

A CRITICAL STUDY OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE AS A MYSTIC

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Abstract

Rabindranath Tagore is the most outstanding name in modern Indian literature and he was the one writer who first gained for modern India a place on the world literary scene. Tagore, the mystic is fundamentally different from the other mystic poets who usually ignore this earth and its people and look for salvation in the other world. Tagore's mysticism is combined with realism and humanism. It is not a philosophy that asks us to renounce the world and its activities. It is a philosophy based on the acceptance of the world as real and this life as earnest and sincere.

Keywords: Mysticism, humanism, realism, spiritual, immortality.

Rabindranath Tagore is the most outstanding name in modern Indian literature and the of the Nobel prize for literature to him but the beginning of a drama of recognition on a global scale to which there cannot be many parallels in literary history Tagore wrote primarily in Bengali but he had a mastery of English also .he translated many of his poems and plays into English.next only to Mahatma Gandhi and shri aurobindo Tagore has been the supreme inspiration to millions in modern india.

MYSTICISM AS A SPIRITUAL SOURCE

Mysticism is the spirit of communion between the individual soul and the eternal soul. A mystic tries to identify the soul with the supreme maker. He believes that all things in the visible world are but forms and manifestations of the one Divine life and that these phenomena are changing and temporary. While the soul that informs them is eternal. Mysticism represents the spiritual side of the human mind and the human personality. Man certainly partakes of the nature of a beast, but he also partakes of the nature of god, Man surely has something of satan in him, but man has at the same time something truly angelic and divine in him. Both these sides of man show themselves in man's thoughts, his desires and in his actions and deeds. In most human beings it is the beastly or the devilish or the satanic side which dominates but there is a small minority of persons in whom the divine element is predominant. There have been persons in whom the spiritual elements dominate to the total exclusion of the other element or elements. Such persons may be called Mystics.

R. N TAGORE AS A MYSTIC

Rabindranath the mystic is fundamentally different from the other mystic poets who usually ignore this earth its people and look for salvation in the other world. Tagore's mysticism is combined with realism and humanism. It is not a philosophy that asks us to renounce the world and its activities, it is a philosophy based on the acceptance of the world as real and this life as earnest and sincere. Tagore goes even farther than this. He maintains that the Divine cannot be realized by renouncing the world. He has to be realized in this very life in the hearts of ordinary men and women of the world. Mystic's have preserved the spiritual heritage of mankind through the ages and among them Rabindranath Tagore occupies an honourable position. Tagore's Mysticism is to be found pre-eminently in his Gitanjali. It was because of his Gitanjali that the Nobel Prize for literature was conferred upon him in 1913. The west began to regard Tagore as a Mystic on the basis of Gitanjali.

MYSTICISM IN GITANJALI

Tagore is a Mystic largely and chiefly in Gitanjali. Here is a book in which Mysticism is to be found in its purest and most unalloyed form. Tagore expresses his firm convictions about God, about the human soul and about the ultimate goal of the human soul. Here is a book free from all kinds of material considerations and worldly desires or ambitions.

The entire Gitanjali is pervaded by the feeling of communion between the soul of the poet and the eternal soul whom he calls by different names as the friend, the comrade, the lover, the lord and the master. All the songs in this book are offerings of the poet at the feet of God, the Divine master. These poems reveal the different moods and thoughts, desires and feelings, hopes and disappointments of the tunes in a plaintive melody. At other times he feels the approach of God and describes his feelings in the words. "He comes, he comes, he ever comes."

The poet feels that the God comes to him through rain and shower through sunshine and spring and also through his joys and sorrows. The all pervading presence of God in the world is described by the poet in different poems. The same stream of the life that flows through his veins also flows through the entire universe and it is one with the eternal stream that flows everywhere. There is unity in diversity. The numerous forms are only the manifestations of the Divine who is also formless.

