

Rabindranath Tagore – A Overview

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Abstract: *It is no easy job to write with objectivity about a person whom one has known for millennium old literature of Bengal and in India. Tagore was an eminent, versatile genius. He became the first non-European and first Indian to win the noble prize in literature in 1913. In translation his poetry was viewed as spiritual and mercurial. Tagore was born in the 'Jorasanko' Mansion in Calcutta hi parents Devendranath Tagore and Sarada Devi. He was raised mostly by his servants because his mother had died in his early childhood. Tagore was influenced in music Sarodiyas, Buddhadev Das gupta and Amjad Ali Khan. His songs are widely popular and under gird the Bengali, Tagore poetic style which proceed from a lineage established by 15th and 15th Centuries. He opposed imperialism and supported Indian nationalist and these views were first revealed in Manasht, which was mostly composed in his true. Tagore renounced his knight hood in protest to the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in 1919. Tagore was poet at eight years old. At the age of sixteen, he released his first substantial poems under the pseudonym Bhanusimha (Sun Lion).*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Rabindranath Tagore who sobriquets Gurudev was Bengali polymath. He reshaped his religion's literature and music. He was author of Gitanjali which 'Profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse. He was born in 1861. His father Debendranath Tagore played a key role in Bengali renaissance. According to their family tradition the Tagores are Bengali Brahmins, who settled in the region situated on the right bank of river Hooghly. He wrote many poems, novels, short stories, and essays. Tagore stands out as a genuine human being never at odds with himself and his universe. Rabindranath is best remembered in history for writing the national anthem of the nation of India and Bangladesh. He coined the title Mahatma for Indian Nationalist Leader, Gandhi.

Rabindranath did come from Hindu family one of the landed gentry who owned estates mostly in what is now Bangladesh. But whatever wisdom there might be in Akhmatova's invoking of Hinduism and the Ganges. Bangladesh chose one of Tagore's songs the "Amar Sonar Bangla" which means "my golden Bengal" as its national anthem. This must be very confusing to those who see the contemporary world as a "Clash of Civilizations" with "the Muslim Civilization", "the Hindu Civilization" and the Western Civilization each forcefully confronting the others. Tagore's own description of his Bengali family as the product of a confluence of three cultures : Hindu, Muslim and British. Tagore's grandfather, Dwarkanath, was well known for his command of Arabic and Persian. He grew up in a family atmosphere in which a deep knowledge of Sanskrit and ancient Hindu texts was combined with an understanding of Islamic traditions as well as Persian literature.

1.1 Tagore and Nationalist Movement:

He wrote many patriotic poems and essays encouraging the people to participate in national movement. The Swadeshi Movement, beginning with partition of Bengal in 1905 and continuing till 1908. In Swadeshi Movement, a large group of people in Bengal chose to boycott foreign goods instead preferring to buy domestically produced ones. While this seemed an effective strategy of resistance, the movement failed to take into account the enormous losses that small traders, mainly Muslims, incurred as a result of this, the boycott of foreign goods was but a small part of a more disturbing turn in anti-colonial politics, the rise of revolutionary nationalism.

Tagore withdrew from the forefront of the Nationalist Movement after an eighteen year old, Khudiram Bose, killed a woman and child by accident, in a botched attempt to assassinate the

magistrate of Muzzafarpur, a town in Bihar. His horror of violence and the blinding irrationality that comes with it is portrayed through Nikhil antithesis in 'The Home and World'.

1.2 Habitation of Peace – Shanthiniketan:

Most of his work was written in Santhiniketan, the small town that grew around the school he founded in Bengal in 1901, and he not only conceive there imaginative and innovative system of education, but through his writings and his influence on students and teachers, Tagore used the school as a base from which he could take a major part in India's Social, Political and Cultural movements. Tagore's elegant prose and magical poetry Bengali readers know well. Tagore was not only an immensely versatile poet, he was also a great short story writes, novelist, play Wright, essayist and composer of songs, as well as talented painter. His essays, moreover, ranged over literature, politics, culture, social change, religious belief, Philosophical analysis and international relations.

The coincidence of the fiftieth anniversary of Indian independence with the publication of a selection of Tagore's letter by Cambridge University press, brought Tagore's ideas and reflections to fore, which make it important to examine what kind of leadership in thought and understanding he provided in the Indian subcontinent in the first half of this Century.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Gitanjali

Through Tagore's Gitanjali that the fame of Tagore crossed the boundaries of Bengal. It won him the coveted Nobel Prize for literature. Though nearly a century has passed since its publication, the book continues to be a source of inspiration to countless people. "The main theme of Gitanjali is the poet's intense yearning to merge with the supreme". To symbolize it, he uses modernized images from classical Indian love poetry. The lyrics are devotional and mystical, showing the great influence of the Upanishads and the Gita on Tagore. In this respect Gitanjali is imbued with the mysticism and spirituality that characterize the thought and philosophy of ancient India. In the words of Dr.K.R.S. Iyengar "The Gitanjali songs are mainly poems of bhakti in great Indian tradition". It is pure poetry and pure poetry aspires to a condition of prayer, such poetry is half a prayer from below half a whisper from above, the prayer evoking the response and always prayer and whisper chiming into song.

