

Homage to Gurudev
RABINDRANATH TAGORE

(7 May, 1861—7 August, 1941)



DESH SUPPLEMENT

JANUARY, 1962.

**'The world has kissed my soul with
its pain, asking for its return in song'**

Gurudev : Stray Birds : CLXVII

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We gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to the Visva-Bharati and the Rabindra Sadan, Calcutta, for reproducing Gurudev's paintings and doodling.

"Take my lute in thine own hand
and play it, Master,"

Rabindranath Tagore



'The Sage who knows love's utter wisdom'

(Photo by Shri S. P. Gwandi)

Rabindranath Tagore

By Shri Hamayun Kabir

A snow-capped volcano in undulating plain
Lifts up its proud head; near its foot
Cluster the vine and the soft streams flow :
Men come and go and build their homes
And pass their days in homely joys and fears.
The mountain keeps them company, sends to them
Its love in flowing streams and gentle rain.
And yet the mountain lives alone
In distant splendour. Lightnings flash,
The thunder shoots up tongues of flame—
Tries to reach the snowy heights in vain.
The fire of fourscore* summers in your heart,
Fourscore winters' wisdom on your crest
Shine in forms of beauty in deathless verse.

(Mahatma and other Poems)

**7 May, 1941*

Editorial :

Our Homage to Gurudev

"In his own verse the poet still we find,
In his own page his memory lives enshrined,
As in their amber sweets the smothered bees,—
As the fair cedar, fallen before the breeze,
Lies self-embalmed amidst the mouldering trees".

What homage would you have, revered Gurudev, from your readers' hearts overflowing with love, adoration and gratitude ?

Our Poet, is it not your delight to stand at the portals of our lips and listen to us sing your eternal harmonies ?

The world you wove with your words and melodies your infinite love gave to us to live in for ever and for ever more. Your sweetness shall abide therein and through them tingle in the beatings of our hearts as long the morning stars dance, the breezes blow and the waves of the sea rise and fall. Our voices shall mix with your voice and rise like the fountain spray to sing the glory of the Lord who is your Master and our Heavenly Father. Your songs shall inspire us to take courage and approach the Almighty without fear, hesitation or restraint. He is ours and we are His

children. He created us out of infinite mercy and love. We must adore Him. We must worship Him. What better offering can we make to Him than your songs which He inspired and which He liked you to sing in your endearing and pleasing voice.

O Poet-Saint of India ! You brought back to us the heritage of our ancestors and saved us from drifting in the turmoil of the mechanistic age. You laid us back at the feet of God; you saved our souls from getting parched. You restored to us the wealth of divine songs at a time when we were being carried away by flashy tunes of doubtful appeal.

You have opened our ears to the rhythm that creates and sustains life. You have awakened our eyes to the perpetual dawn of Eternal Joy that knows no bounds of time, space or place.....Joy

"Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,

And the round ocean and the living air,

And the blue sky, and in the mind of man."

We are always agog to hear your intimations of the arrival of the Lord :

"Have you not heard his silent steps? He comes, comes, ever comes.

Every moment and every age, every day, every night he comes, comes, ever comes.

Many a song have I sung in many a mood of mind, but all their notes have always proclaimed, 'He comes, comes, ever comes.'

In the fragrant days of sunny April through the forest path he comes, comes, ever comes.

In the rainy gloom of July nights on the thundering chariot of clouds he comes, comes, ever comes.

In sorrow after sorrow it is his steps that press upon my heart, and it is the golden touch of his feet that makes my joy to shine.

(Gitanjali : XLV)

Gurudev, we lamentably lack words to express our gratitude to you for all that you did for us in word, deed and, more than these, in song. We cherish your noble image in the shrines of our hearts. We render to you every day of our lives what is rightfully yours : our homage. And our homage is your songs sung in our tunes.

Our scintillating diamond ; our prismatic genius ! Through you the Infinite bewitches us with His spectral colours. The One and the Infinite displays His refulgent glory in the finite and the human : all things in Himself and Himself in all things !

"The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day

runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures.

It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust of the earth in numberless blades of grass and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers.

It is the same life that is rocked in the ocean-cradle of birth and of death, in ebb and in flow.

I feel my limbs are made glorious by the touch of this world of life. And my pride is from the life-throb of ages dancing in my blood this moment.

(Gitanjali : LXIX)

The strife-torn heart of humanity bleeds. Your message of universal peace, equality and brotherhood soothes the burning pain with its balm. Your invocation to the Buddha is an impassioned appeal for our welfare,

"The world today is wild with the delirium of hatred, the conflicts are cruel and unceasing in anguish, crooked are its paths, tangled its bonds of greed.

All creatures are crying for a new birth of thine.

O Thou of boundless life, save them, raise thine eternal voice of hope,

let Love's lotus with its inexhaustible treasure of honey open its petals in thy light.

O Serene, O Free, in thine immeasurable mercy and goodness

wipe away all dark stains from the heart of this earth.

(Natir Puja : Act II)

Your lines addressed to Jesus Christ are unequivocal denouncement of the modern man's ignorance of the divine in him and his consequent lust for all that is false, futile, fickle and demeaning : his lust for power, his reliance upon brutal force, his exploitation of the poor and the weak; and his heedless race for self-destruction—denouncement that reminds us that unless the mad world heeds to your warning—a very timely warning too—it will invoke the wrath of God upon itself.

“...Christ looks about Him, and sees the weapons of evil that wounded His own age. The arrogant spikes and spears, the slim, sly knives, the scimitars in diplomatic sheath, crooked and cruel, are hissing and raising sparks as they are sharpened on monster wheels. But the most fearful of them all, at the hands of the slaughterers, are those on which has been engraved His own name, that are fashioned from the texts of His own words fused in the fire of hatred, and hammered by hypocritical greed... They had hurt him once, standing at the shadow of their temple ; they are born anew in crowds. From before their sacred altar they shout to the soldiers, ‘Strike! And the Son of Man in agony cries, ‘My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’”

(The Fugitive and other Poems :
The Son of Man)

The heart-rending cries of suffering humanity you listened to on your death-bed. You knew the disease and the sure remedy for it. Even though it caused you considerable

pain you wrote out the diagnosis and the prescription. Like a true Prophet of Man you sounded the alert. Your voice resounded throughout the sick, despairing and mad world. You did your last bit for us and left it to us to heed the warning and turn back or fall headlong into the abyss.

“When I see Man
Helpless within the walls
Of his unbearable suffering,
I do not know
Where he will find consolation.
I know the root of this suffering
Is in his riotous living,
Is in his folly.
But this knowledge brings no
comfort.
When I know
The truth that is hidden
In Man's spiritual striving
Is beyond pleasure and pain—
Then do I realize
That those Seekers who make
fruitful
This truth in their lives,
Are the ultimate goal of Man's
destiny.

(Rcgaasajya : No. 29)

Gurudev, you have rightly assessed your value for us. You are one of the Seekers of the greatest Truth ; hence one of the race to which the Buddha and Jesus belong. Your name is written in letters of gold and shall shine along with the Pole-Star—a delight to the heavens.

Other will praise you as an educationist, as an artist, as a great humanist and a philosopher. We adore you for your songs. We love and

cherish your ever-abiding memory as a Revealer of God, a Redeemer of Man and as a champion of the oppressed and down trodden. May your songs help us to know and worship God and serve the cause of humanity! May your prayers be our daily prayers :

(I)

This is my prayer to thee, my lord
—strike, strike at the root of
penury in my heart.
Give me the strength lightly to
bear my joys and sorrows.
Give me the strength to make my
love fruitful in service.
Give me the strength never to
disown the poor or bend my
knees before insolent might.
Give me the strength to raise my
mind high above daily trifles.
And give me the strength to sur-
render my strength to thy will

with love.

(Gitanjali : No. XXXVI)

(II)

Let only that little be left of me
whereby I may name thee my all.
Let only that little be left of my
will whereby I may feel thee on
every side, and come to thee in
everything, and offer to thee my
love every moment.
Let only that little be left of me
whereby I may never hide thee.
Let only that little of my fetters
be left whereby I am bound with
thy will, and thy purpose is
carried out in my life—and that
is the fetter of thy love.

(Gitanjali : No. XXXIV)

'These prayers will give the world
another heart and other pulses.

(R. K. S.)

I do not belong to any religious sect nor do I subscribe to any particular creed. This I know that the moment my God has created me He has made Himself mine. He is ever active in the unfolding of my being through experiences of life and in the enfolding of it with the varied forces and beauties of this world. The very fact of my existence carries an eternal guarantee of love.

(From Gurudev's letter to Mrs. Kate Ohly)

Rabindranath Tagore—The Humanitarian

By Shri Ashit Sanyal B. Sc., Old Student

Visva Kavi Rabindra Nath Tagore was a poet, and a seer; but above all he was a lover of man.

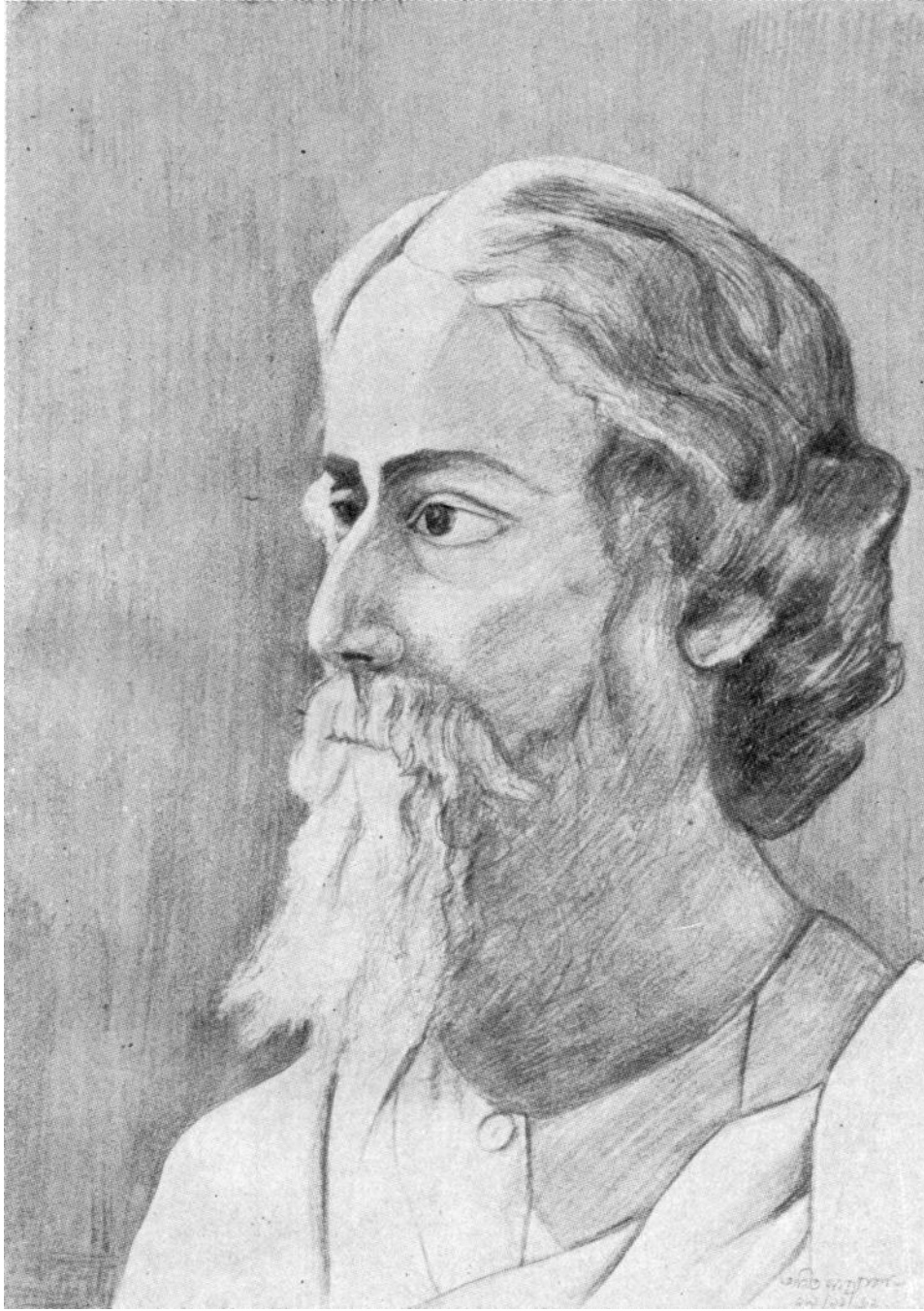
He did not believe in the religion which denounces the material world—the creation of God. He believed in the humanity of God or the divinity of Man. In a conversation with Dr. Einstein he said 'My religion is in the reconciliation of the super-personal Man, the universal human spirit in my own individual being.' He believed in a world in which the individual is unique and essential for the eternal purpose.

Criticizing the orthodox Hindu ways, he said: 'Our attention is directed one-sidedly towards the inner world. We turn away with disdain from the sphere of power and expansion. We want to recognize Brahma by inward contemplation, only in His perfection. We do not want to see His development in the life and tumult of the world. That is why we so often find our seekers after God, the ecstasy of the spirit and the decline resulting therefrom. Their faith does not know of any lawfully imposed limitations; their phantasy soars into the unlimited. Their spirit wears itself out in the attempt to see Brahma separate from His creation, and their heart which tries to embrace

Him wholly in its out-pourings, loses itself in drunken enthusiasm. They have failed to take into account the loss of strength and character which humanity suffers if it disregards lawful conditions and the demands made on its energy by the outside world.'

Tagore's demand in favour of recognizing 'lawful limitation' is of epoch-making significance. He appealed for activity, initiative and diligence because otherwise it is not possible to live as a man should. That is why he said in the *Gitanjali* :

"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 not before thee,
He is there where the tiller
is tilling the hard ground
And the path-maker is breaking
the stones,
He is with them in sun and in
shower,
And his garment is covered with
dust.
Put off thy holy mantle and even
like him
Come down to the dusty soil.



‘At whose touch silence flames into music’

(Pencil Sketch by Shri Ashit Sanyal, Old Student)

My heart is on fire with the flame of thy songs.
It spreads and knows no bounds.
It dances swinging its arms in the sky,
 burning up the dead and the decaying.
The silent stars watch it from across the darkness.
The drunken winds come rushing upon it
 from all sides.
O, this fire, like a red lotus, spreads its
 petals in the heart of the night.

(Poems : No. 54)

Come out of thy meditations
And leave aside thy flowers and
incense.
What harm is there if thy clothes
become tattered and stained ?
Meet him and stand by him in toil
and in the sweat of thy brow."

Again in *Naivedya* he said :

"Leave me not in the soft lap
of comfort and vain dreams,
But make me fit and free in the
field of action."

It is noteworthy here to see how much the illiteracy and poverty of India moved Tagore. In one of his letters he writes "Diseases of different kind are prevailing in all the houses, but nobody is there to help. Is it possible to bear so much unhealthiness, negligence, and poverty in the abode of Man? We have been defeated by all sorts of powers. We endure the torture of Nature, the torture of the king and also we are dumb against the torture of dogmas".

In the *Gardener* Tagore calls for the 'poet' to come down to the material world and says :-

"Let these stunned and pale and
dumb mouths find voice. Let
hope resound in these shrivelled,
tired and battered breasts."

Tagore believed in industrialization but feared the power-intoxication of the West:

"We see how in the West man is
mainly preoccupied with the striving

to expand outwards. The free field of power is his realm. He is only interested in the world of spatial expansion and does not want to have anything to do with the world of inner consciousness where his perfection lies.

..... It seems as if these people were ready to seize everything by force and to despoil it. They do not know the beauty of perfection". He appealed to the modern world, "Let us, the dreamers of the East and the West, keep our faith firm in the life that creates and not the machine that constructs; in the power that hides its force and blossoms in beauty and not in the power that bares its arms and chuckles at its capacity to make itself obnoxious. Let us know that machine is good when it helps us, but not so when it exploits life; that science is great when it destroys evil, but not when the two enter into an unholy alliance".

Tagore wanted a true synthesis of the Eastern spiritualism and the Western materialism to form a millenium.

"Where the mind is without fear
and the head is held high,
Where knowlege 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 habits."

A Pilgrimage to the Realms of Gold : Gurudev, The Poet of Effulgent Joy.

By Shri Radha Krishna Sud

"Poetry," wrote Shelley, "is the record of the best and happiest moments of the best and happiest minds... It is as it were the interpretation of a diviner nature through our own. ... Poetry ... makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world; it arrests the vanishing apparitions which haunt the interlunations of life, and veiling them, or in language or in form, sends them forth among mankind, bearing sweet news of kindred joy to those with whom their sisters abide - Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man."

"A poet, as he is the author to others of the highest wisdom, pleasure virtue and glory, so he ought personally to be the happiest, the best, the wisest, and the most illustrious of men."

Shelley must have written the above words in a moment of prophecy: every word is most true of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and his poetry. Poetry of Gurudev was the means of realizing the Divine and the Infinite in, around and beyond the Finite world and the eternal principle of joyful life—the Creative Life — that sustains the stars, the flowers, the

waves and the particles of dust alike. It is only with the grace of God that such realization is possible and to the most chosen sons of the Lord is entrusted the holy task of communicating it to their less fortunate brethren. The poet, who is possessed of the Joy Eternal, is bound to break forth into a flood of song : he cannot hold back and contain it; it must ripple forth like the free flow of the water of the fountain Aganippe on Mount Helicon, sacred to the Muses. Gurudev is intensely conscious of the honour and the responsibility— it is both—; he is the medium through whom Divine Joy passes to his readers and his poems are everlasting records of his contacts with Divinity for the good of generations to come.

"It has fallen upon me, the service
of the singer.

