

## GITANJALI: INDIVIDUAL QUEST OF MYSTIC TALENT

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### ABSTRACT

Swami Adiswarananda says, "Tagore's philosophical and spiritual thoughts transcend all limits of language, culture, and nationality. In his writings, the poet and mystic takes us on a spiritual quest and gives us a glimpse of the infinite in the midst of the finite, unity at the heart of all diversity, and the Divine in all beings and things of the universe". From Vedic age to the present time Indian culture has given so many deities who have dedicated themselves to nature in different forms. Nature worked as beloved, mother and sometimes as God, who is almighty. This sense is conveyed in so many texts. But Gitanjali is one of the landmarks in the mystic tradition of India. If you want nature in its romantic form then it is easier to find it in the mystic lap of Gitanjali, if you are in search of your beloved then there is a call in the Gitanjali. Everywhere there is omnipresent power that moves our heart even to the core of our reasonable mind and creates a faith which is soothing to our senses. This very faith is the result of mystic current that pours into our heart through Gitanjali. The present paper is an attempt to analyze the mystic tradition of India through Tagore's philosophy, as postulated in Gitanjali.

**Key terms:** mysticism, Indian culture, religion, myth and Gitanjali's influence

Gitanjali is the epitome of Tagore's philosophy of mysticism through love for nature and God. It is a poem that seeks to elucidate Tagore's inclinations through his perpetual praise of natural world and his love of God. It is a manifesto of Tagore's spirituality, which is not irrational but mystic and pious that leads to communion with the creator. Mysticism is a kind of identification of self with the omnipresent or immortal natural aspects around us. It is permanent aspects since the beginning of the universe. In the beginning it was queries of human soul that ran after the wonder of nature with supernatural sense. Sometimes they felt it and could not express but as language developed it became poetic truth and inherent reality of human expression. In every culture either it Hindu or in Greek or anywhere in the world they gave vent to their thought in the form of religion and its devotion. 'Religion is nothing but institutionalized mysticism'. Though Plato was against the poetic truth but the philosophical and God existing imitation, that he propounded, was nothing but the mysticism about the identification of the idea of world and the self, likewise in the Vedic recitation, whatever is seen or conveyed to the Indian consciousness was real and may be called the first Hindu mystic reality.

The very concept of *Atmana* identification with *Brahmana* is based on the mystic postulates. In the Indian culture there are conventions to identify and see God and Goddesses in the natural phenomena. Even a stone is God; a tree is God; the whole phenomenology in which we live is based on Bhakti, which is another form of mysticism. It is not merely 'willing suspension of disbelief' but willing presence of faith in self, which is a traveler in this infinite universe that concretize himself with existing reality and supposed reality. That supposed reality for which man's mind is running after since the beginning of civilization; that quest is going on in different forms and mode even today. The whole philosophy of bhakti is based on the principle of worship of the ultimate truth which is another form of mystery and poetry envisages elucidating the same through the enlightened sense of the poet. These senses bring understanding and sensation to the common ear, perhaps the very existence of this world and its expression has something to do with mysticism. Mysticism deals with knowledge that brings wisdom beyond reason and susceptibility. If Kalidas' Yaksha understands that the cloud will convey his desperate anguish to his beloved then he goes beyond reason to except his own self as cloud. If Shakespeare thinks that the black ink will keep the beauty then it is brightness of his hearts' mystery that keep up pace with acceptability of his hearts' truth. A poet is like a lover who is standing other side of the wall of his beloveds' room and musing over delightful sensations and interaction that is taking place between him and empty room of his beloved. He is imagining his beloved to be present though there is no trace of her in the room, then what he is doing? He is simply filling the void with the mystery of his thoughts. So mysticism is immaculate filling of words into this void and un-identical world. The untouched lips of his beloved are felt in uncountable desires of the lover. So for the poet, all the horizons of this mysterious world are untouched lips of his beloved. He wreaths those desires into poetic garland. T. S. Eliot says that 'a poet has no personality he escapes personality', when he comes to this conclusion then where is the poet? Poet becomes part of what may be called as 'poetic world' which he sees while going through the motions of poetic creation; if Keats is seeing nightingale then he is in the expected world of nightingale; he is in the 'mellow fruitfulness of autumn' so he is living in a mysterious world where his being is fluid just like holy water, ready to become aesthetic and pious that brings new life with wisdom. Sidhartha heard messages on the string of Veena. The moment he heard it, he was like a poet who could hear the language of wind and would make his self awaken from the slumber of transient world. Nobody wants to die but it is the 'easeful death'

