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## AN ANALYSIS OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S MYSTICISM IN "GITANJALI"

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**Abstract:** Rabindranath Tagore was originally a Bengali writer but he belongs to Indian Literature in English too. In fact the emergence of Indian Literature in English can be traced by Tagore's initial English translation of his work, notable among them being *Gitanjali* which earned him the Nobel Prize in 1913. Tagore's work is caught in the complex meshes of tradition, history and modernity. He was very much influenced by Vaishnava lyrics and his works are found to be embodied to great extent in Indian religious beliefs and Upanishadic themes. His philosophical works also made a wide spread impact all over the world through English Literature. He was a great mystic poet. Mysticism is a spiritual force which has always done enormous good to God and Mankind. Mystic has preserved the spiritual heritage of mankind through the ages, and among them. A mystic need not renounce the world together but an attitude of detachment is absolutely necessary. There is a condition for the appreciation of Tagore's mysticism in *Gitanjali*. All the elements of mysticism are to be found in the poem of *Gitanjali*. My research paper deals with the analysis of mysticism poems from *Gitanjali* by Rabindranath Tagore.

**Keywords:** Mystic, Spiritual, God, Human, Devotional

### Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore was one of the greatest creative geniuses of the Indian mind. He was originally a Bengali writer, but he belongs to Indian literature in English too. He is probably the most prominent figure in the cultural world of Indian subcontinent and the first Asian person to be awarded *Gitanjali* with the Nobel Prize in literature (1913). Even though he is mainly known as a poet, his multitalented gifts were showered upon different branches of art, such as, novels, short stories, dramas, articles, essays, painting etc. and his songs, popularly known as Rabindra Sangeet. He was a social reformer, patriot and above all, a great humanitarian and philosopher.

The devotional poetry of Rabindranath Tagore in *Gitanjali*. In each and every part of *Gitanjali* we find the elements of mysticism. Like all mystics, he was a firm believer in the essential unity of man and the external universe. According to Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan (1999) the poems of *Gitanjali* are the offering of the 'Finite' to the 'Infinite'. The mystics all over the world use this analogy and it is constantly used to express the true. The relationship between the human soul and God. The central theme of *Gitanjali* is devotional songs. It has been written in the lyrics tradition of Vaishnav Hinduism.

Rabindranath Tagore had a particular philosophical vision of his own, which he depicted in his essays, seasons and interwoven in his poems. His philosophical views are caught up in spiritual vision and held captive in his poetry. The spirit of his poems is the spirit of his life. Tagore is a mystic poet. His view of life is not that an ascetic to the priest is to leave his singing and chanting and seek God where the tillers are tilling the soil or path makers breaking stones.

*Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads... (Gitanjali)*

The relationship between God and men is the apparent core of all songs in *Gitanjali*. In each every stanza of the book, we find the beautiful elements of mysticism and spiritualism. The realization of life deals with his philosophy of life, where he repeatedly emphasizes on the Indian philosophy of the nature of being, that is the cause for the progress of the soul towards union with the Supreme Being. So meditation on nature or an aspect of nature leads to realization of God. It ennobles man. Man is ultimately bound up with nature. K.R. Srinivasa rightly points out---

*Gitanjali songs are mainly poems of Bhakti in the great Indian tradition.... The imagery, consists, the basic experience, the longing, the trial, the promise, the realization all have the quality unique Indian flavour the taste<sup>1</sup>*

## Objectives

Rabindranath Tagore was a multitalented person. Therefore it is not possible to discuss all factors of his life and activities in this research paper. The main objectives of this research paper is to briefly discuss some elements which contributed towards the poets *Gitanjali*. The objectives of the study are as follows:

- \* To evaluate the poet of *Gitanjali* are meditation of God.
- \* To analyse the immortality of the human soul even though the human body is mortal.

## Methodology

In order to analyse the contribution towards Indian literature of Rabindranath Tagore's in *Gitanjali*. All poets are meditation of God in Bengali language. The research paper would like to follow mainly Descriptive and Analytical methodology has been adopted for the study. Moreover in order to make the study information will also be collected from other secondary data related from various books, journals, etc.

## Discussion

*Gitanjali* is a collection poems by Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore. *Gitanjali* gives him worldwide recognition. It is appreciated for his creativity by W.B yeats, Ezra Pound and many other European cities. The songs *Gitanjali* are poets' meditation of God 'Man and Nature'. Hindu mysticism and presents complex of thoughts in *Gitanjali*. *Gitanjali* represents the journey from finite to infinite. So mysticism represent to the spiritual side of the "Human mind" and the "Human personality". God is not to be found in the temple or through the secluded life of an ascetic but through love and service of our fellow men. Participation in the humble activities and daily life in essential for God realization. This is the unique feature of his mysticism; in this respect the stands alone among other mystics. Yearning and waiting rather than fulfilment are the characteristics of the poet.

*The song that I came to sing remains this day....I live in the hope of meeting him but the meeting is not yet ( Gitanjali )*

The *Gitanjali* is a great mystical work like other mystics Tagore too was convinced by the human social internal. It is the body which dies, the soul lives on. Death for him is merely a transformation on the only gateway to the eternal. The soul comes to the world and assumed a particular form; after death it still on in the external and many assumed some different forms. All the elements of mysticism are to be found in the poems of *Gitanjali*. The very opening in the poem shows Tagore as a mystic. Here Tagore asserts the immortality of the human soul even though the human body is mortal.