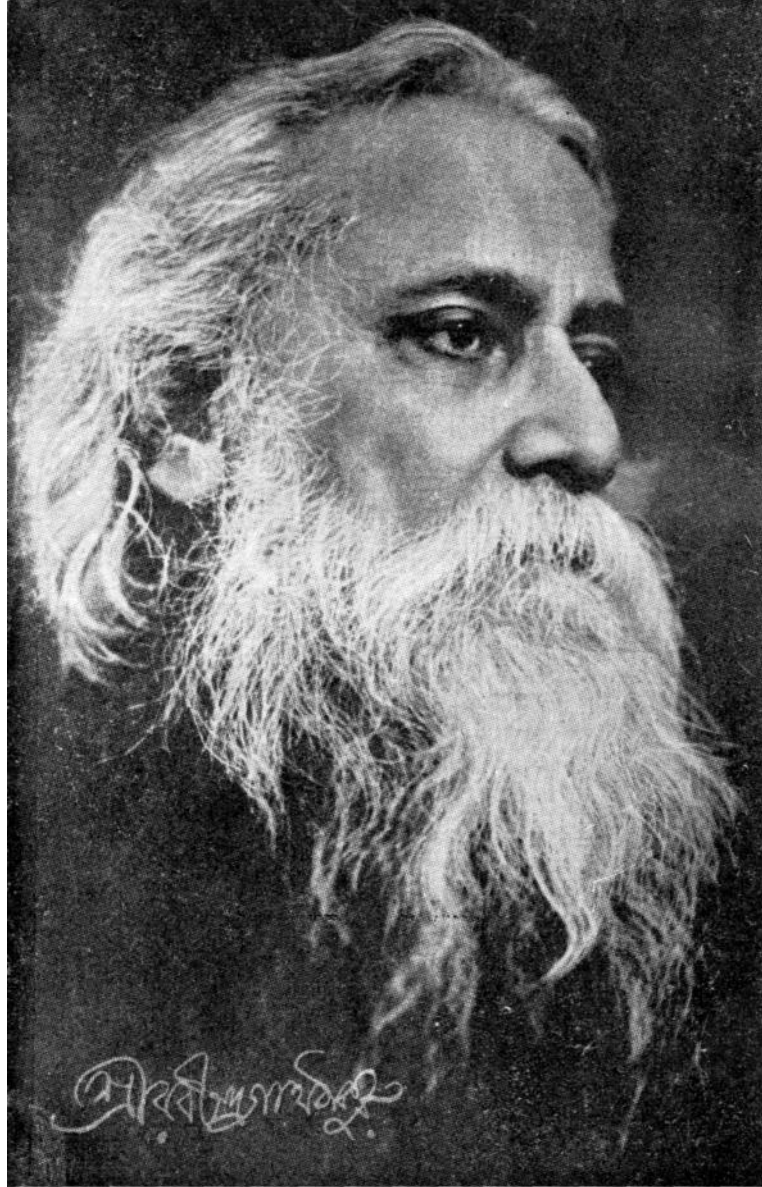
In my songs I have voiced thy
spring flowers, and given
rhythm to the rustling leaves.

I have sung into the hush of thy
night and peace of thy morning.

The thrill of the first summer
rains has passed into my tunes,
and the waving of the autumn
harvest.

I am a poet of the earth :
my flute re-plays its tunes.
I fill its callings with my dreams
and hear the harmony in the
silent hours of my heart.
Inaccessible snowy ranges
call me ever again
with music unheard.
The Polar-star, far, alone,
has touched my sleepless eyes.
The waterfall
dances in my heart as I have heard
the primal song of nature.
I have heard the symphony of being.*

**Quoted from Amiya Chakravarti : A Tagore Reader,
Page 366*



'Sweet is the world, sweet the dust of it.'

(Photo by Mrs. Ananda Coomaraswamy)

Let not thy songs cease at last, My
Master, when thou breakest my
heart to come into my house,
but let it burst into welcome."

(Crossing: LXXIII)

The Gitanjali opens with the celebrated song in which the poet acknowledges his indebtedness to the Divine for inspiration to write his songs, day after day, night, after night, year after year and life after life. If his songs thrill the listeners and readers the credit is not the poet's; it is of the Divine Singer and Inspirer whose music reverberates in the winds and whose tunes mingle with the swing of the waves. This interplay of the cosmic and the human minds is the greatest of miracles which the poet can testify to—the poet and the sage alone in their heart of hearts dance to the Divine rhythm.

"Thou hast made me endless, such
is thy pleasure. This frail vessel
thou emptiest again and again,
and fillest it ever with fresh life.
This little flute of a reed thou
hast carried over the hills and
dales, and hast breathed through
it melodies eternally new.

At the immortal touch of thy
hands my little heart loses its
limits in joy, and gives birth to
utterance ineffable.

Thy infinite gifts come to me
only on these very small hands
of mine. Ages pass, and still
thou pourest, and still there is
room to fill."

(Gitanjali: I)

What a happy relationship this is

between God and His Poet. The more
he sings of Him and His Grace, the
more he longs for singing of them.
No wonder that the poet, being
human, on occasions, when he is
simply carried away by his songs,
forgets himself — his humble en-
tity — and begins to feel proud of
being the Divine Master's cherished
Singer. Nay, he goes one step further
and calls himself, in moments of
drunkenness, as it were, the Lord's
friend. His soul is washed completely
of the earthly dross and the sense of
separateness.

"When thou commandest me to
sing, it seems to me that my
heart would break with pride;
and I look to thy face, and tears
come to my eyes.

All that is harsh and dissonant in
my life melts into one sweet
harmony — and my adoration
spreads wings like a glad bird on
its flight across the sea.

I know thou takest pleasure in my
singing. I know that only as a
singer I come before thy pre-
sence.

I touch by the edge of the far-
spreading wing of my song thy
feet which I could never aspire
to reach.

Drunk with the joy of singing I
forget myself and call thee friend
who art my lord."

(Gitanjali: II)

Should the poet apologize for this
impudence and lapse of prudence?
No, he dare not. For does not the
Lord like to be called his friend? Bet-

ween friends — and between friends alone — there can be perfect understanding and full affinity. In calling himself a friend of the Lord the poet is not transgressing the bounds of decorum and good manners but simply acknowledging that all that he feels or knows is due to his relationship with the Lord. The relationship, to say the least, is not unilateral but bilateral and the Lord and His Poet are equally happy about it. So far as the poet is concerned he cannot resist the call of the Divine Singer just as the Gopis of Brindaban could not but respond to the enchanting strains of the Flute of Lord Krishna.

“Oh, I expire in bliss. I expire,
Who calls me on the flute?
I thought I would remain at home
I would not go out — but tell me
what shall I do
The flute sings outside.
I have heard it play in the bower
On the banks of Jamuna
The music floating in the evening
breeze.
Oh, I must go and tell you
Your flute has played into life . . .
It has played into my life indeed . . .”

(Maitraye Devi : Tagore
by Fireside...Page 41)

And the Lord is, indeed, very happy and proud of the poet's offering of his songs prompted by the Divine wish that he must sing to Him of Him and of His love for him. The joy, therefore, is mutual.

It is difficult to say who is the happier out of the two : the singer

or the Inspirer of the songs sung by the poet. The situation is pleasantly intriguing. With Sir Roger de Coverley we may say that much might be said on both sides.

“What divine drink wouldst thou have, my God, from this overflowing cup of my life ?

My poet, is it thy delight to see thy creation through my eyes and to stand at the portals of my ears silently to listen to thine own eternal harmony ?

Thy world is weaving words in my mind and the joy is adding music to them. Thou givest thyself to me in love and then feelest thine own entire sweetness in me.”

(Gitanjali : LXV)

It is a direct admission by the Lord that He accepts gladly His own gift of the poet's songs, The Lord inspires the poet's songs and gives him tunes and the poet gives to Him the joy there of. A good bargain, indeed. The poet, really speaking, is twice blessed in as far as in taking he gives and in giving back he takes. Thus both the Lord and His singer are richer thereby : the mutual exchange of joy : the Divine and the Human are enriched manifold. This is the great Ministry of Joy which sustains the universe even in the face of Death. The poet will go on singing till the Lord goes on listening to his songs unperturbed and undisturbed.

“If you would it so, I will end my singing.

If it sets your heart aflutter, I will
take away my eyes from your
face. . . .”

(The Gardener : XLVII)

If his songs please the Lord and he blesses him for it; the Earth needs them all the more. He feels for the Earth as he loves her and her children. Sweet is the world, “Sweet the dust of it,” he wrote in *Arogya*. If he must offer his songs to the Lord because they are His, he needs must liberate the heart of the Earth from muteness; that is, release the long-pent up urge of her for meeting the Lord. If his songs have helped him to touch the Divine Feet with his far-spreading wings of song he is sure they will help the Earth as well. In a long poem in the *Gardener* (No : LXXIII) he admits that the ‘patient and dusky Earth’ does not possess ‘infinite wealth’, enough food for her children, ‘perfect gladness’ and toys which are not fragile, She cannot satisfy ‘all our hungry hopes’; its smiles are shadowed with pain and her love knows no fulfilment.

“From your breast you have fed
us with life but not immortality,
that is why your eyes are always
wakeful.

For ages you are working with
colour and song, yet your heaven
is not built, but only its sad
suggestion.

Over your creations of beauty
there is the mist of tears. I will
pour my songs into your mute
heart, and my love into your
love.”

The poet with the help of his songs

will eke the efforts of the Earth to become Heaven. The wings provided by the poet will enable the moth to reach the stars; the Finite world will jump off to Eternity. Such a one as he will never think of renouncing the world. “You cannot satisfy all our hopes?” he asked the Earth and replied, “But should I desert you for that ? Your love which knows not fulfilment is sweet to my eyes.” The many bonds of Delight—the colour, fragrance, soft touch, love, companionship, and sweet memories of childhood: endear the world to him. He has bitterness, pain, sorrow and grief. He loves the Earth all the more because of that.

“Deliverance is not for me in
renunciation.

I feel the embrace of freedom in a
thousand bonds of delight.

Thou ever pourest for me the
fresh draught of thy wine of
various colours and fragrance,
filling this earthen vessel to the
brim.

My world will light its hundred
different lamps with thy flame
and place them before the altar
of thy temple.

No, I will never shut the doors of
my senses. The delights of sight
and hearing and touch will bear
thy delight.

Yes, all my illusions will burn into
illumination of joy, and all my
desires ripen into fruits of love.”

(Gitanjali : LXXIII)

Joy is writ large over the universe ;
only we must have the poet’s eyes
to see, ears to hear and senses to

breathe it. He reverts to this idea again and again in his poems. In a delightful little poem addressed to his readers a hundred years hence he poses a simple question and answers it.

"Who are you, reader, reading my poems an hundred years hence ?

I cannot send you one single flower from this wealth of the spring, one single streak of gold from yonder clouds.

Open your doors and look abroad.

From your blossoming garden gather fragrant memories of the vanished flowers of an hundred years before.

In the joy of your heart you feel living joy that sang one spring morning, sending its glad voice across an hundred years."

(The Gardener : LXXV)

The poet with the spirit of the eternal child in him assures the children of the world that his songs will be their best friend, guide and philosopher. It is no exaggeration: his songs are the symbols of perennial delight and wonder. The child himself is nothing else but a living symbol of delight. Long after the poet is dead and gone his songs will speak for him and his undying love for children.

"This song of mine will wind its music around you, my child, like the fond arms of love.

This song of mine will touch your forehead like a kiss of blessing.

.....

My song will be like a pair of wings to your dreams, it will transport your heart to the verge of the unknown.

It will be like the fruitful star overhead when dark night is over your road.

My song will sit in the pupils of your eyes, and will carry your sight into the heart of things.

And when my voice is silent in death, my song will speak in your living heart."

(The Crescent Moon : My Song)

The joy of living defies death. Through death we attain life. Death is no terror to him. It cannot shake his faith in life's eternity and the joy and beauty of it. It is the Spring that he delights in the most.

"On the shores of endless worlds, children meet.

The infinite sky is motionless overhead and the restless water is boisterous. On the seashore of endless worlds the children meet with shouts and dances.

They build their houses with sand, and they play with empty shells. With withered leaves they weave their boats and smilingly float them on the vast deep. Children have their play on the seashore of worlds"

(The Crescent Moon :
On the Seashore)

In spring the earth is tingling with youth". He records his worship of it in *The Cycle of Spring*: a book dedicated to Life recreating itself out of its own ashes.

"The fire of April leaps from
 forest to forest,
 Flashing up in leaves and flowers
 from all nooks and corners.
 The sky is thrifftless with colours,
 The air delerious with songs.
 The wind-tost branches of the
 woodland
 Spread their unrest in our blood.
 The air is filled with bewilderment
 of mirth,
 And the breeze rushes from flower
 to flower, asking their names."

(The Cycle of Spring)

Why are we born again and again?
 Is there any sense in it? Can we say
 that the Lord thereby has some mys-
 terious purpose to fulfil? The poet's
 reply is that we pursue the joy of
 being one with Him. Real deliver-
 ance will be achieved when this objec-
 tive of human birth and death and
 rebirth is attained. He is every where
 but before we are satisfied, He must
 be enshrined within us. There is no
 doubt that He is within us also but
 we must be aware of His Presence,
 both within and without us. The
 unconscious awareness must become
 conscious awakening.

"I wander along seeking him
 Who is in me, in me.
 He is ..and because He is...my
 sky blooms in the night,
 And my morning blooms flowers
 in the forest ..
 Because He is, there is play of
 light in my eyes,
 Play of endless forms, hues in
 black and white .."

(Maitraye Devi : Tagore by
 Fireside : Page 89)

The poet will seek his deliverance
 for that is his destiny. The joy of
 his heart must merge itself with the
 joy of the cosmos : that is with "the
 rhythm of the dancing cosmos." The
 pursuit eternal must continue for the
 delight of it. And it must continue
 notwithstanding the terrors of death
 (if any) and the tumbling inconve-
 niences of human life (usually highly
 exaggerated).

"Who can say that the ever knew
 the unknowable ?
 Lured by the love of the unknown
 Even when we have attained all,
 We pursue the unattainable.
 Yet the heart dances,
 In an unaccountable joy—
 Joining in the rhythm of the
 dancing cosmos.
 In that rhythm I have my
 deliverance,
 I will evade death through the
 path of death."

(Ibid : Page 13)

He will sing his way to the Eter-
 nal as joyously as he had done
 throughout his life. With singing
 he began his 'official' career and
 with singing he must end it. He
 must be true to his duty and incident-
 ally to himself. What matters in life
 here and beyond is the faith that the
 One reveals Himself in infinite varie-
 ty because He delights in it. Just
 as the flowers must impregnate the
 atmosphere with their fragrance, so
 does the Lord fill the entire universe
 with His delight. This is the highest
 of lessons that we can learn and need
 to learn. This gives us joy while we
 live, solace when we are distressed,

hope when we are assailed by despair
and peace when we quit the world at
the journey's end.

"Ever in my life have I sought
thee with my songs.
It was they who led me from door
to door, and with them have I
felt about me, searching and
touching my world.
It was my songs that taught me
all the lessons I ever learnt; they
showed me secret paths, they
brought before my sight many a
star on the horizon of my heart.
They guided me all the day long
to the mysteries of the country
of pleasure and pain, and at
last, to what palace gate have
they brought me in the evening
at the end of my journey."

(Gitanjali : LI)

Not only that. He will continue
to sing even after his death : 'I know
you',

"Some day I shall sing to thee in
the sunrise of some other world.
I have seen thee before in the
light of the earth, in the love of
man."

(Stray Birds : CCXC)

He has been once guilty of a de-
lusion, though a pleasant one. He
was involved in the riddle that 'the
eternally afar' is 'for ever near'. He
is glad that now he understands that
the riddle was no riddle at all ; 'the
afar' you always long for and 'the near'
gives you a taste of 'the afar' and makes
you long for Him. The sweet nearer
home acts like the pull of the load-

stone towards the sweetest sweet afar.
Our delight lies in being pulled nearer
and nearer.

"When we two first met my heart
rang out in music 'She who is
eternally afar is beside you for
ever,'

The music is silent, because I have
grown to believe that my love
is only near, and have forgotten
that she is also far, far away.

Music fills the infinite between
two souls. This has been muffled
by the mist of our daily habits.

On shy summer nights, when the
breeze brings a vast murmur out
of the silence, I sit up my bed
and mourn the great loss of her
who is beside me. I ask myself?
'When shall I have another
chance to whisper to her words
with the rhythm of eternity in
them ?'

Wake up, my song, from the lan-
guor, rend this screen of the
familiar, and fly to my beloved
there, in the endless surprise of
our first meeting."

(The Fugitive and other
Poems : XIX)

To the poet the loss of his music
will be suicidal ; their loss means the
loss of the joy of pursuit of the
Lord's feet... 'the afar'.

"My songs are like bees ; they
follow through the air some
fragrant trace—some memory—
of you, to hum around your
shyness, eager for its hidden
store."

(Ibid : VII)

No regrets! This is what distinguishes the poetry of Gurudev from the poetry of the age in which he lived and for which he wrote. His poems on Man, Christ and the Buddha clearly show that he felt for the suffering humanity and prayed for the return of peace and faith. But himself he had no regrets of any kind. It is wrong to say that he knew no pain, pangs or sorrows. He endured all these with faith in the Lord's will and with fortitude. His invincible belief that it is Joy that remains ultimately helped him to live and sing his songs. His last songs are a testimony to it. If we read them every day they are sure to lighten our existence and sweeten our living. Imagine him standing on the threshold of the Beyond and listen to him sing :

"In this life I have received the
 blessing
 Of the Beautiful One,
 And in the love of man tasted her
 nectar.
 In sorrow's unbearable day,
 I have come to know the soul
 That is beyond defeat, beyond hurt.
 The day Death's imminent shadow
 touched me,
 I did not own defeat at the hand
 of fear.
 I have not been deprived of the
 touch of Man Supreme—
 His imperishable message I have
 gathered to my heart,
 And in grateful remembrance
 cherish the gifts
 Received from the Lord of Life.

(Aranya: No. 29)

We are touched to the core of

our hearts and find it very difficult to hold back our tears when he takes leave of us all. How simple are his words; how humble and peaceful is the strain in which they are couched. We wish that when it is our turn to lay down our mantles we too could do so with gratitude to the Lord and our kith and kin alike.

"I have got my leave. Bid me
 farewell, my brothers!

I bow to you all and take my
 departure.

Here I give back the keys of my
 door—and I give up all claims
 to my house. I only ask for
 last kind words from you.

We were neighbours for long, but
 I received more than I could
 give. Now the day has dawned
 and the lamp that lit my dark
 corner is out. A summons has
 come and I am ready for my
 journey.

At this time of my parting, wish
 me good luck, my friends! The
 sky is flushed with the dawn
 and my path lies beautiful.

Ask not what I have with me to
 take there. I start on my jour-
 ney with empty hands and ex-
 pectant heart.

I shall put on my wedding garland.
 Mine is not the red-brown dress
 of the traveller, and though
 there are dangers on the way I
 have no fear in my mind.

The evening star will come out
 when my voyage is done and the
 plaintive notes of the twilight
 melodies be struck up from the
 King's gateway."

(Gitanjali XCIV)

The bride leaves the parental home to go to the bridegroom's house leaving a sheaf of blessings and benedictions for all those whom she loved and who loved her. Go she must, even though with a full heart. The pull for the groom is greater than the pull parental. She must take the plunge in full hope and faith that the bridegroom will give her ample compensations of joy and peace for the loss of her parental home. Her trust in her Lord is not misplaced.

"In front stretches the ocean of
Peace.
O helmsman, sail out to the open
sea.
You will be my eternal companion—
Take, O take me in your arms.
The Polar-star will shine
Lighting the path to Eternity,
O Lord of Deliverance,
Your forgiveness, your mercy
Shall be my everlasting sustenance
On my journey to the shores of
Eternity.
May the bonds of earth dissolve,
The mighty Universe take me to
her arms,
And I come to know fearlessly
The Great Unknown.