The songs in Gitanjali are firmly rooted in the ancient tradition of Indian saint poetry, they reveal a highly personal quest for the divine and is characterized by a great variety of mood and approaches. In the opening lyrics the poet pays his obeisance to God in a spirit of humbleness and says that according to the will of God the soul is eternal and immortal.

2.2 Voice of Bengal

Rabindranath Tagore, who died in 1941 at the age of eighty, is a towering figure in Indian history. Any one who becomes familiar with this large and flourishing tradition will be impressed by the power of Tagore's presence in Bangladesh and in India. His poetry as well as his novels, short stories, and essays are very widely read, and the songs he composed reverberate around the eastern part of India and throughout Gitanjali, selection of his poetry for which he as awarded the Noble Prize in Literature in 1913, was published in English translation in London in March of that year, and had been reprinted ten times by November, when the award was announced. Graham Green was able to say "As for Rabindranath Tagore, I cannot believe that anyone but Mr. Yeats can still take his poems very seriously".

2.3 Gandhi and Tagore

Ravindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi were eminent thinkers in 20th Century, Gandhi and Tagore two types entirely different from each other Tagore fundamentally agreed with Gandhi in concerning the reorganization of the village as a source for national reorganization and in radiating Swadeshi from within us, where he disagreed with in the symbolic value of the charkha as that one entity of transformation. His creative mind revolted at his static unitary symbol and its possibility of appropriation and misuse. He pleaded for a massive thrust towards the co-operative Principle and the organization of the village economy as self sustaining economically to unite the different religions and castes.

Romain Rolland was fascinated by the contrast between them and when he completed his book on Gandhi, he wrote when he completed his book on Gandhi, he wrote to an Indian academic in March 1923 “I have finished my Gandhi in which I pay tribute to your two great rivers like souls, overflowing with divine spirit of Tagore and Gandhi”. The following month he recorded in his diary an account of some of the differences between Gandhi and Tagore. Tagore greatly admired Gandhi but he had many disagreements with him on a variety of subjects, including nationalism, patriotism, the importance of cultural exchange, Tagore knew that he could not have given India the political leadership that Gandhi did for nation. And yet each remained deeply critical of many things that the other stood for. They worked long time during freedom movement.

2.4 Tagore’s Physical appearance

Handsome bearded, dressed in non-western clothes may to some extent, have encouraged his being seen as a carrier of exotic wisdom. His white hair flowed safely down both sides of his forehead, the tufts of hair under the temples also were long like two beards, and linking up with the hair on his cheeks, continued into his beard. Commenting on Tagore’s appearance, Frances Comford told William Rothenstein “I can now imagine a powerful and gentle Christ, which I never could before”, he made a comment on Tagore.

Where the mind is without fear:

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action.
Into the heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake”.

ITS SPIRITUAL IMPORTANCE

We have all learnt by heart the poem, where the mind is without fear in our school days. Tagore gave highest importance that people should be able to live and reason, in freedom. His attitudes towards politics and culture, nationalism and internationalism, tradition and modernity, can all be seen in the light of this belief he appealed to God to change the mindset of the people. Tagore prays to God to awake the people from their ignorance, mindedness, prejudice, jealousy. He appeals to God to lead the Country to the place of freedom which is heaven. People should be know where knowledge is free, which means equal opportunities to all without any discrimination like social status, caste, creed and gender. He strongly desires to see people directed by God towards continuous growth and action.

3. CONCLUSION

Tagore was highly influential in introducing the best of Indian culture to the west and vice-versa and he is generally regarded as the outstanding creative artist of Modern India. Tagore’s Bengali Originals in 1939, Rabindra Rachanavali is canonized as one of the nation’s greatest cultural treasurers and he was roped into a reasonably humble role “the greatest poet Indian has produced”. Tagore was removed throughout much of Europe, North America and East Asia. He co-founded darting town hall school a progressive co-educational institution in Japan he influenced such figures as noble laureates yasunari kawabata. Tagore’s works were widely translated to the English, Dutch, German and Spanish. He started an experimental school at Shantiniketan where he tried his upanishadic ideals of education. He participated in the Indian Nationalist Movement. He died on 7 August 941. According to Tagore, salvation is neither non-worldly existence nor complete absorption with God, but it is to be in absolute dedication to humanity. He never wants to attain freedom by the process which counteracts what is human in human beings.

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