In several poems of Gitanjali he clearly tells us that the God resides in the hearts of the people and not inside the temple and asks us to leave the chanting and counting of beads. There is no deliverance in renunciation. God rests his feet among the poorest, the lowliest and lost. If we want to realize God we must be ready to worship the lowliest and the humblest. We cannot establish contact with the Divine without giving up our pride and vanity. Tagore asks us to come down on the dusty soil and find the presence of the Divine among the tiller who tills the land and the pathmaker who breaks the stones. It is Tagore's conviction that God is to be realized not only in the heart of the devotee but also in the outside world, for the Divine resides everywhere.

MYSTICISM AS A MEDIUM OF EXPRESSION

Tagore was basically a poet and not a philosopher, or a Mystic. He made mysticism a medium of expression. Through mysticism he expressed his firm faith in the principle of unity, rhythm and harmony. Mysticism became an essential and important feature of his poetry. Basically he was a poet but by the use of mysticism in his poetry he became to be known as a great mystic. Mysticism in his poems flourished and gave a new form, a new look to his poetry, a poetry which was appreciated by the readers all over the world. Tagore's Gitanjali is full of mystical experience. A Mystic has a

faith in existence of God and human soul. The faith and experiences of mystics in all ages and countries is same and is shared by R. N Tagore.

Tagore used mysticism as a medium as a source through which they can convey their feelings about the particular subject. Tagore early poem there was a fusion of spiritualism and sensualism but in later poetry mysticism comes to the force and sensualism is almost discarded. Tagore's philosophy of life his mysticism is expressed through a number of symbols drawn from the common places objects of nature as flowers, rivers sky stars etc one reason why his poetry has such universal significance is that his images are of things which all men in all ages have seen and known and that is why his poetry so mystical so full of surprises and so much charged with significance for the complex problems of modern life, and yet has the simplicity and directness of ancient folk songs.

Conclusion

All the elements of mysticism are to be found in the poems of Gitanjali. Indeed Gitanjali is steeped in with mysticism, though in order really to appreciate his mysticism we must set aside our worldly concerns and materialistic preoccupations and also forget for the time being that the author of Gitanjali was himself a man very much involved and even entangled in political and social activities and was, besides a great traveler who undertook many foreign tours and delivered numerous lectures on secular subjects. The very opening poem shows Tagore as a mystic. Here Tagore asserts the immortality of the human soul even though the human body is mortal.

“Thou hast made me endless,
Such is thy pleasure.
This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again and
Fillest it ever with fresh life.” (Gitanjali)

Tagore adds that god music has made a captive of his heart. In the next poem Tagore as a mystic acknowledges the need of purity in life and in one's conduct and it is this realization which makes his promise to God that he would always try to keep his body pure, to keep all untruths out of his thought and to drive away all the evils from his heart. As the poem follows Tagore expresses a strong desire for God's company he says to God

“Now it is time to sit quite
Face to face with thee.” (Gitanjali)

In Gitanjali Tagore's longing for communion with God proves mysticism in the poem. Poem after poem Tagore looks forward to meet God to stand before God or to have a spiritual communion with God. There are many poems in which he expresses this longing this hope and even this conviction for instance in one poem Tagore asks if the time has come when he may see God love and offer to him his silent salvation. In the next poem Tagore says

“I am on the waiting for love
To give myself up at last into his hands”

In the next poem Tagore says to God

“If you showest me not thy face
I know not how I am to pass
These long rainy houses.” (Gitanjali)

In the poem which follows Tagore says in the moving words to god

“If thou speakest not I will feel
my heart with my silence and endure it”(Gitanjali)

Thus we can see from all the given thoughts mysticism over filled in Gitanjali. It is a great feature in Gitanjali which makes it unique in Indo Angelican literature. Sunidhi kumar chatterjee in the Centenary volume on Tagore says all the above and much else reveal Rabindranath as a unique creative spirit in the domain of art and aesthetics. As a mystic and devotional poet he takes his place with the greatest sages and devotees of India and the world. Tagore was born in a country of mysticism and spiritual values. There were the intellectual circumstances and situations under which Tagore work.

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