(Last Poems : No. 1)

Gurudev showers his benedictions on his readers as he ascends to the feet of the Lord. He leaves a prayer with us as a Mahamantra to be recited in the moment of our sore need. For are not more things wrought by prayer than this world dreams of!

"When the heart is hard and
parched up, come upon me with

a shower of mercy.

When grace is lost from life, come
with a burst of song.

When tumultuous work raises its
din on all sides shutting me out
from beyond, come to me, my
lord of silence, with thy peace
and rest.

When my beggarly heart sits
crouched, shut up in a corner,
break open the door, my king,
and come with the ceremony of
a king.

When desire blinds the mind with
delusion and dust, O thou holy
one, thou wakeful, come with
thy light and thy thunder.

(Gitanjali : XXXIX)

To his Lord, his Master, he surrenders himself with the spirit of a true *Bhakta* dedicating himself to his cherished Deity or, better still, a Hindu wife to her husband.

"What I gave to you
is yours by right everlasting.
What others receive
are the daily dribblets the heart
yields
to tender importunity.

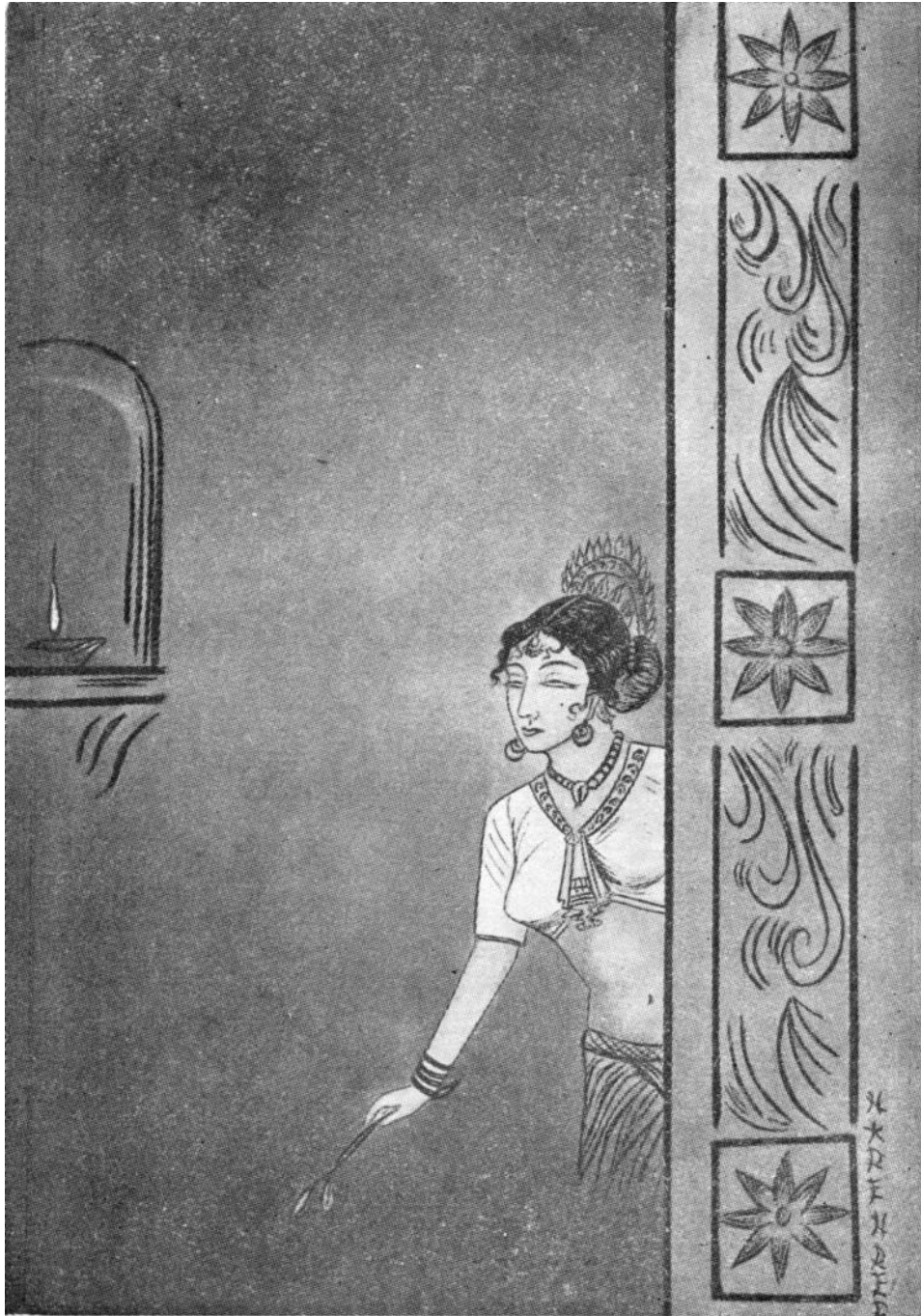
O my princely, my peerless friend,
what I gave to you was your own
gift—
fuller your acceptance, deeper my
debt,
my friend,....."

(‘eshar Kabita)

As Gurudev ascends to the Divine Home his spirit sings his final song : the declaration that with the grace of the Lord his Songs of Joy have been

For a mere nothing fill me with gladness.
Only hold my hand in your hand.
In the deepening night take up my heart
and play with it as you wish. Bind
me close to you with nothing.
I shall spread myself out at your feet
and lie still.
I shall meet silence with silence
under this sky.
I shall become one with the night,
clasping the earth to my breast.
Make my life glad with nothing.
The rains sweep the sky from end to end,
In the wild wet wind jasmines revel in
their own perfume.
The cloud-hidden stars thrill in secret.
Let me fill my heart to the full with
nothing but my own depth of joy.

(Poems : No 45)



'Have you not heard his silent step ?
He comes, comes, for ever comes.'

(Pencil drawing by Narender, Old Student)

accepted. The Divine Seal has been put on them and he has become a member of the Divine Choir.

“You have made me great with your love, though I am but one among the many, drifting in the common tide, rocking in the fluctuant favour of the world.

You have given me a seat where poets of all time bring their tribute, and lovers with deathless names greet one another across the ages.

Men hastily pass me in the market—never noting how my body has grown precious with your caress, how I carry your kiss within, as the sun carries in its

orb the fire of the divine touch and shines for ever.”

(The Fugitive and other Poems : II-XI)

The divine chorister is *Visva Kavi* by right of it. Gurudev's living memorials are his songs; the Lord's memorial to him. He himself would have said that his songs were the Lord's, what was his was the singing of them.

“To the birds you gave songs, the birds gave you songs in return.

You gave me only voice, yet asked for more, and I sing.”

(From Fathering : LXXVIII)

— — —

Thou hast given us to live.

Let us uphold this honour with all our strength and will ;

For thy glory rests upon the glory that we are.

Therefore in thy name we oppose the power that world plant
its banner upon our soul.

Let us know that thy light grows dim in the heart that bears its
insult of bondage,

That the life, when it becomes feeble,
timidly yields thy throne to untruth,

For weakness is the traitor who betrays our soul.

(Lines from Poems : No, 61)

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 limitless 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 that heaven of freedom,
my Father,
let my country awake.

Santiniketan

Abanindranath Tagore

(Gitanjali : No. XXXV)

THE SHEAVES OF GOLD :

Selections from Gurudev's Poems.

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Love, the Many-Splendoured Thing

(i)

You came with the soft grace
 Of unripe life,
You brought the first marvel into my heart,
 Into my blood its first tidal bore.
Love's sweetness in imperfect acquaintance
 Was like the fine gold-work
On the black veil of dawn,
 The cover under which wedded eyes first met.
In our minds till then
 Distinct had not been the song of birds ;
The murmur of the forests sounded at times
 And at times died away.

Midst a family of many people
 Quietly began to be created
A secluded world for us two.
 As birds day after day
Gather sticks and straws to build their nests
 So simple were the materials that made up our world.
It was built with floating bits
 Dropped off from the fleeting moments.
Its value was not in its construction,
 Not in the richness of material.

(Lines from Syamali : The Break)

(20)

(ii)

O woman, you are not merely the handiwork of God, but also of men ;
these are ever endowing you with beauty from their hearts.

Poets are weaving for you a web with threads of golden imagery ;
painters are giving your form ever new immortality.

The sea gives its pearls, the mines their gold, the summer gardens
their flowers to deck you, to cover you, to make you more precious.

The desire of men's hearts has shed its glory over your youth.

You are one-half woman and one-half dream.

(The Gardener : LIX)

(iii)

Woman, thou hast made my days of exile
tender with beauty,
and hast accepted me to thy nearness
with a simple grace
that is like the smile with which the
unknown star welcomed me
when I stood alone at the balcony and
gazed upon the southern night.

There came the voice from above : We know you,
For you have come as our guest of light."
Even in the same great voice thou hast cried to me : "I know you".
And though I know not thy tongue, Woman,
I have heard it uttered in thy music,—
"You are ever our guest on this earth,
poet, the guest of love."

(Poems : No. 72)

(21)

The Eternal ?

(i)

My life caught in the body's frame,
it has its moments of thrill,
its sudden tremors of consciousness,
why is it so impatient, to speak what ?
To voice the bodiless
The seed sleeps beneath the ground,
the warmth of *chaitra*, the dews of *magha*,
and the rains of *shravana* touch it.
In the heart of the darkness it dreams
of the wonderful-yet-to-be,
is that dream its only fulfilment ?
In dawn's light comes the hour of the flower ;
why it shall never be ?

(*Sesh Saptak No. 9*)*

(ii)

The first day's sun
asked
at the manifestation of new being—
Who are you.
No answer came.
Year after year went by,
the last sun of the day
the last question utters
on the western sea-shore,
in the silent evening —
Who are you,
He gets no answer.

(*Poems : No. 127*)

(iii)

They who are near to me do not know that you are
nearer to me than they are.
They who speak to me do not know that my heart
is full with your unspoken words.
They who crowd in my path do not know I am
walking alone with you.
They who love me do not know that their love
brings you to my heart.

(*Poems : No. 22*)

* Quoted from *The Later Poems of Tagore* by *Sisir Kumar Ghosh*.

The Lovely Miracle

(i)

"Alas ! who can hold you but the sky ?"
Cried the dew drop—
"O, Sun, I can dream of you,
 but I cannot serve you.
I have not the strength to grasp you.
So my tiny life is only a teardrop without you."
"I illumine the world
 with the splendour of my light.
Yet I may be held
 by a wee little dew drop,
 and love it."
Replied the beaming Sun,—
"Small in the small, I will fill your being,
and make your little life blossom
 into a smile." *

* From the fly-leaf of *Tagore b; Fireside* by Maitraye Devi

(ii)

Bathed in morning light
All things are made holy and beautiful.
The formless One, the limitless,
With its touchstone creates forms of Joy.
Under the altar of the ever-old
Is consecrated the ever-new.
In sunshine and shadow,
Is woven the cloth of earth
With threads of green and blue.
The leaves dance in rhythm
With the heart-beat of the sky.
From forest to forest,
On the neck of morning
Sparkles the necklace of diamond.
The random songs of birds
Chant their praises to the goddess of life.
The love in the heart of man,
Gives them the touch of immortality—
It makes sweet the dust of earth
And spreads over it
The throne of Eternal Man.

(*Arogya* : No 2)

(23)

“ B E W A R E ! ”

At the old nations' council-chambers
plans and protests are pressed flat
 between the tight-shut prudent lips.
In the meanwhile across the sky rush
 with their blazing blasphemy
the soulless swarms of vulture-machines
carrying their missiles of ravenous
 passion for human entrails.

Give me power, O awful Judge,
sitting on the throne of Eternity,
give me a voice of thunder,
that I may hurl imprecation
upon this cannibal whose gruesome hunger
spares neither women nor children,
that my words of reproach may ever rock
upon the heart-throbs of a history
 humiliated by itself,
till this age choked & chained
finds the bed of its final rest in its ashes.

(Lines from Poems : No 107)



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upon the heart-throbs of a history
 humiliated by itself,
till this age choked & chained
finds the bed of its final rest in its ashes.

(Lines from Poems : No 107)



Abiding Recompense

(i)

Ignored by the tribe,

I have wandered about
hungry for the contact of Man,
the Man whose guest-house
is without walls or sentries.

I found my lonely mates
among those who have come in the great epochs of history
with light, with the voice of peace and benediction,
in the power of the spirit,
the heroes, the sages, the winners of death;
they are my familiars, men of my clan and colour.

In their eternal purity am I ever-pure,
the wayfarers of the path of truth,
worshippers of light, deserving of beatitude.

Man is lost within the bounds of limit.

I have met him beyond the frontiers
of all nations and countries.

To him have I prayed with folded hands,
“O Man of all times, O Man in the hearts of all men, deliver us
from the pride of exclusiveness
flaunting its caste-mark of separation.

O divine Man, blessed am I that I have known you,
from beyond the dark shores,—
I, the uninitiate and the outcast.”

(Prantik No. 19)*

* Quoted from *The Later Poems of Tagore* by Sisir Kumar Ghosh.

(25)

(ii)

I have ever loved thee in a hundred forms and times,
Age after age, in birth following birth.
The chain of songs that my fond heart did weave
Thou graciously didst take around thy neck,
Age after age, in birth following birth.

When I listen to the tales of the primitive past,
The love-pangs of the far distant times,
The meetings and partings of the ancient ages,
I see thy form gathering light
Through the dark dimness of Eternity
And appearing as a star ever fixed in the memory of All.

(Poems : No. 6)

(iii)

Through death and sorrow
there dwells peace
in the heart of the Eternal.
Life's current flows without cease,
the sunlight and starlights
carry the smile of existence
and springtime its songs.

Waves rise and fall,
the flowers blossom and fade
and my heart yearns for its place
at the feet of the Endless.

(Poems : No. 33)

(26)

(iv)

Blessed am I that I am born to this land and that I had
the luck to love her.

What care I if queenly treasure is not in her store but
precious enough is for me the living wealth of her love.

The best gift of fragrance to my heart is from her own
flowers and I know not where else shines the moon
that can flood my being with such loveliness.

The first light revealed to my eyes was from her own
sky and let the same light kiss them before they are
closed for ever.

(Poems : No. 38)



SCINTILLATIONS

(i)

I touch God in my song
as the hill touches the far-flung sea
with its waterfall.

(ii)

In love I pay my endless debt to thee
for what thou art.*

* (Fireflies)

(27)

Summum Bonum

(i)

I know life is sacred.
One knows not by what unseen path she has come,
Rising from the fountain of the Unknown,
And taken form in wondrous reality.

Filling his golden pitcher
The sun bathes and purifies life each morning.
This life has given voice
To the day, to the night;
It decks with flowers the temple
For the worship of the Unseen,
And in silent twilight
Kindles the lamp of evening.
Her first love
Life offered to the world.
At her golden touch
All my daily loves blossom forth —
I have loved my beloved,
I have loved the flowers of this world ;
Whatever she touches,
She makes her very own.
With a book she enters the world—
At first the pages are bare,
Gradually they fill,
And when the day ends
The picture becomes clear
And the beads of self-knowledge are strung together.
Then the heedless artist
Draws a black line
Through the letters ;
But a few remain—
Those in letters of gold.
They shine along with the Pole-Star—
A delight to the heavens.”

(*Last Poems : No. 7*)

(28)

(ii)

Work your havoc and pile up the wreck
yet in the midst of this ruin
the luminous spot of inward joy
will burn bright as ever.

For it was fed day after day on the heavenly wine
which the Gods pour on earth through every sight and sound.
I had loved them all
and sung of that love.

That love has lifted me above your bounds,
the love that shall abide, even though its words grow feeble,
defaced by constant use.

On this love of mine have traced their autographs
the pollen of the mango - blossom,
and the dew-cooled fragrance of the *sephalika*
the twitterings of the *doels* in early dawn
and the rapturous touch of the beloved.

When I take my leave of you, O Earth,
take back from me, carefully reckoning,
all that you had vouchsafed to me,
the outfit and provision for a life's sojourn
Yet never think that I hold your gifts but slight,
Ever grateful I am to this clay - cast mould
through which I have had my introduction to the Formless.

(Poems : No. 109)

(29)

The White Radiance of Eternity

(i)

To-day in the midst of my birthday
I am lost.
I want near me my friends—
The gentle touch of their hands.
I shall take with me—
Earth's ultimate love,
Life's parting gift,
Man's last blessing.
My bag is empty to-day.
All that I had to give,
I have given utterly.
The little gifts I receive daily—
Some affections, some forgiveness—
I shall take with me,
When in my little raft
I make my last crossing
To the voiceless festival of the End !

(Last Poems : No, 10)

(ii)

The journey nears the road-end
 where the shadows deepen with death.
The setting sun unties the last strings of its gifts,
 Squanders gold with both hands.
Death is lighted with festive colours ;
 Life is before me.

With this word my breath will stop :
 I loved.
Love's overbrimming mystery
 joins death and life. It
Has filled my cup of pain
 and joy.

*(Amiya Chakravarti :
A Tagore Reader, Page 359)*

(30)

(iii)

Your creation's path you have covered
with a varied net of wiles,
Thou Guileful One.
False belief's snare you have
laid with skilful hands
in simple lives.

With this deceit have you left a mark
on Greatness ;
for him kept no secret night.
The path that is shown to him
by your star
is the path of his own heart
ever lucid,
which his simple faith
makes eternally shine.

Crooked outside yet it is straight within,
in this is his pride.
Futile he is called by men.
Truth he wins
in his inner heart washed
with his own light.
Nothing can deceive him,
the last reward he carries
to his treasure-house.

He who has easefully borne your wile
gets from your hands
the unwasting right to peace.

(Poems : No. 129)

(31)

Tagore--On Nationalism

By Shri R. C. Pillai, M. A.

The Problem of India was the Problem of the World in miniature. India is too vast in its area and too diverse in its races. It is many countries packed in one geographical receptacle. It is just the opposite of what Europe truly is, mainly one country made into many. Thus Europe in its culture and growth has had the advantage of strength of the many as well as the strength of the one. India, on the contrary, being materially many yet adventitiously one, has all along suffered from the looseness of its diversity and the feebleness of its unity. A true unity is a round globe, it rolls on; carrying its burden easily; but diversity is a many cornered thing which has to be dragged and pushed with all force. 'Be it said to the credit of India that this diversity was not her own creation; she has had to accept it as a fact from the beginning of her history.'—So goes the description of India by Rabindranath Tagore.

The versatility of Rabindranath's genius is known to us all. He helped India to regain her moral equilibrium and to gain a high status in the Community of Nations. Though the best element in the genius of Rabindranath is his poetic ability, this, by no means, is the only element. He was born with the unique capacity for deep thinking and it is by that excellent foresight and imagination

that he saw many of the problems of our national life. He has given guidance to the nation at all moments of crisis and helped it to overcome unexpected obstacles. Though not primarily a political thinker, he had the vision of a great political thinker. In fact, he was one of the great political philosophers of this age. He thought long ago about those problems, social and political, which have actually revealed themselves only later. Long before the country was free, he left stored in his books his considered views on those problems which have been gradually raising their heads long after the attainment of freedom.

