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Mysticism in Tagore's writing

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Abstract: Tagore's Mysticism is mainly expressed through his concept of inter-personal (*I* and *thou*) relationship. This paper shall discuss here Tagore's Mysticism vis-à-vis inter-personal relationship. In order to expound this idea, this paper shall embark on his concept of man; man the finite and man the infinite, man within bounds and man the boundless. Tagore has reflected comprehensively and intensely on the ontological status of man in idiosyncratic dimensions and the revelation of the meaning in relation (a) to nature and (b) to modes of inter-personal relationship. This paper has also discussed the role of language in an understanding inter-personal relationship and finally, arrive at the conclusion that the interpersonal relationship of *I* and *thou* takes the form of intra-personal relationship of *I* am *thou*.

Keywords: Tagore, Mysticism, humanism, human values, liberty, character, language

Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore is a literary product of the East and the West. Influenced by the great English Romantics like Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth and the Victorians like Tennyson and Browning on one side, the Indian legends, the Vedas and the Buddhism on the other side he achieved a creative unity and a 'broad base' for human understanding. His composition of seven hundred lines of the verse before he was eighteen is indicative of his literary zeal which spanned over sixty-five years. Rabindranath Tagore is regarded as an epoch-making dramatist of the Indian renaissance. His plays are radically divergent in spirit and form. They are fruitful works of a transformed environment of circumstances. His plays elaborate new ideas and ideas and open up new dramatic vistas. Hence, his plays are widely viewed as the most representative expression of his dramatic genius, it is his dramatic art which lies in his theoretical aesthetics like suggestive and creative devices and the imaginative performance that made him figure among the leading playwrights of Indian drama.

Tagore's dramatic output is concerned more with ideas than a mere story. The dramatic content and elements in his plays aimed at the pursuit of a principle of life-fulfilment. While the marriage of medium and material is his fort, the medium of music and dialogic play a vital role in his plays. Tagore is the first Indian playwright who proved through his works that original plot is not the dramatic soul but the organic interrelationship of musical speech, the dramatic formation of action, character through speakable to dialogue and the invention of motivation, form the dramatic soul in the plays. By artistically twisting the old material and shaping it into new dimensions, Tagore paved a new dramatic era in Indian playwriting.

The dramatic form attracted Rabindranath Tagore very early in his career as a writer. He was twenty when he wrote 'Valmiki-Pratibha'. Tagore wrote over forty

plays. His major works include dramas of ideas and facts (Malini, Sacrifice, King and the Queen), plays of allegory (The Post Office, Chitra, King of the Dark Chamber, and Red Oleanders) and plays of experimentation (like Muktadhara, Natirpuja and Chandalika) which entitle him to be a major dramatist.

Mysticism in Tagore's writing

The term mysticism had originally been used in connection with Greek 'mysteries' or 'secret rites' performed to impart divine knowledge to those seeking it. Mysticism is commonly understood to mean an idea and a belief that the knowledge of god and real truth may be obtained through meditation or spiritual insight in the transcendence of the mind and the senses. Mysticism is the attitude of mind which consists in the spiritual quest of man for union with God culminating in unitive experience. In ancient Greece, a person who was initiated into the mysteries of existence and the esoteric knowledge of the realities of life and death was called mystic i.e. mystic. Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary says "Mystic is a person who tries to become united with God and so reach truths beyond human understanding." (7)

Mysticism in India has its origin in the Vedas. During the time of the Rigveda, the sages and seers proceeded from Henotheism to Monotheism and their search for the Supreme One ultimately led them to the mystic realization. A mystical vein of thought has been present throughout the development of different schools of philosophy from the age of Upanishads downwards. The greatest of the mystic hymns were composed in Tamil literature. The Saiva Saints are known as Nayanmars and Vaishnava Saints known as Alwars had toured all parts of the land visiting temples of Shiva and Vishnu and had sung their hymns. These hymns represent the high watermark of the Hindu religious revival.