*Thou has made me endless*

*Such is thy pleasure.*

*This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again and*

*Fillets it ever with free ( stanza -1 )*

The very first lines of *Gitanjali*, give a sense of "thou" the lord, as a beloved to whom the poet is trying to unite, *Gitanjali*, as said by critics, is Tagore's spiritual autobiography. It is the collection of devotional lyrics, which explore a relationship between Man and God.

Mystics believe himself to be capable of seeing God at least establishing of close relationship with God. A relationship with enables him to have divine spirit. It shows the relationship between devotee and God. He builds the image of master pupil relationship:

*I know not how thou singes, my master! I ever listen in silent amazement.*

*The light of thy music illumines the world. Thy life breath of thy music runs from sky to sky. The holy steam of my music breaks through all stony obstacles and rushes on.*

*My heart longs to join in thy song, but vainly struggles for a voice. I would speak, but speech breaks not into song and I cry out baffled. Ah thou hast made my heart captive in the endless meshes thy music, my master! ( stanza-3)*

Tagore varied literary enterprises are the manifestation of the realization of man's integral presence in the overall infinite and sublime of the cosmic God head. Tagore expresses a stormy desire for God's company. He says to God--

*Now it is time, to sit quite*

*Face to face with thee (Stanza- 5)*

Tagore's communication with God and feeling of love, sure that he would succeed in his aspiration. He is a calm and joyous acceptance of death as the messenger of God. Life and death and the world manifested to him as one when death comes, he would like to say:

*Thou the lost fulfilment of life, death,*

*My death, come and whisper to me!*

*Day often day have I kept watch for thee,*

*For thee have I borne the joys*

*And pangs of life. ( Stanza- 31)*

Death means freedom from bondage, Tagore has learnt from very close quarters that death is not end of an individual just as birth is not the beginning. It is in fact life's real identity.

Tagore was a poet of inexhaustible vitality, humanism and a written by nature timeless beauty. Life brought him many sorrows and this reflected in some of the poems in *Gitanjali* song offerings. The songs from *Gitanjali* are closest relationship between the poet and the eternal God. So, Srinivas Iyengar says,

*The progress in unnecessary conceived as a battle as a journey and as a continuing sacrifices culminating in a total offering of all surrender, so that by losing all one may gain all.*<sup>2</sup>

In other poem, Tagore discourse that a perfect sweetness has blossomed in the depth of his heart. The poet with his faith on God and larger life energy survived all shocks his devotion to the spiritual life was practiced according to the precepts of ancient Indian religious beliefs. So, Tagore says that even if he does not call God in his prayers and even if he does not keep God in his heart, God's love would still wait for his love. Tagore says to God ---

*Thus it is that Thy joy in me is so full (Stanza- 56)*

Some mystics are ambiguous about the nature of God. This mystic dilemma is also found in *Gitanjali*. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan writes in his book *The philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore* (1918) about this ambiguity:

*Critics may urge that the Vedanta philosophy is ambiguous about the nature of god. True it says, God is all. But it also says is God is nothing. "It is not this, not this. This dilemma of mysticism which makes God some times to all. Sometimes, nothing, is not peculiar to the Vedanta writing, but runs through all musical literature. Rabindranath's poems are full of it. It soon pages the absolute is an abstract, formless, featureless unity, not a God who deserves to be adored and worshipped. It is the inscrutable without name form"*<sup>3</sup>

Indian philosophy to take on the human form of life is a rare privilege for souls. It is asserted that the soul has the ability to reach God, only after being born in a human body. Tagore says, that through wide experience and spiritual discipline the truth of divine immanence can be realized through God is grace—

*My eyes strayed far and wide before  
I shut them and said here art thou (Stanza- 12)*

God has created this beautiful world for the enjoyment of man and our duty is to enjoy and God has blessed us in such plenty. He says:

*No, I will never shut  
The doors or my sense,  
The delights of sight and hearing  
And touch will bear thy delight (Stanza- 23)*

Rabindranath Tagore, the great poet and philosopher of India. The consciousness of human self and its relation with the Divine Being by invoking the philosophy and principle of Upanishad. He realizes the Upanishad truth of joy (Ananda) in him. In his belief mysticism, the whole universe is the expression of joy. This conciseness is presented as the divine nectar of joy in the sky in the air.

### Conclusion:

From the above discussion it can be included that Tagore's *Gitanjali* as a devotional poetry thriving mainly Hindu mysticism and presents a complex of thought. *Gitanjali* are the offering of the "finite" to the "infinite". It is the great tradition of devotional poetry cantering in the love of Radha and Krishna. The whole universe is regarded by Tagore as the express God in different degrees.

Tagore believed that humanity and divinity don't belong to too different orders. *Gitanjali* is a straight and simple introduction to this new approach to the "divine" and is certainly new mysticism with its border line lights. It he seeks a perfect order of human existence. The nature of life, the mystical joy, the sense of inadequacy as mystic, a desire for death the devotee dedication to God, a dislike for material all elements, the wailing of the heart of the poet etc.

The poems of *Gitanjali* are characterized by the immense variety and richness. Even a single theme of death is treated in a variety of ways. The translation of *Gitanjali* is hailed as a great contribution to English language and literature from the East.

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