The Principle of Self-reliance

The fundamental tenet of his political philosophy is Self-reliance. It is by taking his stand on this cardinal principle that he tried to analyze the question of Indian-nationalism in his political discourses. He had to face much adverse criticism at that time to establish the principle which is universally recognized these days. It was Rabindranath who was one of the intellectual leaders of, what we call, the 'Swadeshi Movement.' At that time he actually entered the political field. Those who recollect those eventful days can easily understand the electrifying effect the poet's addresses, songs and even his presence used to have. It

must be, admitted, that had the 'Swadeshi Movement' been deprived of his spiritual leadership, it would have taken an altogether different shape.

His plea for a Constructive Programme.

In the beginning of the Indian Freedom Movement, there was not the conflict between parties which is there today. At that time there was one party known as the Indian Congress; it had no real and definite social programme. They had a few grievances for redress by the authorities. They wanted larger representation in the Council House and more freedom in Municipal government. In fact, they needed mere scraps of things, but they had no constructive programme. Since they had no constructive programme, Tagore says, he did not have any enthusiasm for their methods. It was, therefore, his stong conviction, that what India needed the most was constructive work coming from within herself. Hence his suggestion—: "In this work we must take all risks and go on doing the duties which by right are ours, though in the teeth of persecution, winning moral victory at every step by our failure and suffering. We must show those who are over us that we have in ourselves the strength of moral power, the power to suffer for truth. Where we have nothing to show, we have only to beg."!*

* *Nationalism*
By Rabindranath Tagore.

His Views on Extremism

The Congress, however, lost power because the people soon came to realize how futile was the half-way policy adopted by them. The party split, and there arrived the Extremists who questioned the wisdom of the methods of prayers and petitions followed by the Moderates in order to achieve their political objective. They advocated independence of action and discarded the method of piecemeal-reform. Their ideals were based on western history. In the words of Tagore, the Extremists had no sympathy with the special problems of India. They did not even recognize the patent fact that there were causes in our social organization which made the Indian incapable of coping with the alien.

Nationalism is more Social than Political.

It is through these special social problems that Tagore has tried to approach the great question of Indian nationalism. This is particularly evident from his own saying. "The thing, we in India, have to think of is this—to remove those social customs and ideals which have generated a want of self-respect and a complete dependence on those above us—a state of affairs which has been brought about entirely by the domination in India of the caste system, and the blind and lazy habit of relying upon the authority of traditions that are incongruous—anachronisms in the present age."**

** *Nationalism in India*
By Rabindranath Tagore

happens that one day at the end of a chapter in Indian history, the British at the time of their departure leave behind on the ruins of their ordered rule crores of people unused to self-reliance, unable to defend themselves, then whom shall we blame for our endless misfortune ridden by eternal poverty? Is it then written on the scroll of destiny that the Indians would remain divided among themselves and will not be bound to one another by ties of common good?*

Rabindranath clearly realized what the country and the country's welfare mean and he had warned us in proper time. This is explained by the fact that we have not yet come to have full faith in that principle of self-reliance on our own strength of which Rabindranath was the true prophet, for this was the central point of his political doctrine. How true his words ring in the well-known song :

“If they answer not to thy call
walk alone,
If they are afraid and cower
mutely facing the wall,
O thou of evil luck,
open thy mind and speak out alone.

If they turn away, and desert you
when crossing the wilderness,
O thou of evil luck,
trample the thorns under thy
tread,
and along the blood-lined track
travel alone.

If they do not hold up the light
when the night is troubled with
storm,
O thou of evil luck,
with the thunder flame of pain
ignite thine own heart
and let it burn alone.”

(*Poems, No. 40*)

Such self-reliant hearts alone
create unity in diversity.

Though an artist of the most delicate sensitiveness, he was not cloistered. He never hesitated to speak out his mind when necessary. He boldly opposed the partition of Bengal. Disdaining personal honour, while his countrymen were repressed and insulted, he returned his knighthood to Lord Chelmsford as a protest against the firing in the Jallianwalla Bagh at Amritsar.

* Tagore Centenary Souvenir.—Edited by Dewan Ram Parkash

x x x x x x

- (i) We gain when the full price for our right to live is paid.
- (ii) Its store of snow is the hill's own burden, its out-pouring of streams is borne by all the world.
- (iii) The Morning, Star whispers to Dawn, “Tell me that you are only for me.”
“Yes” she answers, “and also for that name-less flower.”

(Quoted from *Towards Universal Men*)

The Magic touch of Gurudev's Songs :

(AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE)

By Deenabandhu C. F. Andrews

"The night when I first met the Poet was at Rothenstein's house, on the hill near Hampstead Heath. H. W. Nevinson had taken me there. He had met me by accident in the street and had told me casually that Rabindranath Tagore had arrived in London. He mentioned also that W. B. Yeats was that very night reading aloud some of Tagore's poems in Rothenstein's house. It was in the summer of 1912, and my eagerness was so great that I hurried along almost too excited to talk to Nevinson as we walked up the hill to meet the Poet.

The readings that were given by W. B. Yeats were taken from *Gitanjali* and as I listened, I was spell-bound. It is quite impossible for me to describe it in words what had happened. The music of the poems took possession of me and their beauty enthralled me. The Poet himself was there, in the background, shrinking from observation, and I can well recollect how my one great longing at that moment was to touch his feet. From the lighted room and the Poet's presence and the sound of the music of his poems. I went out at last into the late evening twilight and walked in solitude on Hampstead Heath. The moon had just begun to rise and the air was full of enchantment. Darkness was slowly creeping over the earth and a beautiful after—

glow of light was still visible in the west. The glamour of it all was upon me and I wandered across the Heath up and down hardly knowing where I was going. At that hour I was literally oblivious of time and space and things external. There was an inner vision of beauty that I saw with the eye of the spirit. I went far beyond the bounds of the temporal and material world.*

The joy of this illumination has never altogether passed away. Whenever I return into the Poet's presence after a long absence, the memory of it unfailingly comes back to me. He has introduced me into the secret of this new spirit of beauty in the universe. Since the first time of vision I have tried to see this beauty with his eyes, both as he describes it in his own songs and as he builds up its living fabric in his Ashram."

x x x

'Opening momentarily her clay doors,
The Earth shows her hidden chamber
—a glimpse of the world beyond,
shut in the heart of mortal sphere
in an immortal vessel.
From there the bewitching spring
enchants the trees,
Form of the Formless takes shape
in leaves.'

From *The Great Wanderer* By Maitraye Devi : Pp. 31-32

Tagore : the Significance of his Life and Work.

By Shri J. K. Jain, M. A.

TAGORE is beyond a shadow of doubt, a great lyrical poet. He is a poet of vision, who 'sees into the very life of things' and sings passionately of 'God', of joys and sorrows of human life, of the beauties of nature and sometimes of its terror and its ruthlessness. His poetry fulfils one of the greatest needs of the human spirit—the need of adoration of and reverence for the Infinite and the repose that flows from an awareness of it. It is a reservoir of spiritual energy. If we surrender ourselves humbly to its serene strength, we are lifted above the trivial cares and anxieties of every day life and look upon the world as an intensely fascinating phenomenon, the visible image of the Divine. We come back to our normal selves becalmed, refreshed and filled with zest for living

But Tagore, the man, fascinates me even more than Tagore, the poet. 'It was as a man that he was greatest of all', says Edward Thompson of him. He was one of the completest men that ever lived. He did not neglect any constituent of the totality of his being. He allowed himself the utmost freedom and grew freely until the last moment of his life like a tree or a stream that is ever-fresh, ever-new, ever-expanding. The many-sidedness, the vitality and the dynamism of Shakespeare that is reflected in his plays can be seen in Tagore's life. He

is, to my mind, a symbol of the whole man, the eternal explorer, 'the eternal traveller'. 'still achieving, still pursuing'. That is perhaps the reason that his contemporaries could not always understand him. He outgrew them and left them baffled. This aspect of his life is brought out rather well by Dr. V. S. Naravane in his article, 'The Eternal Traveller', in the Tagore Centenary Issue of 'The Illustrated Weekly of India, Bombay'. Therein he says, "Again and again the world discovered with a start that Rabindranath Tagore could not be taken for granted. His ideas could not be docketed, nor his art labelled. Acclaimed as the greatest 'religicus' poet of our age, he suddenly championed the cause of modern Science. From a deeply meditative existence, he often jumped into the fray of social and political controversies. At sixty he emerged as a painter, at seventy he startled his readers with new experiments in style and diction. For all his mysticism, he would unexpectedly put forward ideas and schemes saturated with intense realism. And when it was generally believed that the great dreamer had finally secreted himself in the solitude of his Ashram, he would suddenly pack his bags and go wandering around the globe."

He was born in a wealthy family and if he had wanted, he could have

lived a life of comfort and security untroubled by either what was happening outside or inside him. But men of energy have no taste for mere ease; they launch out on the waters of life exploring new realms of consciousness, new modes of expression, new fields of action. At the age of eight, he sought self-expression in poetry and poetry and he grew into life-long companions. He wrote copiously and the result was that he became one of our greatest poets who compelled the attention of the whole world, when he was awarded the Nobel-prize for literature in 1913. He wrote an enormously large number of songs (more than 2000) and set them to music. The greatest tribute to his power as a writer of songs lies in the fact that they are found on the lips of the humble-folk of Bengal. He wrote short-stories some of which ('e.g. The Cabuliwallah') are of considerable merit. He wrote plays and novels, though not of great excellence by Western standards. In the last two decades of his life, he discovered himself as a painter and his paintings ushered in a new school of painting in Bengal. He wrote fine essays and his prose, though exhortatory and poetic in tone, bears the impress of his penetrating intellect, his powers of observation and analysis, his ability to build up his argument and his acute understanding of some of the ills of our modern life, especially militant nationalism and exaggerated emphasis on material prosperity.

In his later life we find him broadening out into the field of action, in the sense in which it is

commonly understood. He did not feel satisfied with merely creating a new world through words, sounds and images. He wanted to remould this world and worked for it. He saw that his people were groaning under foreign domination and gave voice to their urge for freedom. He realized that it was futile to get engaged in the political controversies of the day and that the great need of the hour was silent and solid work. For this purpose he established the Shantiniketan, that was one of the greatest experiments in education and the Sriniketan, the institute of reconstruction of the Indian village, where villagers were given a new dignity, a new self-respect in their crafts.

Rabindranath possessed great personal charm. He was a fine conversationalist. Every one who came into contact with him was struck particularly by his humaneness, warmth, unassuming manners and humility which only the greatest have. He never quite lost his childlike simplicity of heart. His love of children, understanding of their nature and the immense pleasure that he always got from playing with them bear eloquent testimony to that. To all this was added a majestic appearance that reflected, quite adequately, the majesty of his mind. "The creator", to quote Dr. Krishanlal Sridharni, "was seldom kinder in bestowing on one man the triple blessings of talent, beauty and lineage. And beauty, rather than 'handsomeness', was the word to describe Rabindranath Tagore. Six foot three, with Indo-Aryan fea-

tures and complexion, full brow and deep-brown eyes, silvery grey-beard and flowing, waving long hair, wearing his high turban and silken robes; to many an American, Tagore resembled Christ as he is depicted in the paintings of Leonardo Da Vinci. His tapering fingers looked like flames of fire, reminding one of the fingers painted by the artists of the Ajanta Caves". It was perhaps some American poet who observed that Tagore made them look mean in his presence.

Rabindranath rejected the kind of asceticism which shuts out our life and our world. The imperfection of the temporal did not repel him. On the contrary, he loved 'your mournful dust, Mother Earth'. The terrible facts of loneliness, pain and death did not drive him away into a far-off sanctuary. He embraced the finite, the many, and found the Infinite, the One, hidden there. In all his work we find him being severe on those Sanyasis who withdraw from the active scene of life into temples of some kind. "Mine is not the deliverance", he declared, "achieved through mere renunciation. Mine is rather the freedom that wastes itself in a thousand associations."* Life for him was sanctified by a personal experience of 'the sublime and blessed mood'

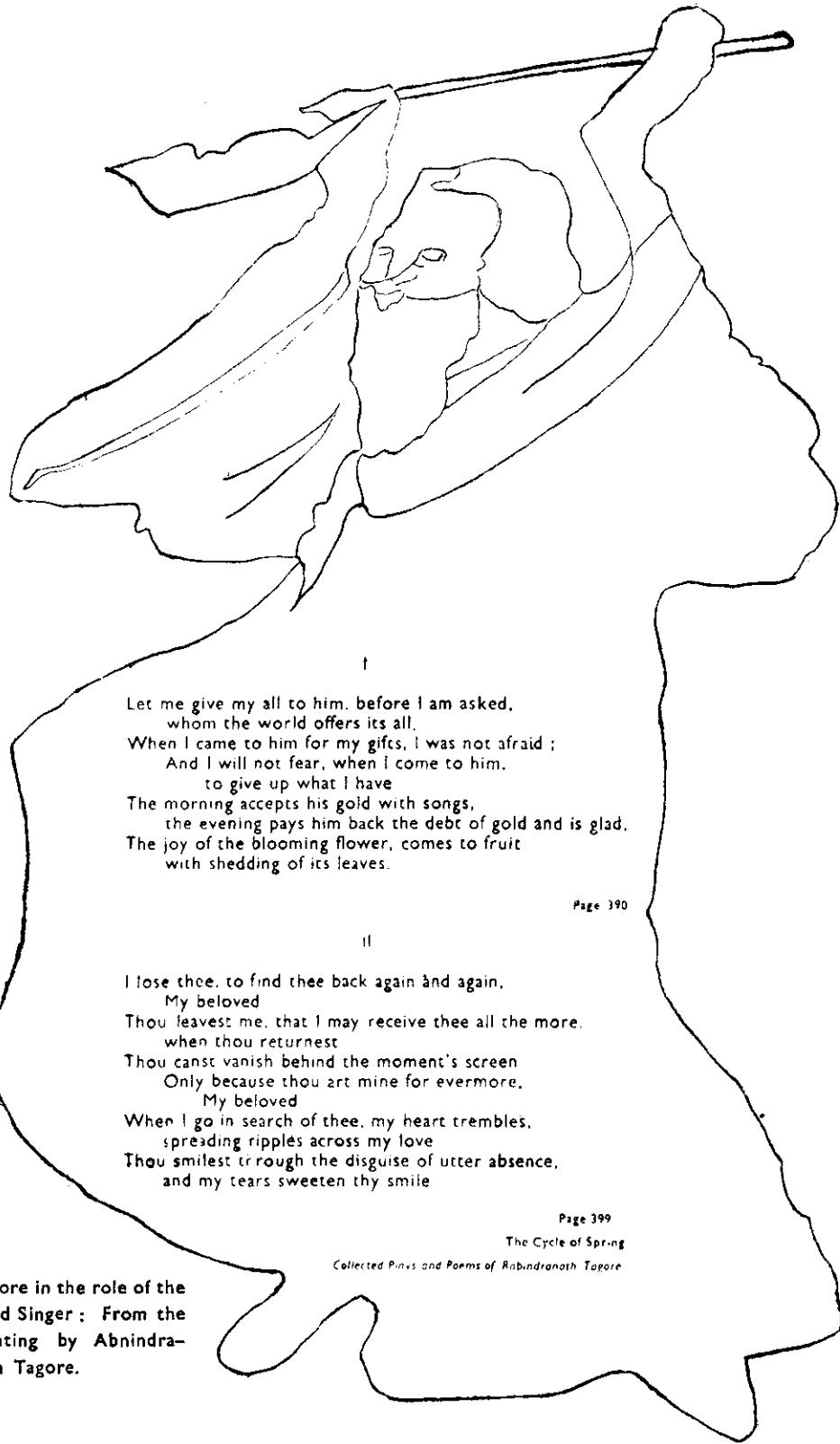
in which the cover of triviality is lifted from all objects and their beauty compels us to have reverence for them. Here I like to quote the entire passage from his 'Reminiscences' in which he describes his vision : "As I would stand on the balcony, the gait, the figure, the features of each one of the passers-by, whoever they might be, seemed to me all so extraordinarily wonderful as they flowed past,—waves on the sea of the universe. From infancy I had seen only with eyes but I now began to see with the whole consciousness. I could look upon the sight of two smiling youths, nonchalantly going their way, the arm of the one on the other's shoulder, as a matter of small moment; for through it I could see the fathomless depths of the eternal spring of Joy, from which numberless sprays of laughter leapt up throughout the world

When of a sudden from some innermost depth of my being, a ray of light found its way out, it spread over and illuminated the whole universe, which then no longer appeared like heaps of things and happenings, but was disclosed to my sight as one whole. This experience seemed to tell me of the stream of melody issuing from the very heart of the

* No, my friends, I shall never be an ascetic, whatever you may say.
 I shall never be an ascetic if she does not take the vow with me.
 It is my firm resolve that if I cannot find a shady shelter and a companion for my penance, I shall never turn ascetic.
 No, my friends, I shall never leave my hearth and home, and retire into the forest solitude if rings no merry laughter in its echoing shade and if the end of no saffron mantle flutters in the wind ; if its silence is not deepened by soft whispers.
 I shall never be an ascetic.

The Gardener : XLIII

Also read *Gitanjali* LXXIII quoted on Page 11.



I

Let me give my all to him, before I am asked,
whom the world offers its all.
When I came to him for my gifts, I was not afraid ;
And I will not fear, when I come to him,
to give up what I have
The morning accepts his gold with songs,
the evening pays him back the debt of gold and is glad.
The joy of the blooming flower, comes to fruit
with shedding of its leaves.

Page 390

II

I lose thee, to find thee back again and again,
My beloved
Thou leavest me, that I may receive thee all the more,
when thou returnest
Thou canst vanish behind the moment's screen
Only because thou art mine for evermore,
My beloved
When I go in search of thee, my heart trembles,
spreading ripples across my love
Thou smilest through the disguise of utter absence,
and my tears sweeten thy smile

Page 399

The Cycle of Spring

Collected Poems and Poems of Rabindranath Tagore

Tagore in the role of the
Blind Singer : From the
painting by Abnindra-
nath Tagore.

Let all the strains of joy mingle in my last song—
joy that makes the earth flow over in the riotous
excess of the grass, the joy that sets the twin
brothers, life and death, dancing over the wide
world, the joy that sweeps in with the tempest,
shaking and waking all life with laughter, the joy
that sits still with its tears on the open red lotus
of pain, and the joy that throws everything it
has upon the dust, and knows not a word.'

Gitanjali : LVIII

X X X

“One word keep for me in thy silence, O World,
when I am dead, ‘I have loved’.”

Stray Birds : CCLXXVII

universe and spreading over space and time, re-echoing thence as waves of joy which flow right back to the source

The whole world was one glorious music, one wonderful rhythm. The houses in the street, the men moving, children playing, all seemed parts of one glorious whole inexpressibly glorious”.