He believes within the renunciation of unhealthy needs, those desires which are not good, should be avoided. The moral development lies in man's growth to his unselfish and true self through good and desirable acts. In his ethical life, man has a sense of obligation and his freedom at the same time. Morality relates to conduct that primarily could be a performance of our can. In his opinion, "what the intellect is in the world of Nature our will is in the moral world." Morality cannot be reduced to mere good conduct. It is a way of attaining to what one ought to be through the right or good doing. Morality consists in being good through good action. Such action is feasible through discrimination between the specified and therefore the fascinating. Selfishness or egoism is normally desired, but it is not desirable because it hinders the proper development of social relations and the growth of the true self of man.

At the existential level, we see nature's contribution to human development; and this is possible if one can free oneself from the attitude of closed-ness caused by the ego. There is always a correlation between the extent of receiving from nature and separating from the ego. There is currently a deepening of understanding, and self-development at the higher level of relatedness to nature is communion or unity. Tagore thinks that the unity of man and nature has its supply within the One or

absolutely the. The spirit and nature area unit the dual aspects of absolutely the. It is in man's consciousness of a deeper unity with nature, with the universe, and finally with the Supreme Person who has created this universe for man. Communion as the next mode of relationship between man and nature is characterized by inwardness and depth.

The credit of being the mystic poet of Bengal goes to Chandidas. Another major mystic poet of Bengal is Vidyapati. Tagore was greatly influenced by Vidyapati. The great Indian poets like Aurobindo and Tagore, composed mystic poetry of high order under the influence of the western and oriental mysticism. Tagore is not a systematic philosopher and never discusses the question of philosophical problems in a logical discourse. He does not advance any of the traditional proofs to prove the existence of God, as according to him, the experience is above any proof. But we find in some of his writings he gives arguments to prove the existence of God.

Tagore describes his God as 'Supreme Person' or "Supreme Man". Tagore has never described God in negative terms as the advaitins did. He has defined God as love. Like the Vaishnava poets, Tagore describes God as the divine lover who plays hide and seeks with us. He is not only the deity who wants our devotion and worship. But he craves for our love. Tagore says, "In India God with us is not a distant God, he belongs to our homes as well as to our temple. Tagore gives us the concept of loving God, it is not so important that he has infinite strength wealth, but it is more important that he has found himself with finite beings. He also craves for getting love from them whom he loves. But God is not only loving, blissful, he is also the giver of pain and suffering.

Again, nature has two levels one is the reasoning and the other is an existential Statement as a form of inter-relation between man and. At the reasoning level, nature contributes to knowledge, not as an externality but as exposed to man. But man due to his activities with the day to day happenings forgets that nature is his. It is not because that nature has grown out of touch with us, rather, we do not observe nature in its feature of unity; we are driven to annihilation by our focus on the patchy. He laments that "we grow out of bit with this nice truth, we tend to forget to simply accept its invite and its welcome once in quest of external success our works become unspiritual and inexpressive." Tagore also quotes here Wordsworth's line: The world is too much with us; late and soon, Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers. Little we see in Nature that is ours.

The central theme of Gitanjali is the understanding of God through self-purification, love, constant prayer, bhakti, dedication and surrender before God, through service to humanity. Briefly speaking, Gitanjali is the soul's voyage to eternity. The entire work is suffused with the divine presence, and the divine is shown a yearning for union with the human as much as the human yearns for union with the divine. It is the superb expression of mysticism and spiritualism in devotional form of poetry.

As god is loving in nature, he expresses himself through his creation, which is his sacrifice, but this act of self-sacrifice is done by God out of joy. Thus, for Tagore, everything in nature is an expression of God, and so, it is a kind of mysticism of the poet. The realization of God is the ultimate goal of the human soul. This realization consists in the union of the individual soul with God. The human soul has double aspects, the finite and the infinite. Our ultimate aim in life is to realize the truth of the self, not its appearance.

Conclusion

They believed in the realization of the Infinite through the finite. Many of their mystic concepts are similar. They believed that the intimacy between the finite and the infinite is possible by the descent of God and ascent of Man. The Infinite yearns for the company of the finite as much as the finite longs for the Infinite. There is an intimate indispensable link between finite and infinite.

The mysticism of Tagore has not been institutionalized by him. It is his way of life, but in Aurobindo, it takes the form of an institution. He is a doughty champion of the human spirit. Tagore is not a mystic in the sense. He does not become indifferent to the world outside. He is a mystic but he is also a humanist. Humanism is the basis of Tagore's mysticism.

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