confidence through his realization that the

Almighty's love will find fulfillment in him. The Lord comes to the human being to realize himself through him through his love. Tagore has faith that life seeks its freedom in the forms of perfection. He is ever against the oppression of the free spirit of man under unmeaning laws and obsessions. The poet has witnessed how the creative soul of man is not properly expressed in the manmade world. Man's pursuit of perfection is always blocked by his trust in material power. The great world is an expression of the Almighty the call of nature expressed through the morning sunrise and evening stars reminds man of his divine nature which finds itself in freedom of spirit. Tagore writes that the ultimate truth in man is not his possession:

It is in his illumination of mind, in his extension of sympathy across all barriers of caste and color, in his recognition of the world, not merely as a storehouse of power, but as a habitation of man's spirit, with its eternal music of beauty and its inner light of the divine presence.-2

The sense of largeness which inspires Tagore's poetry is derived from his faith in the vastness of nature, and man's life is always viewed in relation to the vast life of nature. The contrast between the narrow world of man and the ampler world of nature, between the home and the sky is suggested when the poet grieves that although the delight of a new life breaks out in the tints of flowers and the night beyond the wall has vanished, the smoking lamp with its paltry light and smell is still burning in the cell. The immensity of nature is due not merely to its expansiveness and creative vitality but also to its continuity, to the power by means of which it can communicate its energy to the future. Men are mortal, and one generation vanishes, making room for another, but the dead have left the imprint of their passion on spring which has developed in power and strength from age to age, for its breeze is laden with love legends that had faded from all human language.

Tagore loves nature as a whole. Nature appeals to him both on account of her purer beauties and the sensuous beauty of her most common place and trivial objects. The poet wants to

mingle himself in this larger unpurged life of nature. He is a mystic for whom nature is suffused with the presence of the Supreme Being. He finds in nature a reflection of the glory and greatness of the Divine, and while in her midst can commune with the God.

Nature is generally represented in Tagore's poetry as the storehouse of life out of which humanity evolved through the course of ages. Tagore wishes to return to this pre-human cosmic existence to which he belonged long ago. It is for this reason that he feels joy in nature, but he is also grieved as he has been cut off from this universal life. The voice of Mother Nature often calls to man through the wind, and the cry of the birds and animals, and the poet listens to the cry. Tagore feels joy in the beauty of nature because of this embryonic connection and also a touch of grief and melancholy at the thought that his human birth has cut him off from this universal life. The call from the vaster world of nature comes to men in the midst of their daily work as something odd and strange.

Tagore seeks in the child the symbol of the Infinite. The child breaks and makes his toys like the All-powerful creating and destroying Shiva. He brings out the full and hidden potentialities of the little things of daily life. Secondly a man can realize the Divine only if he can give up his worldly activity and be carefree like a child. It is interesting that such transformation can take place only through the agency of nature, for nature, like the child, is untouched by the corrupting influence of man's commercialism, the rediscovery of childhood is like the emergence of morning light out of mist. Tagore's sympathetic understanding of the ways of children is one of the most fascinating things in the entire poetry. They have the greatest fondness for the moon of all the things in nature. In life, they love nothing so much as their mother, and by thinking logically, the child feels that what is true of one of these dear things must be true of the other. That is why, he thinks of catching the moon just as he might catch hold of his mother's face. The child feels an attraction to merge him in the life of the clouds and the waves, but he cannot, because the clouds and the waves are so far off and he is also not willing to leave his mother. But he does not mind this limitation, for he will be the cloud and his mother

the moon or he will be the waves and his mother a strange shore:

Mother, the folk who live up in the clouds call out to me-

"We play from the time we wake till the day end.

We play with the golden dawn; we play with the silver moon."

I ask, "But how am I to get up to you?"

They answer, "Come to the edge of the earth, lift up your hands to the sky and you will be taken into the clouds."

"My mother is waiting for me at home," I say. "How can I leave her and come?"

Then they smile and float away.

But I know a nicer game than that, mother.

I shall be the cloud and you the moon....-3

Tagore has his feet firmly planted on the earth. His poetry shows a deep concern for a number of human heroism, human suffering and human problems. The poet stresses the superiority of spiritual to material wealth. He is a spiritual humanist who discovers spiritual significance in the commonplace activities of life, and finds the Almighty Lord in the humblest cottage and not in the temple.

A similar note is struck in *The Champa Flower* in which the child, after many unsuccessful efforts of hiding himself longs to become a champa flower so that he may elude his mother and then return to her as her child. The child has not learnt to differentiate between man and nature and his plans are not subject to the limitations of probability. Everyone should embody all phases of truth- the need of today is the all-rounder, one in whom all the elements of philosophy, mysticism, emotion and work were equally present in full. All paths are to be made active in the service of man as God. Buddha's teaching speaks of Nirvana as the highest achievement possible. Ashok Kumar Jha writes:

Like Kabir, there is a protestant element in Tagore's stand in respect of sanctioned values of the traditional religion. His admiration for Buddhism cannot be concealed. A protestant belief close enough to the traditional fold to be a worthwhile off-shoot and yet distant enough to reject much of what is orthodox, can be seen at work in what Tagore inherits from his father. Also what comes from the Upanishads, Kabir and Raja Ram Mohan Roy may have blended into one as an influence behind Tagore's protestant zeal to bypass the demands of a stratified society and the external authority of religion.-4

Tagore finds a meaning, a purpose in his existence at earth. He says:

Born in this universe full of infinite mystery we cannot accept our existence as a momentary outburst of chance, drifting on the current of matter towards an eternal nowhere! We cannot look upon our lives as dreams of a dreamer who has no awakening in all time. We have a personality to which matter and force are moving unless related to something infinitely personal, whose nature we have discovered in some measure in human love, in the greatness of the good, in the martyrdom of the heroic soul, in the ineffable beauty of nature, which can never be a more physical fact but an expression of personality.-5

It can be concluded that the philosophy and outlook of Tagore towards human life is not of a saint who renounces the world and endeavors to search God. A person should maintain fixed belief in the Almighty fulfilling all his duties.

Works Cited

1. Ghose, Sisir Kumar. *The Later Poems of Tagore*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1961. p.50.
2. Tagore, R.N. *The Religion of Man*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1949. p.88.

3. ---. The Religion of an Artist. Kolkata: Vishvabharati, 1953.p.32.
 4. ---. Creative Unity. London: Macmillan and Co., 1912. p.22.
 5. ---. The Crescent Moon "Clouds and Waves". London: Macmillan and Co., 1936. p.145.
-