This ‘new Earth’, this ‘new Heaven’ cannot be dreamt of, as Coleridge said, ‘by the sensual and the proud.’ This joy is given only to ‘the pure and in their purest hour ! So Tagore strove for a purity of the whole being, a freedom from the delusion of egoistic desire, lust, pride and greed. All his thoughts, feelings and actions were pervaded by a sense of ‘life of my life’. In this particular respect he came to belong to the great Indian tradition of saints like Kabir and Surdas who dedicated their songs to the Lord. Tagore wanted like them to “make my life simple and straight, like a flute of reed for Thee to fill with music.” But he differed from his saintly predecessors in accepting the world of forms. If this world was created by a Perfect Being, it was surely not created to flee away from. If there was any salvation, that was to be found ‘here and now’. Life must be lived and lived fully. True fullness of life demands an awareness of the Formless, a purity of being that goes beyond the usual narrow ethical code without eliminating it, a freedom from prejudice, a vigorous and ever-seeking intellect, a fully developed aesthetic sensibility, a full-blooded

exercise of the senses; in short, a synthesis of ‘the vitally savage’ and ‘the mentally civilized”.

All art strives for the expression of that something in human nature which is deeper than the conscious mind which functions most of the time in terms of what is received from the outside——conventions, obligations, duties and restraints. As we live according to what is expected of us, we tend to become non-entities, mere ‘cogs’ in moral and social machinery. In course of time a great violence or damage is done to the spontaneous inside us and a nameless anxiety starts eating into our very vitals. Thus to preserve our vitality, as Huxley brought it out rather well, it is essential to find such an outlet for the instinctual energy as does not strike at the roots of organization and order in society. Tagore found this release in arts, especially in music and dancing and that is why he made them vital parts of the life at Shantiniketan. Without the arts ‘which are the spontaneous overflow of our deeper nature and spiritual magnificence’, Tagore said, knowledge is ‘a dead load of dumb wisdom.”

Tagore had a sensitive social conscience. He would never rest content with a personal deliverance. He wanted full life for the whole of human society. Not a single human being was to be neglected. Freedom did not have any meaning if it was not freedom for all. It would be callous to live in an ivory tower of bliss, when one’s fellow-beings were victims of oppression, injustice, pove-

ty of spirit and mind and body. One's destiny lay in participation in the life of others, in joining the "great fair of common human life". His God's peace was burst by 'the cowardice of the weak, the arrogance of the strong, the greed of fat prosperity, the rancour of the wronged, pride of race, and insult to man'. His heart throbbed with sympathy and love for 'the poorest, and lowliest, and lost, among whom his Master walked.* He was thankful that "my lot lies with the humble who suffer and bear the burden of power, and hide their faces and stifle their sobs in the dark." He was sure that, "...every throb of their pain has pulsed in the secret depth of Thy night, and every insult has been gathered into Thy great silence.

And the morrow is theirs."

The ideals of life that he believed in are embodied in the large number of prayers that are scattered all over his work. Here I would refer only to three of them :

"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high

(Gitanjali : XXXV) quoted on page 18;

"This is my prayer to thee, my lord—strike, strike at the root of penury in my heart."

(Gitanjali : XXXVI) quoted on page 5.

and The Fruit-Gathering : LXXIX

"Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers but to be fearless in facing them.

Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain but for the heart to conquer it.

Let me not look for allies in life's battle-field but to my own strength.

Let me not crave in anxious fear to be saved but hope for the patience to win my freedom.

Grant me that I may not be a coward, feeling your mercy in my success alone ; but let me find the grasp of your hand in my failure."

It is clear from these three poems what Tagore's concept of character and personality was. He knew that life yielded its full meaning only to the fearless, sensitive, humane, unbiassed and independent seekers. I wish that each one of us said the above prayers in the privacy of his heart every day and saw what happened to him.

Tagore is significant for us in other ways, too. He was one of the few Indians who saw that India, with its different religions and races, was essentially one. The tremendous assi-

* Read *Gitanjali* : XI. quoted on page 6 and *Gitanjali* : VIII -

The child who is decked with prince's robes and who has jewelled chains round his neck loses all pleasure in his play ; his dress hampers him at every step.

In fear that it may be frayed, or stained with dust he keeps himself from the world, and is afraid even to move.

Mother, it is no gain, thy bondage of finery, if it keeps one shut off from the healthful dust of the earth, if it robs one of the right of entrance to the great fair of common human life.

milative power of this land filled him with awe. It had attracted different peoples from all over the world. In spite of being ill-treated by them sometimes, it had been enriched immeasurably by this constant influx of foreign cultures. In a number of songs and poems, he celebrated "this vast sea of humanity that is India." As he was aware that modern India was the work of many races, he welcomed them all.

"Come ye Aryan, come non-Aryan,
Hindu, Muslim, come,
Come ye English, come ye Christians,
welcome every one,
Come Brahmin, cleanse your mind
and clasp the hand of all,
Come ye outcaste, come ye lowly,
fling away the load of shame!
Come, one and all, to the Mother's,
crowning"

Our national anthem, consisting of the first stanza of a song of Tagore, cherishes his vision of 'Our India'. We can realize how significant it is in the context of the disruptive forces which are, alas! operating today once again in all parts of the country.

Rabindranath was a genuine cosmopolitan and univarsalist. He stood for a creative contact between different cultures and modes of life. "So we must prepare the grand field for the co-ordination of the world," he declared in 'The Centre of Indian Culture', "where each will give to and take from the other, where each will have to be studied throughout the growth of its stages in history. This adjustment of knowledge through

comparative study, this progress in intellectual co-operation is to be the key-note of the coming age." He was not cheated by the myth of the inherent superiority of the Indian tradition over others. He kept his mind open to all influences without being troubled by the notion that they were foreign. He wrote to Udai Shankar, "There are no bounds to the depths or to the expansion of any art which, like dancing, is the expression of life's urge. We must never shut it within the bounds of a stagnant ideal nor define it as either Indian or oriental or occidental, for finality only robs it of life's privilege which is freedom." To him the whole human community was one. Its split into different fragments and a clinging to one particular bit were highly undesirable. His 'Visva-Bharati' is a living symbol of his all-embracing mind. "आत्मवत् सर्वं भूतेषु यः पश्यति स पश्यति (He alone sees, who sees all beings as himself)", he declared in the language of the Upanishadic sages.

But he was a great realist, too. He did not lose the sense of realities of growth in any hazy notions of universalism. He knew that we could not learn from others if we did not know what we ourselves were. Meeting of cultures did not and should not mean a rejection of our own culture. When we approach others without self-knowledge, we either dismiss them or fall under their glamour. A nation which suffers from either a sense of superiority or inferiority is a decadent nation. Imitation is not the same thing as assimilation. Growth cannot occur in a soil of self-pity or

self condition. Hence his opposition to the British brand of education for us :—"The educational institutions in our country are alms-bowl of knowledge; they lower our intellectual self-respect; they encourage us to make a foolish display of decorations composed of borrowed feathers. What I object to is the artificial arrangement by which this foreign education tends to occupy all the space of our national mind and thus kills, or hampers, the great opportunity for the creation of a new thought power by a new combination of truths."

So Tagore turned to his own country's classics for inspiration. He accepted Kalidasa* as his master. He drew upon his country's mythology and the works of Kalidasa for imagery, and also from contemporary life, of course. He discovered wherein lay the glory of his people and wherein lay their degradation. "Once upon a time," he reminded his countrymen, "we were in possession of such a thing as our own mind in India. It was living, it thought, it felt, it expressed itself. It was receptive as well as productive." He warned that "if the whole world grows at last into an exaggerated West then such an illimitable parody of the modern age will die, crushed beneath its own absurdity." "I said to myself that we must seek for our own inheritance, and with it buy our true place in the world."

Thus Tagore was perhaps the first Indian intellectual who viewed his

traditions critically. No one was more bitterly critical than he of the evils that were sterilizing the Indian mind; none else had realized the acute need of deriving sustenance and food from the India of antiquity. He was denounced by some of his own countrymen for being excessively westernized. But he was only trying to evolve a synthesis of the East and the West. And, like all great men, he had the courage of standing alone and independent of popular prejudice. His conscience was his "strong retreat."

Edward Thompson has summed up this aspect of Tagore admirably well: "His mind and being were rooted in India; he was at home with the forest sages and men and women of heroic legend. But his genius was a tree whose branches spread to every land and time, and his catholicity was as great as his courage. In politics, in education, in ethics and social reconstruction, his findings were usually untainted by nationalist prejudice; his wisdom will be seen ever more clearly as the centuries pass"

To sum up, he faced both East and West, filial to both, deeply indebted to both He has been both of his nation, and not of it; his genius has been born of Indian thought, not of poets and philosophers alone but of the common people, yet it has been fostered by Western thought and English literature; he has been the mightiest of national voices, yet has

* Read *The Fugitive and other Poems* : I, IX :

'If I were living in the royal town of Ujjain, when Kalidasa was the King's poet, I should know some Malwa girl and fill my thoughts with the music of her name.....'

stood aside from his own folk in more than one angry controversy.”

Let our friends, who are all the time singing paeans of adulation of western life, its thought and art and decrying everything that smells of Indian-ness, turn to Tagore and learn from the great example set by him. They should realize that they have no right to despise their own people, and their own culture. We may be backward in certain ways (and we should make every effort to shake off our weaknesses) but let us not forget that

we are also ahead of the West in other ways. Self-abasement will only sink us in despair.

In the death of Gurudev, India lost one of her greatest sons and the world one of its wisest men and melodious singers,

The only fitting ‘Shridhanjali’ that we can pay to Tagore is that we should study his life and works with an open mind and try to absorb in ourselves whatever strikes us as valuable.

AN ANECDOTE

“ One day, in a small village in Bengal, an ascetic woman from the neighbourhood came to see me. She had the name ‘Sarvakhepi’ given to her by the village people, the meaning of which is ‘the woman who is mad about all things’; She fixed her star-like eyes upon my face and startled me with the question, ‘When are you coming to meet me underneath the trees?’ Evidently she pitied me who lived (according to her) prisoned behind walls, banished away from the great meeting-place of the All, where she had her dwelling. Just at that moment my gardener came with his basket, and when the woman understood that the flowers in the vase on my table were going to be thrown away, to make place for the fresh ones, she looked pained and said to me, ‘You are always engaged reading and writing; you do not see.’ Then she took the discarded flowers in her palms, kissed them and touched them with her forehead, and reverently murmured to herself, ‘Beloved of my heart’. I felt that this woman, in her direct vision of the infinite personality in the heart of all things, truly represented the spirit of India.”

(Gurudev : *Creative Unity*)

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

By Gurudev

Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people,
Thou Dispenser of India's destiny.
Thy name rouses the hearts
of the Punjab, Sind, Gujrat and Maratha,
of Dravid, Orissa and Bengal.
It echoes in the hills of the Vindhya and Himalayas,
mingles in the music of Jumna and Ganges,
and is chanted by the waves of the Indian Sea.
They pray for thy blessing and sing thy praise,
Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,
Victory, Victory, Victory to thee.*

Day and night, thy voice goes out from land to land,
calling Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains round thy throne
and Parsees, Mussalmans and Christians.
Offerings are brought to thy shrine by the East and the West
to be woven in a garland of love.
Thou bringest the hearts of all peoples into the harmony of one life,
Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,
Victory, Victory, Victory to thee.

Eternal Charioteer, thou drivest man's history
along the road rugged with rises and falls of Nations.
Amidst all tribulations and terror
thy trumpet sounds to hearten those that despair and droop,
and guide all people in their paths of peril and pilgrimage.
Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,
Victory, Victory, Victory to thee.

When the long dreary night was dense with gloom
and the country lay still in a stupor,
thy Mother's arms held her,
thy wakeful eyes bent upon her face,
till she was rescued from the dark evil dreams
that oppressed her spirit,
Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,
Victory, Victory, Victory to thee.

* This stanza has now been adopted as our National Anthem : 'Jana-Gana-Mana.'

The night dawns, the sun rises in the East,
the birds sing, the morning breeze brings a stir of new life.

Touched by golden rays of thy love
India wakes up and bends her head at thy feet.

Thou King of all Kings,
Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,
Victory, Victory, Victory to thee,

(Poems : No. 51)

X X X X

JANA-GANA-MANA

जन-गण-मन अधिनायक जय हे
भारत - भाग्य - विधाता ।
पंजाब, सिंधु, गुजरात, मराठा,
द्राविड़, उत्कल, बंग,
विंध्य, हिमाचल, यमुना, गंगा,
उच्छल जलधि - तरंग ।
तव शुभ नामे जागे
तव शुभ आशिष मांगे
गाहे तव जयगाथा ।
जन-गण - मंगल - दायक जय हे
भारत - भाग्य - विधाता ।
जय हे, जय हे, जय हे,
जय जय जय, जय हे ॥

X X X X

'I shall be born in India again and again. With all her
poverty, misery and wretchedness, I love India best.'

Our Gem of many Facets

from Gurudev's Writings

(i) On the Sense of Beauty.

Beauty has brought our instinctive urges under control. We are no longer slaves of dire necessity because the joy of beauty is there to liberate us The mind has many levels, The field of vision which is open to our reasoning and intellectual faculties becomes widened when our emotions are brought into play. With moral discrimination added to them, the field is widened farther. And once our spiritual insight lies open infinitude becomes the limit. That which we see with our mind's eye, gives us more satisfaction. The terms : Good and Beautiful connote two different concepts because their appeal and impact are different. Whenever we see the Good and the True in perfect accord, the Beautiful stands revealed. Beauty is Good in its fulness as fulness of Beauty is Good incarnate Beauty reveals God's majesty in the midst of His creation. Goodness shows beauty not so much as a thing to be perceived or understood. The beauty of goodness is a thing of much wider and deeper significance—it endows man with Godliness, All our literature, all our music and fine arts are tending towards the True, whether consciously or unconsciously. Art and literature bring home to us that what is True is joy, what is True is Eternal. They annotate over and over again the truth propounded by the Upanishads :

He is Truth in all its Beauty and to realize Him is to taste Joy Everlasting.

(From the Sense of Beauty)

(ii) On what is Art ?

Art like life itself, has grown by its own impulse, and man has taken his pleasure in it without definitely knowing what it is. For man, as well as animals, it is necessary to give expression to feelings of pleasure and displeasure, fear, anger, and love. In animals, these emotional expressions have gone little beyond their bounds of usefulness. But in man, though they still have roots in their original purposes, they have spread their branches far and wide in the infinite sky high above their soil. Man has a fund of emotional energy which is not all occupied with his self-preservation. This surplus seeks its outlet in the creation of Art, for man's civilization is built upon his surplus When a feeling is aroused in our hearts which is far in excess of the amount that can be completely absorbed by the object which has aroused it, it comes back to us and makes us conscious of ourselves by its return waves. Only man knows himself, because his impulse of knowledge comes back to him in its excess. The efflux of the consciousness of his personality requires an outlet of expression. Therefore, in Art, man reveals himself and not his



'That I exist is a perpetual surprise which is life.'

'This is my delight, thus to wait and watch at the
wayside where shadow chases light and the rain
comes in the wake of the summer.

Messengers, with tidings from unknown skies, greet
me and speed along the road. My heart is glad
within, and the breath of the passing breeze is
sweet.

From dawn till dusk I sit here before my door, and I
know that of a sudden the happy moment will
arrive when I shall see.

In the meanwhile I smile and I sing all alone. In the
meanwhile the air is filling with the perfume of
promise.'

Gitanjali : XLVI

objects The principal object of art, being the expression of personality, and not of that which is abstract and analytical, it necessarily uses the language of picture and music. This has led to a confusion in our thought that the object of art is the production of beauty; whereas beauty in art has been the mere instrument and not its complete and ultimate significance. ...The artist finds out the unique, the individual, which yet is in the heart of the universal. When he looks on a tree, he looks on that tree as unique, not as the botanist who generalizes and classifies
 ...Where there is an element of the superfluous in our heart's relationship with the world, Art has its birth. In other words, where our personality feels its wealth it breaks out. ... In our life we have one side which is finite, where we exhaust ourselves at every step, and we have another side, where our aspiration, enjoyment and sacrifice are infinite. This infinite side of man must have its revelations in some symbols which have the elements of immortality. There it naturally seeks perfection. ...This world, whose soul seems to be aching for expression is its endless rhythm of lines and colours, music and movements, hints and whispers, and all the suggestion of the inexpressible, finds its harmony in the ceaseless longing of the human heart to make the Person manifest in its own creations.This consciousness of the infinite in the personal man, ever strives to make its expressions immortal and to make the whole world its own. In Art the person in us is sending answers to the Supreme Person, who

reveals Himself to us in a world of endless beauty across the lightless world of facts.

(From What is Art ?)

(iii) On the Artist

It is for the artist to remind the world that with the truth of our expression we grow in truth. When the man-made world is less an expression of man's creative soul than a mechanical device for some purpose of power, then it hardens itself, acquiring proficiency at the cost of the subtle suggestiveness of living growth. In his creative activities man makes Nature instinct with his own life and love. But with his utilitarian energies he fights Nature, banishes her from his world, deforms and defiles her with the ugliness of his ambitions.

This world of man's own manufacture, with its discordant shrieks and swagger, impresses on him the scheme of a universe which has no touch of the person and therefore no ultimate significance. All the great civilizations that have become extinct must have come to their end through such wrong expression of humanity; through parasitism on a gigantic scale bred by wealth, by man's clinging reliance on material resources; through a scoffing spirit of denial, of negation, robbing us of our means of sustenance in the path of truth.

It is for the artist to proclaim his faith in the everlasting Yes———to say: 'I believe that there is an ideal

hovering over and permeating the earth, an ideal of that Paradise which is not the mere outcome of fancy, but the ultimate reality in which all things dwell and move.'

I believe that the vision of Paradise is to be seen in the sunlight and the green of the earth, in the beauty of the human face and the wealth of human life, even in objects that are seemingly insignificant and unprepossessing. Everywhere on this earth the spirit of Paradise is awake and sending forth its voice. It reaches our inner ear without our knowing. It tunes our harp of life which sends our aspiration in music beyond the finite, not only in prayers and hopes, but also in temples which are the flames of fire in stone, in pictures which are dreams made everlasting, in the dance which is ecstatic meditation in the still centre of movement.

(From *The Religion of an Artist.*)

On the Language of the Universe

(a) 'The world of sound is a tiny bubble in the silence of the infinite. The Universe has its only language of gesture, it talks in the voice of pictures and dance. Every object in this world proclaims in the dumb signal of lines and colours the fact that it is not a mere logical abstraction or a mere thing of use but is unique in itself, it carries the miracle of its existence.

