

RABINDRANATH TAGORE - SPIRITUALITY INSTIGATES WITH HUMANISM

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ABSTRACT

Rabindranath Tagore, the greatest Indian English poet, possessed a deep spiritual philosophy. He achieved international fame and recognition after writing Gitanjali which is a "transcreation" of the Bengali original. He has given a spiritual message in Gitanjali. He has meditated deeply, observed very closely the behaviors of man in society, numerous phenomena of nature, manifestations, movements and actions of God with man. He has a very clear picture of position of man with respect to society, Nature and Almighty God. This paper focuses on Tagore Spiritual humanism in Gitanjali.

SPIRITUALITY INSTIGATES WITH HUMANISM IN GITANJALI

Rabindranath Tagore, the greatest Indian English poet, possessed a deep spiritual philosophy. He achieved international fame and recognition after writing Gitanjali which is a "transcreation" of the Bengali original. He has given a spiritual message in Gitanjali. It was for this work that he was awarded the Noble Prize for Literature. Indianness has a universal significance in his poetry. Tagore has exhibited that Indian sentiments, thoughts, emotions and imagery can also be expressed in English like any other India language. He has meditated deeply, observed very closely the behaviors of man in society, numerous phenomena of nature, manifestations, movements and actions of God with man. He has a very clear picture of position of man with respect to society, Nature and Almighty God. This paper focuses on Tagore Spiritual humanism in Gitanjali. Tagore believes that detachment, asceticism and deliverance are counter balanced with the love of humanism. But he does not believe in renunciation of World of senses. He is of the opinion that relationship of soul with God is not possible without relationship of soul with man. Tagore says that God lies among human beings. He is in you, me and every living being. Consequently, to love everyone in this world is to love the Almighty and to serve mankind is to serve the God. God is not to be found in the temple but with the tiller, the stonebreaker and honest Labourers. He says in song no. 11 of Gitanjali, He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path maker is breaking stones. He is with them in rain and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. He castigates the idolatry and the blind worship and advises the priests to give up their counting of beads, their singing and chanting of Mantras, and the worship of God in a secluded corner of the temple, with their eyes half-shut. He criticizes these things in song No. 11 when he says, "Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut ? open thine eyes and see thy God is before thee".

Tagore thus glorifies the life of humble labour, and rejects the ascetic way of life. God lives in the company of companionless. The richness and artificial living do not have any impact on God. They rather take a man away from the God. This is what the holy Bible says; "Blesses are the poor for thy shall see the God." Tagore does not believe in deliverance from the bondage of birth and death through renunciation of life. He says that deliverance is merely an illusion He says in Song No 11, 'Deliverance ?

Where is this deliverance to be found ? Our master has joyfully taken upon him the bounds of creation ; he is bound with us for ever. ”

The most dominating spirit of Gitanjali is the quest of God. But man realizes him only after spiritual illumination. Man is “frail vessel” whose own existence is short-lived and God fills it with fresh life. His immortal touch enthrills the man with joy. Man should try to make himself worthy of union with God. Self-purification is essential for this mystic union with the God, which is also the starting point of his voyage for union. He wants to be in the company of God for a moment and feels restless when he is away from God. The man knows that the communion with humanity and participation in ordinary human activity is essential for spiritual growth and enjoyment. The man feels his presence and wishes to meet Him but he finds himself chained with sensual pleasures. His little self which is proud assertive, arrogant and egoistic, is a barrier between his lofty individual soul and the infinite. He makes efforts to crush that little self to let his lofty soul grow in power and place it firmly before completing this earthy pilgrimage.

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two parts make the man pass through two stages. One gives Joy and sorrow, parting and meeting and the other one gives the joy of spirituality and detachment. These two parts can not be parted as they are like light and shadow. It is very difficult to get rid of the little self which forms the ego of a person Tagore says in song no 30 of Gitanjali, “I came out alone on my way to my tryst. But who is this that follows me in the silent dark ? I move aside to avoid his presence but I escape him not.

He makes the dust rise from the earth with his swager; he adds his loud voice to every world that I utter. He is my own little self, my lord, he knows no shame; But I am ashamed to come to thy door in his company.”

A man’s ego is an obstacle in the way of his spiritual quest, It must be relinquished before attaining spiritual salvation. The root cause of everything that binds man is ‘ego’ which gives one the feeling of ‘I’ and ‘mine’. It can be got rid of only by enquiry and meditation. Tagore says in song no 10

“Pride can never approach to where thou walkest in the clothes of humble among the poorest, and lowliest, and lost”.

He makes it clear that those who shun the poor and the humble, can never find God. The true worship of God means mingling with humble humanity. The rich and the proud can never find God, for they keep aloof from the poor and the down-trodden. Wealth and consequent pride are obstacles in the way of communion with God. The poet wishes for freedom from worldly temptations and his grief is due to separation from God. But when the sudden illumination comes to him, he comes to know that God is always there in him, beside him and he is also a part of this Almighty. The song no 50 in Gitanjali stresses the virtue and power of charity and self sacrifice. This song expresses Tagore’s message that one gets in proportion to what one sacrifices. The poet in the guise of a beggar goes from door to door for alms. Suddenly he beholds a prince in a glorious chariot. The poet expects to get big amount in alms from the prince. But the poet is shocked at the act of the prince when he himself extends his palm towards the poet and asks him what he has to give him. The poet gives him the smallest grain of corn from his wallet. But when he returns home, he is surprised to find a little grain of gold in his wallet. He repents and realizes

the value of giving. The message is that man must sacrifice and renounce his all. Then only he can realize God. The one who gives all, gets all. Total surrender to the will of God, complete self-sacrifice, perfect charity, and absolute renunciation of all our possessions- is the only way that leads to God. This song is a poetic version of the mythical story of Lord Krishna and his boyhood friend Sudama. Sudama, the friend of lord Krishna in the miserable state of poverty, remembers his friend and visits him in his rags. He offers Krishna some rice he carries with him. Krishna eats them with great pleasure and the each morsel that Krishna takes, makes Sudama wealthier. On reaching home, Sudama finds him flooded with wealth and splendor. Tagore has attempted to 'visualize' God in man. Happiness of man is the happiness of God. Man should be kept in priority above God. God is Almighty and does not need worldly wealth and luxuries. It is rather man who needs materialistic growth to lead his life. It is raising the helping hand towards the needy, the weak and the humble which gives happiness to God and man gets His grace in return. Certainly, Rabindranath Tagore, with his sublimity and the theme of spiritual humanism, has surpassed the mankind with human touch and grace and has made Gitanjali, the spiritual vendor to the entire world.

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