of mysticism through the language of the poet that differentiates between mortal death and meeting with the Omni present soul or transcendent reality. Mystic understands the lightening of the sky, has a purpose beyond scientific and mathematical calculation. For him, world is platonic portrait and only he sees the supreme reality or purpose of this worldly life, as was seen by Arjuna and Sanjaya in the epic “Mahabahrata”. But those who saw Him were mystic in one sense or other. Whatever a devotee sees and feels is also the result of mystic dedication that happens in multifarious ways. The more you are dedicated the more you are mystic.

Such was the case with Rabindra Nath Tagore in the context of Gitanjali. This is not merely a text that gives us higher understanding or scholastic knowledge about mysticism but it gives the glimpse of a long tradition of felt culture. Tagore opens his mystic heart in the very first stanza of the Gitanjali. He presents himself in many metaphorical objects of this material world. Through material reality he makes himself permanent because both the self and its Master, whom he addresses as Thou, are present since beginning. So it is that grand presence that makes everything permanent.

‘Thy infinite gifts come to me only on these very small hands of mine.

Agess pass, and still thou pourest, and still there is room to fill’. (Tagore 1)

The submission and dedication are in sublime position. The poet calls himself a ‘fool’ and ‘beggar’ who should not care about his own burden because there is someone greater than this self who cares about everyone and everything. That presence fills in him the confidence that we can carry this burden. This is the true reflection of Indian Bhakti tradition in which devotee accepts his self as the messenger or the follower of his master. He does not care about anything but his egoless dedication. In Gitanjali there is a self who poses himself like a spiritual dancer, who does not care for scientific steps. Poet is like a traveler who is travelling in the realm of the platonic world and whatever he sees there, he feels it as the part of his and the greater self. Poet in the Gitanjali sings to please his Master. He wants to make his life worthwhile by singing the immortal song.

‘In thy world I have no work to do; my useless life can only break out in tunes without a purpose’. (Tagore 11)

His mystic self believes that omnipresent master has given him the gift of simplicity and he is ready to save him from any peril. This belief and the faith is not created by the material considerations but through the mystic reality that poet inherently feels. Sometimes he presents himself as a lover who is waiting to see his beloved’s face. His beloved might be anything, like God or wisdom. This obscure and mystic self propounds multilayered meanings.

‘Clouds heap upon clouds and it darkens. Ah, love, why dost thou let me wait outside at the door all alone?

In the busy moments of noontide work I am with the crowd,  
but on this dark lonely day it is only for thee that I hope.

If thou showest me not thy face, if thou lovest me wholly aside,  
I know not how I am to pass these long rainy long hours. (Tagore 13)

In every stanza, concept comes like a shower. Sometimes poet calls him as friend, sometimes as light. Every moment, the depth and wisdom of the language fills the void with meaning. This meaning makes the illusion of this world, as beautiful and permanent as any immortal thing could be. Tagore as a poet felt deep communion with the natural aspects around him and that brought in him, the deep insight of feeling into every object of nature. He says in his Nobel prize acceptance speech that, “the wild ducks that came during the time of autumn

from the Himalayan lakes were only living companions, and in that solitude I seem to have drunk in the open space like wine overflowing with sunshine, and the murmur of the river used to speak to me and tell me the secrets of the nature” (Tagore 86). This attitude is conspicuously overflowed in the Gitanjali. The stanzas of Gitanjali are like 103 beads giving the sublime pleasure that only intuition can grasp. In these beads one can see the colors of the entire universe embedded in one garland, like Tagore’s philosophy, leading to immaculate pleasure or God.

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