(Tagore : *On Art and Aesthetics*
Page 103)

(b) Most people do not or cannot

use their eyes well. They go about their own little business - — unobservant and listless. The artist has a call and must answer the challenge to compel the unperceptive majority to share in his joy of the visible, concrete world — — directly perceived. He sings not nor does he moralize. He lets his work speak for itself and its message is: Look, this is what I am, *Ayam-aham bho i*

(Ibid : Page 109)

On the Role of Forms

"The man who shapes brings the real very close to us, throwing light upon our awareness of the reality within man. The real lies scattered about in many divers objects. I cannot see it in its pure unfragmented state immediately. I can behold its form. Art awakens a sense of the real by establishing an intimate relationship between our inner being and the universe at large, bringing us a consciousness of deep joy."

(*Maker of Forms : Art and Aesthetics*)

On the Divine Maker of Forms

"At the present time (29 November, 1928) I wander about with eyes open in the world of form where lines crowd upon lines. As I watch the trees, I seem to see so much of them. It is borne on me that this visible world is a vast procession of forms— not in any emotional, sentimental or intellectual manner, but purely for the sake of assembling different forms

together. And strangely enough this has become a source of great joy to me. Almost intoxicating. These days the lines have got the better of me. There is no escaping them. Everyday they are revealing themselves anew in ever new shapes and attitudes. There is no end to his mystery. At last I have come to know the mind of the Creator who is himself an artist. Infinite and ineffable himself, he delights in drawing lines upon lines, to set a limit to himself. Limited in space they are unlimited in diversity. Nor should we forget that it is definition which makes for perfection. When the measureless finds its own measure—it realizes itself. The joy in a picture is a joy of a perfect sense of proportion. The restraint of lines makes the picture distinct and definite. To see it is to see the thing itself—what ever it may be, a piece of stone, a donkey, a cactus, an old woman—it does not matter. Whenever and wherever we envision a thing as true we touch the infinite and that is an endless joy.

(From a letter to Rani Mahalanobis)

(iv) On true Spirituality

“There is no spirituality in the cultivation of suffering for some ultimate gain : true spirituality lies in suffering for the sake of love. The agonies of the man always in search of wealth or the penances of the man in search of a secure place in the next world, cannot lead to fulfilment ; they only denote an inner poverty. The sacrifice that stems out of love alone

elevates the spirit to great heights of strength and joy and helps life to triumph over death.

It is the joy in suffering that makes us transcend our own selves, and apprehend the universal. Suffering is the price of truth. It is an enrichment of the spirit, and through it we understand ourselves, and humanity. So it is that the scriptures tell us : ‘The spirit is not attainable by the strengthless.’ In other words, he who does not have the strength to suffer cannot attain self-realization.”

*(From Towards Universal Man
Page, 168-169)*

(v) On the Value of Atmosphere in School Education.

Children have their active sub-conscious mind which, like the tree, has the power to draw food from the surrounding atmosphere. For them the atmosphere is a great deal more important than rules and methods, equipment, text-books and lessons. The earth has her mass of substance in her land and water; but if I may use figurative language, she finds her stimulus in her atmosphere. It evokes from her responses in colour and perfume, music and movement. In his society man has about himself a diffuse atmosphere of culture. It keeps his mind sensitive to his racial inheritance, to the current of influences that come from tradition ; it enables him to imbibe unconsciously the concentrated wisdom of ages. But in our educational ‘organizations we behave

like miners, digging only for things and not like the tillers of the earth whose work is a perfect collaboration with nature In educational institutions our faculties have to be nourished in order to give our mind its freedom, to make our imagination fit for the world which belongs to art, and to stir our sympathy for human relationships. This last is even more important than learning the geography of foreign lands.

(*Ibid* P. 300)

On How to live

Providence expects that we make this world our own, and not live in it as though it were a rented tenement. We can only make it our own through service, and that service is to lend it love and beauty from our soul.

(*From Talks in China : To Students*)

On Having the Child Spirit

I have kept the child spirit, and have found entrance to my mother's chamber ; it was from her that the symphony of awakening light sang to me from the distant horizon, and I sing now in response to it.

(*Ibid*)

Address to Gandhiji at Shantinekatan

".....So disintegrated and demoralized were our people that many wondered if India could ever rise again by the genius of her own people until there came on the scene a truly great soul, a great leader of men, in line with the tradition of the greatest sages of old, whom we are today assembled to honour Mahatma Gandhi.

He who has come to us today is above all distinguished by his freedom from any bias of personal or national selfishness. For the selfishness of the Nation can be a grandly magnified form of that same vice; the viciousness is there all the same Our reverence goes to the Mahatma whose striving has ever been for truth, who to the great good fortune of our country at this stage time of its entry into the new age, has never, for the sake of immediate results, advised or condoned any departure from the standard of universal morality.

.....Now it has been declared that it is for us to yield up life, not to kill, and yet we shall win ! A glorious message, indeed, not a counsel of strategy, not a means to a merely political end. In the course of unrighteous battle death means extinction ; in the non-violent battle of righteousness something remains ; after defeat victory, after death immortality. The Mahatma has realized this in his own life, and compels our belief in this truth."

मरिते चाहि न ग्रामि

(श्री ओम् प्रकाश कोहली, एम०ए०)

एक स्थल पर कबीर ने मृत्यु का अभिनन्दन किया है। मृत्यु इसलिए अभिनन्दनीय है क्योंकि मरने पर 'पूर्ण परमानन्द' की उपलब्धि होती है—
...जीव पूर्ण परमानन्द रूप परब्रह्म ही हो जाता है, अद्वैत स्थिति सिद्ध हो जाती है—

जा मरने तें जग डरै, मेरे मन आनन्द ।
कब मरिहौं कब पाइहौं, पूरन परमानन्द ॥

जीवित रहने से जग का सुख-आनन्द मिलता है किन्तु आध्यात्मिक पूर्णानन्द (महानन्द) की तुलना में वह अकिञ्चन है। अतएव परमानन्द कामी का मृत्यु कामी होना स्वाभाविक ही है। किन्तु रवीन्द्रनाथ की जीवन में गाढ़ आसक्ति थी। वे जीवन के कवि थे, मृत्यु के नहीं। उन्होंने जीने की कामना की थी, मरने की नहीं—

मरिते चाहि ना ग्रामि सुन्दर भुवने,
मानवेर माभे ग्रामि बाँचिबारे चाइ ।

(इस सुन्दर संसार में मैं मरना नहीं चाहता ।
मैं मनुष्यों के बीच में जीना चाहता हूँ ।)

रवीन्द्रनाथ का जीवन में गहरा अनुराग था। मध्ययुग के वैरागी सन्तों को जीवन की प्रतीति मायामय और दुःखमय रूप में हुई थी, रवीन्द्र को जीवन की प्रतीति सुख-सौंदर्य-प्रेम के रूप में हुई। रवीन्द्रनाथ मूलतः कलाकार थे। कलाकार के राग-

रस से उनकी चेतना ओत-प्रोत थी। सम्पूर्ण चराचर उनकी चेतना के राग-रस से मण्डित था। यद्यपि उनकी सरस्वती अनेक बार 'इस पार' का अतिक्रमण कर 'उस पार' के गीत गाने लगती है, पर वे प्रमुख रूप में 'इस पार' के ही कवि हैं।

पृथ्वी में रवीन्द्रनाथ की गहरी आसक्ति थी। व्यापक विश्व अपनी समग्र रमणीयता में उनके समक्ष विवृत हुआ था। उन्होंने विश्व में गतिमती प्रकृति के ललित व्यापारों का अनुभव किया था। 'पृथ्वी की धूलि मधुमय है' इस सत्य को उन्होंने महामन्त्र बनाकर अपने अन्तर में धारण कर रखा था,

ए द्युलोक मधुमय, मधुमय पृथ्वीर पर धूलि—
अंतरे नियेछि ग्रामि तुलि, एइ महामन्त्रखानि
चरितार्थ जीवनेर बाणी ।

(‘यह द्युलोक मधुमय है, इस पृथ्वी की धूलि मधुमय है।’ इस महामन्त्र को, जो सफल जीवन की बाणी है, मैंने अपने अन्तर में धारण कर लिया है।)

पृथ्वी की धूलि के प्रति रवीन्द्रनाथ का मन आदर से नत है। इसकी तुलना में उन्हें स्वर्ग फीका प्रतीत होता है। पृथ्वी की धूलि के प्रति अपनी भक्ति-भावना की व्याख्या उन्होंने स्वयं ही अपनी एक कविता में कर दी है। ‘स्वर्ग हड़ते विदाय’

कविता में उन्होंने स्वर्ग और पृथ्वी की मार्मिक तुलना प्रस्तुत की है। स्वर्ग में सुख-सौन्दर्य और वैभव है किन्तु स्नेह-ममता-करुणा और प्रीति नहीं। पृथ्वी जननी रूपा है। पृथ्वी का सबसे बड़ा आकर्षण उसकी संवेदना है। स्वर्ग की अप्सराओं और देवताओं के पास सब कुछ होते हुए भी 'आँखों में अश्रु जल' नहीं है। स्वर्ग में लक्षशत वर्ष यापन कर चुकने के बाद विदा के समय स्वर्ग वालों का हृदय भर नहीं आता, उनकी आँखें सजल नहीं होतीं, उनका मन वेदना से मथा नहीं जाता। ममता-शून्य स्वर्ग का एक चित्र देखिए—

आजि मोर स्वर्ग हते विदायेर दिन
हे देव, हे देवीगण। वर्ष लक्षशत
यापन करे छि हर्षे देवतार मतो
देवलोके। आजि शेष विच्छेदेर क्षणे
लेशमात्र अश्रुरेखा स्वर्गेर नयने
देखे याव, एइ आशा छिल्ल। शोकहीन
हृदिहीन सुख स्वर्ग भूमि, उदासीन
बेये आछे। लक्ष लक्ष वर्षे तार
चक्षेर पलक नहे। अश्वत्थशाखार
प्रान्त हते खसि गेले जीर्णतम पाता
यतटुकु बाजे तार ततटुकु व्यथा
स्वर्गे नाहि लागे,.....

(हे देव, हे देवीगण ! आज स्वर्ग से मेरी विदाई का दिन है। मैंने देवलोक में देवताओं के समान आनन्द सहित करोड़ वर्ष बिताए हैं। आज अंतिम विद्योग के क्षण में स्वर्ग की आँखों में लेशमात्र अश्रुरेखा देख पाऊंगा, यही आशा थी। किन्तु शोकहीन, हृदयहीन सुख स्वर्ग-भूमि अनासक्त भाव से देख रही है। लाखों वर्ष उसकी आँखों में पलक नहीं गिरते। पीपल की शाखा के किसी स्थान से जीर्णतम पत्ते के टूटकर गिरने से उसे जितनी व्यथा होती है, उतनी भी व्यथा स्वर्ग को नहीं.....)

स्वर्ग की निष्ठुरता की विषमता में पृथ्वी का ममतामय रूप यह है—

मर्तभूमि स्वर्ग नहे,
से ये मातृभूमि—ताइ तार चक्षे बहे
अश्रुजलधारा, यदि दु दिनेर परे
केह तारे छेड़े याय दु दण्डेर तरे।
यत क्षुद्र, यतक्षीण, यत अभाजन,
यत पापी तापी, मेलि व्यग्र आलिंगन
सबारे कोमल वक्षे बाँधिवारे चाय—

(मर्त्यभूमि स्वर्ग नहीं है, वह मातृभूमि है। इसीलिए वहाँ दो दिन भी रहकर यदि कोई उसे दो पल के लिए छोड़ कर चला जाय तो उसकी आँखों से आंसुओं की धारा बहती है। हम चाहे जितने क्षुद्र, दुर्बल, अयोग्य, पापी क्यों न हों, वह व्यग्र आलिंगन में लेकर सबको अपने कोमल वक्ष में बांधना चाहती है।)

रवि बाबू ने धरती को मातृ-रूप में अनुभव कर उससे अमित ममता पाई थी और बदले में अपने अन्तर की ममता धरती के पुत्रों (मनुष्यों) में वितरित कर दी थी। उन्हें मनुष्य में गजब की आस्था थी। वे इस उपलब्धि से आश्चर्य थे कि उन्होंने पृथ्वी और पृथ्वी के पुत्रों को प्यार किया है। उन्हें दृढ़ विश्वास था कि उनका मानव-प्रेम अमर सत्य बनकर मृत्यु का तिरस्कार कर देगा—

आमि जानि, याव यत्रे
संसारेर रंगभूमि छाडि,
साक्ष्य देबे पुष्प बन ऋतुते ऋतुते
ए विश्वेरे भालो वासियाछि।
ए भालो बासाइ मत्य, ए जन्मेर दान।
विदाय नेबार काले
ए मत्य अम्लान हये मृत्युरे करिबे अस्वीकार।

(मैं जानता हूँ, जब मैं संसार की रंगभूमि को

छोड़ कर जाऊंगा, तब हर ऋतु में पुष्पवन साक्षी देगा कि मैंने इस विश्व को प्यार किया है। यह प्रेम ही सत्य है, इस जन्म का दान है। विदा लेने के समय यह सत्य अम्लान रहकर मृत्यु को अस्वीकार करेगा।)

रवीन्द्रनाथ ने जीवन में अक्षय सौन्दर्य का आशीर्वाद पाया था। उनकी आत्मा सौन्दर्य-रस पीकर अपराजित-अशत बन गई थी। 'विश्व की नित्य-सुधा' से अमर प्राणों वाले कवि को मृत्यु का भय नहीं रहता। रवीन्द्रनाथ मरना नहीं चाहते, पर वह मृत्यु से भीत नहीं हैं। उन्होंने इस विश्व को प्यार किया है, फिर मृत्यु की दुश्चिन्ता क्यों? प्यार सत्य है, न कि मृत्यु। 'मरिते चाहि न आमि सुन्दर भुवने' पंक्ति की व्याख्या इस रूप में नहीं की जानी चाहिए कि कवि मृत्यु के भय से कंपित है। कवि इस देह से, इन्द्रियों से, संसार की सौन्दर्य-सुधा का पान कर मृत्यु-जय बन चुका है। वह जीना इसलिए चाहता है कि व्यक्त जगत में व्याप्त विश्वात्मा के सौन्दर्य से और अधिक क्रीड़ा कर सके, जीवन्त हृदय में स्थान पा सके। वह धरती पर प्राणों के चिरतरंगित खेल को देखकर बार-बार विभोर हो उठता है..... चाहता है कि अनन्त काल तक यह खेल देखता रहे, अनवरत, निरन्तर।

धरती और धरती के पुत्रों में हृद आस्था ने कवीन्द्र रवीन्द्र की साधना का स्वरूप निर्धारित किया है। रवीन्द्र की साधना वैराग्यमूलक नहीं, रागमूलक है। वह प्रवृत्ति के कवि हैं, निवृत्ति के नहीं। 'पाथ' कविता में उन्होंने व्यंग्य करते हुए मुक्ति का उपहास किया है और धरती के प्रति अपनी ममता को दोहराया है—

शुधायो ना मोरे तुमि मुक्ति कोथा, मुक्ति कारे कइ
आमि तो साधक नइ, आमि गुरु नइ।

आमि कवि, आछि धरतीर अति काछाकाछि,
ए पारेर खेयार घाटाय।

(मुझसे न पूछना कि मुक्ति कहां है और मुक्ति किसे कहता हूँ। मैं तो साधक नहीं हूँ, मैं गुरु नहीं हूँ। मैं कवि हूँ, धरती के अत्यन्त निकट हूँ, इस पार, नौका के घाट पर।)

एक अन्य कविता (प्रतिज्ञा) में कवि ने अत्यन्त हृद शब्दों में तापस न बनने की प्रतिज्ञा की है। उसने कहा है, "मैं तब तक घर नहीं छोड़ूंगा, उदासीन सन्यासी बनकर बाहर नहीं होऊंगा, यदि घर के बाहर कोई पृथ्वी को लुभाने वाली हूँसी न हूँसे। यदि मधुर विचंचल हवा में नीलांचल न उड़े, कंकण और नूपुर यदि रुनभुन न बजे तो मैं तापस नहीं बनूंगा।"

पृथ्वी के प्रति कवि का मोह इतना गम्भीर है कि वह वैराग्य-साधना से प्राप्त मुक्ति का निषेध कर देता है। रवीन्द्र में वैष्णव भक्तों की रागमूलक आराधना और सौन्दर्यवादी रोमांटिक कवियों की सौन्दर्य-लालसा एकत्रित हो गई थी। अतएव उन्होंने मोह का त्याग नहीं किया अपितु मोह को ही आध्यात्मिक साधना का आधार बनाया है। रवीन्द्र का भाल आध्यात्मिक साधना के उन्नत गगन को स्पर्श करता है तो उनके चरण रागमयी पृथ्वी की धूलि में अवस्थित हैं। धरती और आकाश का, भौतिकता और आध्यात्मिकता का, इहलोक और परलोक का सहचिपूर्ण सामंजस्य उनकी कविताओं में मिलता है। वे मुक्त होना चाहते थे, पर मधुर पार्थिव बंधनों के बीच रहकर ही। बंधनों के बीच में ही मुक्ति का आस्वाद पाने की तीव्र कामना उनके मन में थी। रवीन्द्रनाथ ने 'मृत्ति-का पात्र' का, इस देह का, सम्मान करने का संस्कार पाया था। अपार्थिव अमृत को वे पार्थिव

देह के चषक में भर कर पीना चाहते थे । धरती का तिरस्कार कर उन्होंने स्वर्ग को स्वीकार नहीं किया, बल्कि स्वर्ग के सुख-वैभव और सुपमा का धरती की धूलि में ही साक्षात् किया था । 'मुक्ति' कविता में कवि ने निर्भ्रान्त रूप में अपनी साधना का स्वरूप स्पष्ट कर दिया है—

वैराग्य साधने मुक्ति, से आमार नय ।
असंख्य बंधन-माभे महानन्दमय
लभिव मुक्तिर स्वाद । एइ वसुधार
मृत्तिकार पात्रखानि भरि बारम्बार
तोमार अमृत ढालि दिवे अविरत
नाना बरों गंधमय

(वैराग्य साधना से प्राप्त होने वाली मुक्ति मेरी मुक्ति नहीं है । असंख्य बंधनों में ही मैं महानन्दमय मुक्ति का आस्वाद पाऊंगा । इस वसुधा के मृत्तिका पात्र में भरकर बारम्बार नाना बरों गंधमय तुम्हारा अमृत निरन्तर ढलता रहे ।)

रवीन्द्र ने मोह को मुक्ति रूप में प्रकाशित किया था, प्रेम को भक्ति रूप में ढाला था—

मोह मोर मुक्ति रूप उठिबे ज्वलिया,
प्रेम मोर भक्ति रूपे रहिबे फलिया ।

रवीन्द्रनाथ ने व्यक्त जगत के कण-कण में जीवन का संगीत सुना था । यह भुवन उनके लिए मात्र जड़पिण्ड नहीं था, अपितु भावपूर्ण जीवन नाटक की रंगशाला था । उन्होंने कवि की अन्तर्दृष्टि से भुवन-व्यापी सौंदर्य का साक्षात्कार किया था, अपनी संवेदना से पल्लव-पल्लव में जीवन का स्पन्दन अनुभव किया था । बाह्य जगत के जीवन-सौंदर्य को अपनी चेतना पर फैला लेने की उत्कट लालसा निम्नलिखित पंक्तियों में द्रष्टव्य है—

खोल दो, खोल दो द्वार ;
कर दो अवारित नीलाकाश को

कौतूहली पुष्प गंध को करने दो प्रवेश मेरे कक्षमें
प्रथम आलोक सूर्य-किरणों का
होने दो संचार नस नस में ;
'मैं जीवित हूँ', यह बाणी अभिनन्दन की
मर्मरित हो रही पल्लव पल्लव में—
मुझे सुनने दो ;

रवीन्द्रनाथ इसी मिट्टी में खिले कुसुम थे । अपने विकास के सभी तत्व उन्होंने धूलि से ग्रहण किए थे । पृथ्वी की ममता ने उनके प्राणों को दुलराया था । मिट्टी उनकी जननी थी, वह मिट्टी का तिरस्कार कैसे करते । मिट्टी से उन्होंने जो जीवन पाया, उसका अभिनन्दन किया, उसका शृंगार किया । उन्होंने कभी भी जीवन पर असुन्दर व्यंग्य नहीं किया । जिस मिट्टी के वे ऋणी थे, उसे अपनी धृणा से अपावन कैसे कर सकते थे—

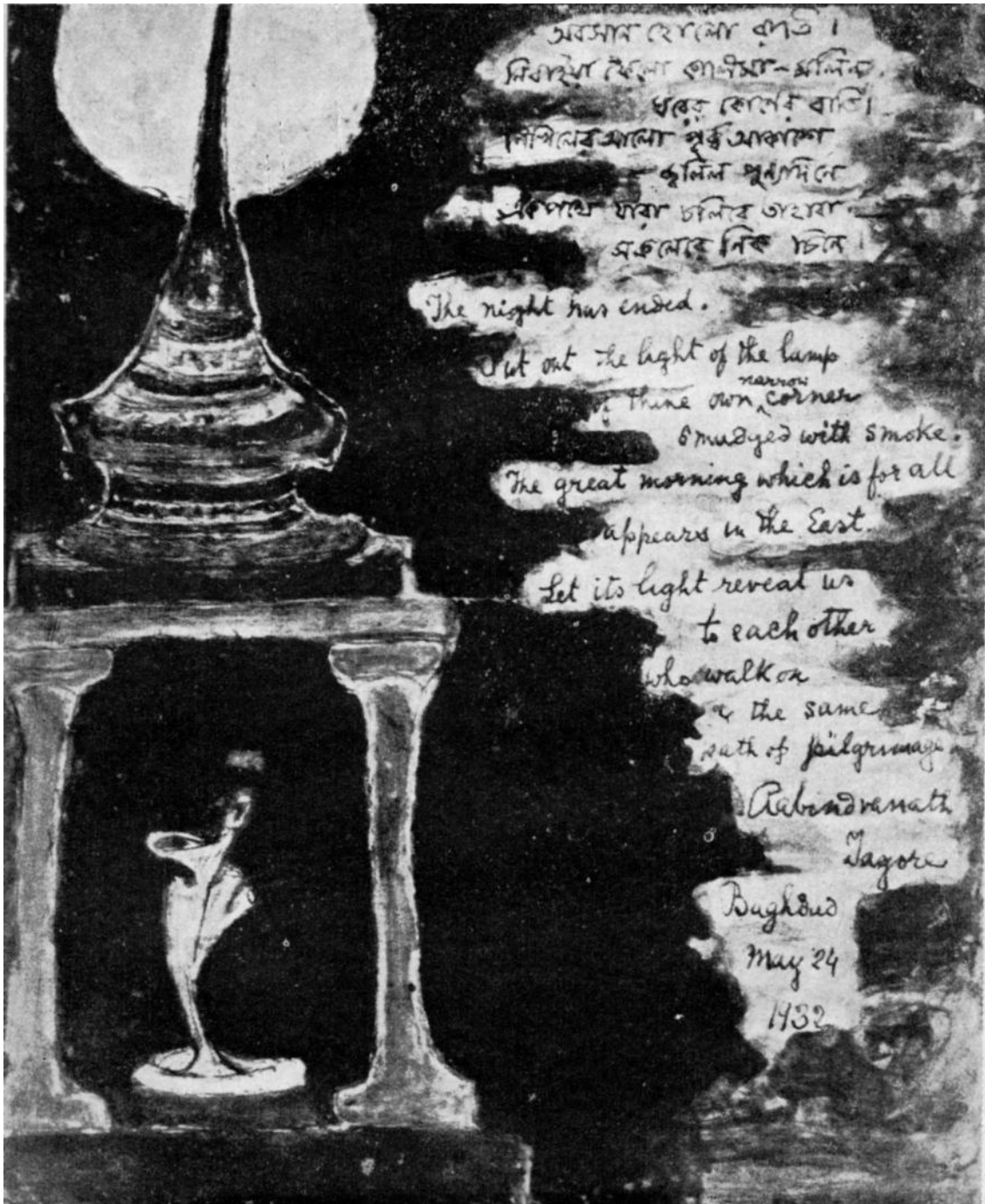
जिस मिट्टी का ऋणी है

अपनी धृणा से फूल करता नहीं अशुचि उसे ।
कवीन्द्र ने मिट्टी की भर्त्सना नहीं की थी, उसका तिलक अपने भाल पर लगाया था । पृथ्वी और पृथ्वी की सन्तानें उनके लिए वन्दनीय थी । विदा की बेला में वे अपने शिर पर पृथ्वी की पावन रज धारण कर अपनी प्रगति इसी धूलि में रख गये थे । जीवित रहते हुए जिस महामानव ने धरती की धूलि से अनुराग किया था, अंतिम विदाई के समय वह 'इसी धूलि, मिट्टी, घास, वनस्पति औषधि आदि के बीच अपना हृदय बिछा गया था'—

सत्येर आनन्द रूप ए धूलि ते नियेछि मुरनि
एइ जेने ए धुलाय राखिनु प्रगति ।

(सत्य का आनन्द रूप इसी धूलि में मूर्ति धारण किए हुए है । यही जानकर इस धूलि में अपनी प्रगति (नमस्कार) रख जाता हूँ ।)

AN ILLUMINATED PAGE BY GURUDEV



“It is the element of unpredictability in art which seems to fascinate me strongly. The subject matter of a poem can be traced back to some dim thought in the mind. Once it leaves the matted crown of Shiva, the stream of poetry flows along its measured course---well-defined by its two banks. While painting, the process adopted by me is quite the reverse. First there is the hint of a line, then the line becomes a form. The more pronounced the form becomes the clear becomes the picture to my conception. This creation of form is a source of endless wonder. If I were a finished artist I would probably have a pre-conceived idea to be made into a picture. This is no doubt a rewarding experience. But it is greater fun when the mind is seized upon by something outside of it, some surprise element which gradually evolves into an understandable shape. I am so taken with new game that all my various responsibilities, extraneous to myself, peep in from outside my door only to withdraw the next moment with much shaking of the head. If I were a free agent as of yore, unburdened by any cares, do you realize what I would have done? I would live by the Padma and gather a harvest of pictures and nothing but pictures to load the Golden Boat of Time with.”

(From a letter to Rani Mahalanovis, dated 7th November, 1928.
Reproduced from *Art and Aesthetics* Pages 89-90)



अनुवादक :—श्री ओम प्रकाश कोहली एम० ए०

प्राण

मरिते चाहि ना आमि सुन्दर भुवने,
मानवेर मांभे आमि बाँचिबारे चाई ।
एइ सूर्यकरे एइ पुष्पित कानने
जीवन्त हृदय मांभे यदि स्थान पाइ !
धराय प्राणेर खेला चिर तरंगित,
विरह मिलन कत हासि-अश्रुमय—
मानवेर सुखे दुःखे गाँथिया संगीत
यदि गो रचिते पारि अमर आलय !
ता यदि ना पारि तबे बाँचि यत काल
तोमादेरि मांभेखाने लभि येन ठाँइ,
तोमरा तुलिबे बले सकाल बिकाल
नव नव संगीतेर कुसुम फुटाइ ।
हासि मुखे नियो फुल, तार परे हाय
फेले दियो फुल, यदि से फुल शुकाय ॥

मैं नहीं चाहता मरना सुन्दर जग में,
मैं जीना चाहता हूँ मानव जग में ।
यदि पा सकूँ स्थान
सूर्य-किरणों से पुष्पित इस कानन में,
जीवन्त हृदय में !
प्राणों का है खेल धरा पर चिर चंचल,
हास-अश्रुमय विरह-मिलन सुख-दुःख मानव का
निज गीतों में गूँथ यदि रच सकूँ अमर धाम ।
कर न सकूँ यदि ऐसा तो जब तक जीऊँ
बीच तुश्कारे पा सकूँ स्थान इस आशा से
विकसित करता हूँ नव-नव गीतों के कुसुम जिन्हें
तुम तोड़ोगे समय-असमय ।
प्रसन्न भाव से उन्हें तोड़ लेना तुभ
और फेंक देना यदि वे सूख जाय ।

इस जीवन में सुन्दर का पाया है मधुर आशीर्वाद

ए जीवने सुन्दरेर पेयेछि मधुर आशीर्वाद,
मानुषेर प्रीति पात्रे पाइ तांरि सुधार आस्वाद ।
दुःसह दुःखेर दिने
अक्षत अपराजित आत्मारे लयेछि आमि चिने ।
आसन्न मृत्युेर छाया ये दिन करेछि अनुभव
सेदिन भयेर हाते ह्य नि दुर्बल पराभव
महत्तम मानुषेर स्पर्श हते हइ नि वंचित,
ताँदेर अमृत वाणी अन्तरेते करेछि संचित ।
जीवनेर विधातार ये दाक्षिण्य पेयेछि जीवने
ताहारि स्मरणलिपि राखिलाम सकृतज्ञ मने ॥

इस जीवन में सुन्दर का पाया है मधुर आशीर्वाद,
मानव के प्रेम पात्र में पाता हूँ उसी की सुधा का स्वाद
दुःख के कठिन दिनों में
पहचाना है मैंने अक्षत अपराजित आत्मा को ।
आसन्न मृत्यु की छाया का किया जिस दिन अनुभव
उस दिन भय के हाथ से नहीं हुआ दुर्बलपराभव।
श्रेष्ठ मानवों के संग से हुआ नहीं वंचित,
उनकी अमृत-वाणी को कर लिया हृदय में संचित ।
जीवन विधाता का दाक्षिण्य पाया जो इस जीवन में
उसे लिख स्मरणलिपि से कृतज्ञ हो रख लिया मन में ।

मुक्ति

वैराग्य साधने मुक्ति, से आमार नय ॥
असंख्य बन्धन माझे महानन्दमय
लभिव मुक्तिर स्वाद । एइ वसुधार
मृत्तिकार पात्रखानि भरि बारम्बार
तोमार अमृत ढालि दिबे अविरत
नानावर्णगंधमय । प्रदीपेर मतो
समस्त संसार मोर लक्ष वर्तिकाय
ज्वालाये तुलिबे आलो तोमारि शिखाय
तोमार मन्दिर-माझे ॥
इन्द्रियेर द्वार
रुद्ध करि योगासन, से नहे आमार ।
ये-किछु आनन्द आछे दृश्ये गन्धे गाने
तोमार आनन्द रबे तार माझ खाने ॥
मोह मोर मुक्ति रूपे उठिबे ज्वलिया,
प्रेम मोर भक्ति रूपे रहिबे फलिया ॥

वैराग्य साधना से प्राप्त मुक्ति, ऐसी मुक्ति नहीं है मेरी।
असंख्य बन्धनों में पाऊंगा मैं
महानन्दमय मुक्ति का आस्वाद ।
इस वसुधा के मृत्तिका पात्र में भरकर बारम्बार
ढलता रहे तुम्हारा अमृत अविरत
नानावर्णगंधमय ।
दीप के समान यह समस्त संसार
तुम्हारी ही शिखा में प्रज्वलित कर लक्ष वर्तिकाएं
प्रकाश करेगा तुम्हारे मन्दिर में ।
इन्द्रियों के द्वार को योगासन से रूंधना,
वह मेरा मार्ग नहीं है ।
दृश्य गंध गान में जो कुछ भी आनन्द है
वह तुम्हारा ही है ।
मोह, मेरी मुक्ति के रूप में जलेगा ।
प्रेम, मेरी भक्ति के रूप में फलेगा ॥

मधुमय पृथ्वी की धूलि

ए ब्रूलोक मधुमय, मधुमय पृथ्वीर धूलि—
अन्तरे नियेछि आमि तुलि,
एइ महामन्त्रखानि
चरितार्थ जीवनेर वाणी ।
दिने दिने पेयेछिनु सत्येर या-किछु उपहार
मधु रसे क्षय नाइ तार ।
ताइ एइ मन्त्रवाणी मृत्युर शेषेर प्रान्ते बाजे—
सब क्षति मिथ्या करि अनन्तेर आनन्द विराजे ।
शेषस्पर्श निये याब यबे धरणीर
वले याब, 'तोमार धूलिर
तिलक परेछि भाले ;
देखेछि नित्येर ज्योति दुर्योगेर मायार आडाले ।
सत्येर आनन्दरूप ए धूलिते नियेछि मुरति,
एइ जेने ए धुलाय राखिनु प्रगति ।'

यह ब्रूलोक मधुमय है, पृथ्वी की धूलि मधुमय है —
धारण किया है मैंने निज अन्तर में,
यह महामन्त्र
चरितार्थ जीवन की वाणी है यह ।
प्रतिदिन प्राप्त किया था जो कुछ उपहार सत्य का
मधुरस में क्षय नहीं उसका ।
तभी तो यह मन्त्र-वाणी गूँजती है मृत्यु के शेष प्रान्त में
मिथ्या कर सब क्षतियाँ अनन्त का आनन्द विराजता ।
शेष स्पर्श ले जाऊंगा जब इस धरती का,
कह जाऊंगा—'तुम्हारी धूलि का,
तिलक दिया है ललाट पर ;
दुदिन की माया की ओट में देखी है ज्योति नित्य की ।
सत्य का आनन्द रूप मूर्तित हुआ है इस धूलि में,
यही जानकर
करता हूँ प्रणाम इस धूलि को ।'

अपनी कीर्ति का मैं विश्वास नहीं करता

आमार कीर्तिरे आमि करि ना विश्वास ।
जानि, कालसिन्धु तारे
नियत तरंग घाते
दिने दिने दिवे लुप्त करि ।
आमार विश्वास आपनारे ।
दुइ बेला सेइ पात्र भरि
ए विश्वेरे नित्यसुधा
करियाछि पान ।
प्रति मुहूर्तेर भालो बासा
तार माभे ह्येछे संचित ।
दुःख भारे दीर्ण करे नाइ,
कालो करे नाइ धूलि
शिल्पेरे ताहार ।
आमि जानि, याब यबे
संसारेर रंगभूमि छाडि,
साक्ष्य देबे पुष्पवन ऋतुते ऋतुते
ए विश्वेरे भालो बासियाछि ।
ए भालोबासाइ सत्य, ए जन्मेर दान ।
बिदाय नेबार काले
ए सत्य अम्लान ह्ये मृत्युरे करिबे अस्वीकार ।

अपनी कीर्ति का मैं विश्वास नहीं करता ।
जानता हूँ,
कालसिंधु उसे
नियत तरंगाघात से
दिन प्रतिदिन करेगा लुप्त ।
मेरा विश्वास अपने आप में है ।
दोनों बेला उसी पात्र में भर कर
इस विश्व की नित्य सुधा का
किया है पान ।
प्रति मुहूर्त का प्यार
उसमें हुआ है संचित ।
दुःख के भार ने किया नहीं विदीर्ण उसे,
मलिन नहीं हुआ शिल्प उसका धूलि से ।
मैं जानता हूँ, छोड़ जाऊंगा जब
संसार की रंगभूमि,
साक्ष्य दूँगे पुष्पवन प्रतिऋतु में
इस विश्व को मैंने प्यार किया है ।
यह प्यार ही सत्य है, इस जन्म का दान है ।
विदा बेला में
यह सत्य अम्लान रहकर करेगा उपेक्षित
मृत्यु को ।‡

‡ 'मंजरी' शीर्षक के अन्तर्गत रवीन्द्रनाथ ठाकुर की पांच मूल बंगला कविताओं का देवनागरी लिप्यन्तर और हिन्दी अनुवाद दिया गया है। इन सभी कविताओं का मूल स्वर एक ही है। जीवन में गहरी आस्था। आज जब कि घोर वैज्ञानिक युग में युद्ध-त्रस्त मानव का जीवन में से विश्वास उठता जा रहा है, ये कविताएं डिगती हुई आस्था को स्थिर करने की प्रेरणा देती हैं। कवि का दृष्टिकोण स्वस्थ और रचनात्मक है। भ्रमित मानव के लिए इन कविताओं में स्पष्ट संदेश है, अंधकार से आलोक में ले जाने की शक्ति है।

Trends In Tagore

Dr. R. Bharadwaj

I propose to discuss briefly the main currents of thought in Rabindranath Tagore, the greatest mystic poet, painter and philosopher of his age in India. In doing so, it will be my endeavour to keep close to his own words, as far as possible.

The Boundless

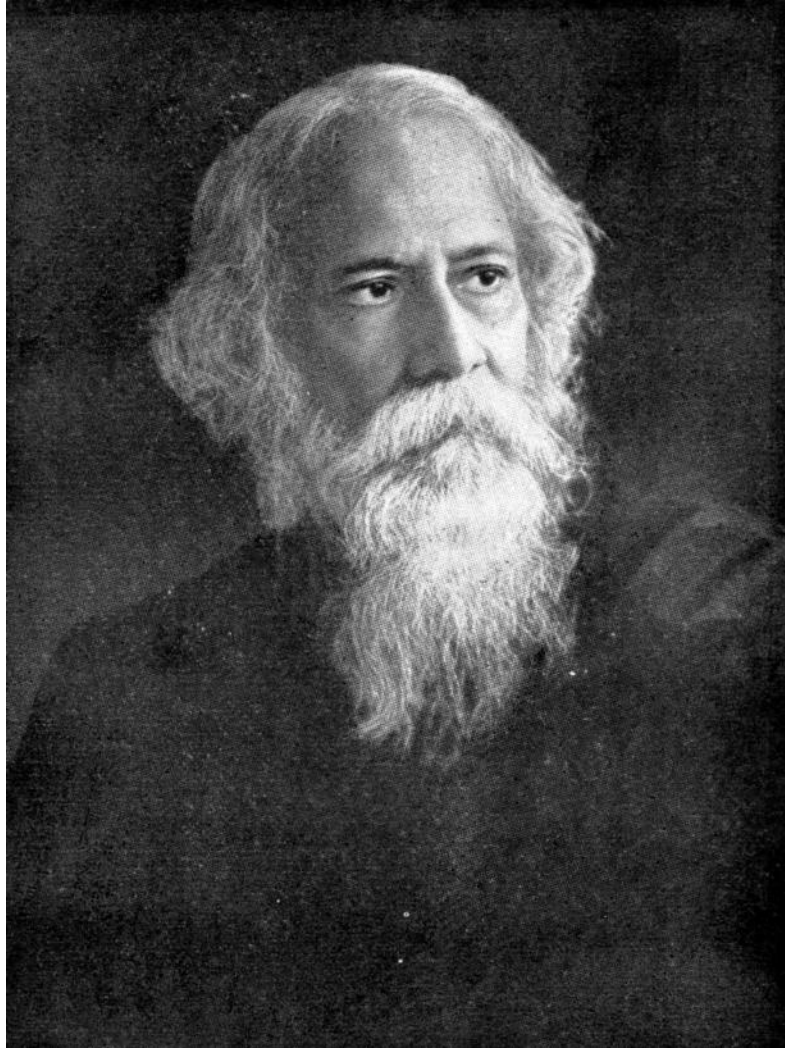
'Brahma is boundless in his superfluity.' That is to say there is profusion and superfluity, not scarcity or want, in the Lord or his creation. Trees, for example, bear more seeds, and birds and reptiles lay more eggs, than necessary. So man, too, has 'his vital and mental energy vastly in excess of his need. He can go beyond his needs to step out from utility to beauty, or from satisfaction to delight,

'The west seems to take a pride in thinking that it is subduing nature, as if we are living in a hostile world where we have to wrest everything we want from an unwilling and alien arrangement of things.' But India put all her emphasis on the harmony that exists between the individual and the universal. By the help of 'the Gayatri,† a verse which is considered to be the epitome of all the Vedas', we try to realize the essential unity

of the world with the conscious soul of man. It is not in the power of possession but in the power of this union that India recognizes differences of value in different things. 'India chose her places of pilgrimage where there was in nature some special grandeur or beauty so that her mind could come out of its world of narrow necessities and realize its place in the infinite. This was the reason why in India a whole people, who once were meat-eaters, gave up taking animal food to cultivate the sentiment of universal sympathy for life—an event unique in the history of mankind.'

We should be not merely men, but men-in-the universe, 'The rishis were they who having reached the supreme God from all sides had found abiding peace, had become united with all, had entered into the life of the Universe.' Tagore refutes some modern European philosophers who are directly or indirectly indebted to the Upanishads, far from realizing their debt, maintain that the Brahma of India is a mere abstraction, a negation of all that is in the world.' The fact is that the infinite is present in all things, and this presence is a source of constant inspiration. The ancient sage chanted: I bow to God over and over again who is in fire and in water, who permeates the whole world, who is in the annual crops as well as in the perennial trees.

† ओ३म् भूर्भुवः स्वः । तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य । धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् । यजु० ३६,३



GURUDEV

“Rabindranath Tagore, the eternal pride
And garland of thoughts and feelings allied
Of Bharat, the tallest glorious guide,
Shows light to the world and a norm to 'bide.”

(By Dr. R. D. Bharadwaj)

My heart sings at the wonder of my place
In this world of light and life ;
At the feel in my pulse of the rhythm of creation
Cadenced by the swing of the endless time.

I feel the tenderness of the grass in my forest walk,
The wayside flowers startle me :
That the gifts of the infinite are strewn in the dust
Wakens my song in wonder.

I have seen, have heard, have lived ;
In the depth of the known have felt
The truth that exceeds all knowledge
Which fills my heart with wonder and I sing.

(Poems : No 67)

'His reflection is death as well as immortality : यस्य छायामृतं यो मृत्युमृत्युः नृ० पू० २,१२ 'Everything has sprung from immortal life† and is vibrating with life, for life is immense.'‡ The supreme being is all-pervading, therefore he is the innate good in all : सर्वव्यापी स भगवाँ स्तस्मात् सर्वगतः शिवः, श्वेताश्व ३,११

In the Image of God

God creates the world; so does man, who 'was made in the image of God'.* Man secures to himself the necessities of life and even reproduces himself physically. But from self-preservation he rises to self-expression also. In other words, he *creates* and *recreates* himself through fine arts such as painting, music and poetry.

The Useful Man

It is the limitation and a thousand and one preoccupations which prevent man from going beyond the field of utility to beauty. The merely useful man's lower than 'the complete man'. The one, guided by self-interest and considerations of the 'market price', has little inspiration of reality; the other enjoys the exuberant reality in and around him.

The Complete Man

'The Complete man' comes freely

† यदिदं किंच जगत्सर्वं प्राण एजति निःसृतम्, कठः ६,२

‡ प्राणो विराट्

* Cf. The Holy Bible, Gen. 1, 26-27

in contact with whatever *appears* to him in nature—personal, animate or inanimate—whether outside him or within himself. He does not care much for the final character of a thing. For abstract truth belongs to science and metaphysics, but the world of reality belongs to art. He grabs inspiration and delight from what *appears* to him. Such delight or inspiration is not calculated, it is *immediate*. Man is finite when he is over-conscious of himself and of his self-interest; but he becomes infinite by coming into contact with the Infinite that lies in and around him.

The Way of Contact

This contact with the Infinite is attainable by 'self-forgetting' and 'self-sacrifice'. The personality in man becomes one with the One when he loses himself.* 'In your effort to capture life as expressed in a living tissue, you will find carbon, nitrogen and many other things utterly unlike life, but never life itself.' In other words, one might say, when the 'I am' in man realizes itself in the 'That' he becomes 'Soham ;सोऽहम्: That I am, or 'Sohansah: सोऽहंस: I am That I AM'.** This is the formula which an individual repeats actually but unknowingly while breathing—ajapa-japa, as mentioned in the *Shatapatha Brahmana*. The 'Complete man' realizes the Reality by intuition and divides it by intellect. Here one is reminded, I might say, of Henri Bergson who held that 'the intellect delimits reality'

* Cf. The Holy Bible, St Matthew, 10, 39

** Cf. Ibid, Exodus : 2, 14

where as 'intuition is a sympathetic attitude to the reality without us which makes us seem to enter into it, to be one with it, to live it'. So 'limitation of the unlimited', says Tagore, is personality, and God is also personal where He creates.

The Nature of Art

'Art is maya', it is appearance, 'it is and is not': Science reveals that 'the ultimate difference between one element and another is only that of rhythm', through which it shows itself. Gold and mercury, for example differ in the rhythm of their respective atomic manifestation just as a king and his subject in situation and circumstance. Rhythm is the movement generated and regulated by harmonious restriction; and it is 'the creative force in the hand of the artist'. For a 'great picture is always speaking.' There is cadence and harmony in the so-called ordinary things. An in, tellectual might fail to find beauty in a donkey, whereas childish innocence would find it. If we should look at a fine piece of linen through a magnifying glass, big holes would appear and mar the fineness. If you X-ray a beautiful woman, what will you get—an ugly skeleton? Test a poem and lose its charm. So enjoyment inheres in appearance; that is, not in intellectual but in aesthetic judgement. Again we are reminded, I should suppose, of Bergson who thought that the 'clearest evidence of intuition is in the works of great artists'.

Poetry

'Poems are not like market commodities transferable. Gustave Flaubert, Walter Pater, Guyde Maupassant, A. C. Bradley and some others laid more emphasis on the form of poetry, which in their opinion, 'is so subtle a spirit that, in pouring out of one language into another, it will all evaporate'.¹ This is 'the reason why if we insist on asking for the meaning of such a poem; we can only be answered it means itself.'² So there 'exists but one way of expressing one feeling, one word to call it by, adjective to qualify, one verb to animate it.'³ Surely, as Tagore says, we cannot receive the smiles and glances of our sweetheart through an attorney, however diligent and truthful he may be.' For each 'poet has his own distinct medium of language.' No doubt he inherits a hypnotizing one, but it has to be modulated according to the urge which he as an individual has. It is because social life changes and with it all great languages undergo changes, It is also because a poet's individual use of it, having life's magic touch, transforms it into a special vehicle of his own creation.' A political, commercial, educational or religious force obstructs the free flow of inner life of the people. 'Unmeaning obsessions have therefore to go.

In this connection a word of caution seems to be necessary against 'fashions in literature', which arise out of attraction for 'the extravagant and the unusual', Who would, for example,

1. *Aenid* Preface. 2. Bradley. 3. Pater.

appreciate a modern writer who has described 'the coming out of the stars in the evening' as 'sudden eruption of disease in the bloated body of darkness'? Laborious pursuit of a spurious novelty in manner and matter is 'the symptom of old age' in literature. For a 'reaction against a particular mannerism is liable to produce its own mannerism in a militant fashion.' 'The same herd instinct is followed in a cult of rebellion as it was in the cult of conformity.'

The modern mind, in its rush over the miscellaneous, ransack cheap markets of curios which mostly are delusions. Lacking leisure and labouring under the delusions of sex-psychology and drug-stores of moral virulence, some modern writers fail to see luxuriant nature and express their 'feelings that are usual in a form that is unique, and yet not abnormal.' Tagore believes that 'the vision of Paradise is to be seen in the sunlight and the green of the earth, in the beauty of the human face and the wealth of human life, even in objects that are seemingly insignificant and unprepossessing.'

Good And Evil

'Pain is the feeling of our finiteness; it is not a fixture in our life.' Nor is it an end in itself, as joy is. 'As in intellectual error, so in evil of any other form, its essence is impermanence, for it cannot accord with the whole.'†

† नाल्पे सुखमस्ति, भूमावेव सुखम्, छांदो०
७,२३,६

'When we are conscious of our soul, we perceive the inner being that transcends our ego and has its deeper affinity with the All.' Letters 'become a source of joy to us only when they combine into words and sentences and convey an idea.' 'Therefore love is the highest bliss that man can attain to, for through it alone he truly knows that he is more than himself and that he is at one with the All.' Such persons are called Mahatmas, who have already expiated their sins by such prayers as this :

O God. O Father. completely sweep away all our sins. Give unto us that which is good.‡

Purified they realize the All and offer their unreserved bows :

"We bow to Thee from whom come the enjoyments of our life ; we bow also to Thee from whom comes the good of our soul ; we bow to Thee who art good, the highest good'.*

Education

The highest education, according to Tagore, is that which not only gives us information but also makes our life in harmony with all existence. 'When there came the separation of the intellect from the spiritual and the physical, the school education

‡ विश्वानि देव सवितर्दुरितानि परासुव, यद्भद्रं
तन्न आसुव । ऋक्र, ४,४,२५

* नमः शम्यवायच मयोभवायच नमः शङ्करायच
मयस्करायच नमः शिवाय च शिवतराय च,
यजु० १६ ४१

put entire emphasis on intellect and the physical side of man.' Rabindranath trusts the instinct of the pupil and the atmosphere of the *asram*, for the kindling of the spiritual aspiration and the development of the spiritual life.

It is desirable that regional languages should be the medium of education. 'It cannot seriously be contended that English should become the common language of the whole of India. Even if it is possible, it may not be desirable. We cannot hope to develop any great literature in the English tongue.'

The educated class of the present day is characterized by superficiality, lack of originality and drawback of bilingual thinking. To insist on learning English in the early years is to cut at the root of sound education. Such insistence generates a tedium and weariness instead of cheerfulness into the daily routine. Dr. Radhakrishnan further tells us that Tagore wrote all his works in Bengali and later translated some of them into English. The educated men of today feel as if they were a class apart. Their traditional ideas are not settled. Their religious belief is weakened. It is because they have acquired a Eurasian mentality.

To revive the harmony of art and industry, beauty and use, the recovery of the religious spirit is necessary. Machinery is now displacing Indian industries. 'While Tagore believes that industrialization must come to India and should come, he considers

that India need not pass through the evils of industrialization,' such as slum-life, unemployment, liquor-traffic, prolonged labour, gross vulgarity, bad manners, bestiality of art, embittered life, stunted faculty. Beauty, life and soul-power have given place to cheapness, utility and trade-instinct. Modern India is, therefore, forgetting the function of art in life.*

Men's Religion

Tagore had the religion of an artist. He says, 'Our religion is the inner principle that comprehends these endeavours and expressions and dreams through which we approach Him in whose image we are made.' Civilization is 'the product of the art of religion'. 'We stop its course of conquest when we accept the cult of realism and forget that realism is the worst form of untruth, because it contains a minimum of truth.' 'The realism in man is the animal in him, whose life is a mere duration of time; the human in him is his reality which has life everlasting for its background'.

Union with the Reality 'has its significance not in the realm of *to have* but in that of *to be*. *To gain* truth is to admit its separateness, but *to be* true is to become one with truth.' 'The Infinite is love itself: रसो वै सः' So 'enjoy Him through sacrifice', "covet not,"* for greed diverts your mind to that illusion in

*(ओ३म्) ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥

you which is your separate self and diverts it from truth in which you represent the *parama purushah*, the 'Supreme Person'.

Message to the world

'The western civilization is more mechanical than spiritual, more political than religious, more mindful of power than of peace. This political tendency is expressing itself in many ways. The problem of the woman is one symptom of it as the European War is another'.¹ The woman of today 'does not feel that her vocation lies at home. She is restless. She fears marriage and maternity' and struggles against man's monopoly of business. She unsexes herself by working in shops and stations, factories and offices, and tries to imitate man and make life artificial and unnatural. She now 'craves to acquire

man's character and position in public life'. But 'true woman will have neither the desire nor the capacity for it.'²

'The war is a sign that modern civilization is not alive'.³ Yet Rabindranath Tagore, an optimist as he is, hopes that there will be a change of heart, which will effect 'the reconstruction of the world on a spiritual basis'.⁴ It will happen when all are disgusted with the cruelties of war. Tagore condemns, in strong terms, the selfish nationalist spirit of the West.⁵

Tagore, therefore, holds to the world the two torches of sympathy and love, for the East and the West to unite.

* The whole section on Education and the Message to the World are based on Dr. Radhakrishnan's exposition of Tagore's thoughts.

At midnight the would-be ascetic announced :

"This is the time to give up my home and seek for God. Ah, who has held me so long in delusion here ?"

God whispered, "I", but the ears of the man were stopped.

With a baby asleep at her breast lay his wife, peacefully sleeping on one side of the bed.

The man said, "Who are ye that have fooled me so long ?"

The voice said again, "They are God," but he heard it not.

The baby cried out in its dream, nestling close to its mother.

God commanded, "Stop, fool, leave not thy home," but still he heard no

God sighed and complained, "Why does my servant wander to seek me, forsaking me ?"

The Gardener : LXXV

THE AUGUST ASSEMBLY

'There be of them that have left a name behind them.'

(Ecclesiastes. VII-1)

**'They shine along with the Pole-Star—
A delight to the heavens.'**

Gandhiji to Gurudev

(a) In common with the thousands of his countrymen I owe much to one who by his poetic genius and singular purity of life has raised India in the estimation of the world.

(b) Gurudev's soul is immortal and he lives though dead. Gurudev longed to serve the world through India and breathed his last while doing so. His experiment is unfinished. His mortal remains are no more but his soul is immortal like ours. Taken in this sense none perishes or dies. None is born. Gurudev lives significantly. His tendencies were universal, mostly heavenly through which he will be immortal. Shantineketan, Srineketan and Visvabharti—all these are manifestations of his action. They were for his soul for which Deenabandhu Andrews left his world, followed by Gurudev. Our true homage would be to maintain these institutions which he is watching from wherever he may be.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu to Gurudev

.....He always had a universal quality. And India, always universal

in her appreciation of all knowledge, the reception of all science, her reaction to all beauty, no matter from where the gift of beauty comes, found her last, her latest, her most lovely interpreter, her most lovely embodiment, her most lovely prophet, her most lovely affirmation in Rabindranath Tagore, who before he died, with the knowledge of his coming death said, "I have tasted the hidden honey of a lotus." The hidden honey of the lotus was ultimate vision of this seer and out of the lotus of his own lyric genius, as was that, he drew the hidden honey with which he went, sweet upon his tongue, to greet the immortal in the world of poets, his fellow poets belonging to the world of song.

Albert Einstein to Gurudev

You saw the fierce strife of creatures, a strife that wells forth from need and dark desire. You saw the withdrawal in calm meditation and in creation of beauty. Cherishing these, you serve mankind all through a long and fruitful life, spreading every where a gentle and free thought in a manner such as the seers of your people have proclaimed as the ideal."

My Mistress of the Line

GURUDEV

The tree pursues a purpose
In its flowers and fruits,
But never at all in the hieroglyph
Limned on its chequered shade
Where butterflies imitate
The flitting of the yellow leaves
And a swarm of lines and curves quiver on the grass.

My Mistress of Speech in the pride of her rich inheritance
Rules with a rod.
She rarely allows wild vagaries of the wayward ;
But the Line smiles at my extravagance
And never raises her warning finger at the foolish.
Thus I fear not to widen gaps between my tasks
Through which to run out to the boundless realm of the
 Inconsequential,
And to litter all my time with an irrelevant caprice of forms.

Fondly indulgent is My Mistress of the Line to the errant
 in the poet
Whose truancy is not to be checked
By the curbing rein of reputation,
For his proud name, acclaimed by the market
Ignores the painter's brush
Leaving it free to follow its path
Free as is the Spring with his paint-box."

(Reproduced from *Art and Aesthetics*,
Pages 87-88)

The Drawings and Paintings of Tagore

By Shri Adarsh Deepak M. Sc.

Very few people in our country, till recently, were aware of the fact that the poet and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore was a great painter as well. It is only this year, on his centenary, when all his works came into spotlight, that his significance as a painter came into prominence. But it is doubtful, whether the importance of his work has been fully understood even a quarter of a century after his death.

Tagore took to painting in the evening of his life. He was 67. And thereafter, painting became his grand obsession. He proclaims: "My morning was full of song. Let my sunset days be full of colour." He continued to paint vigorously till his death. In 1941, at 80, he died leaving a legacy of over 2000 drawings and paintings which revealed a new facet of his genius.

Many questions arise in our minds such as : what was Tagore's contribution to painting ? What prompted him to take to painting at that late age ? Where from did he learn his painting technique ? What was it that he tried to express through his drawings ? And many more academic questions, such as : what is the significance of his art ? or, to what 'ism' does his art belong ? or, what do his paintings convey to us ? Many writers in Europe and in India have

written critical studies of his artistic works and tried to answer these questions. In this dissertation, which is divided into sections, I shall attempt to give a coherent picture of Tagore, the painter, and of his art.

Section I deals with Tagore as a painter, while section II deals with the discussion of his paintings.

(I) Tagore as a Painter,

(A) Tagore and the background of art in India*

When Tagore suddenly took to painting in 1928, at 67, it came as a surprise to many people. It was confusing for them to see their national hero, a writer and poet of international acclaim, producing some seemingly "meaningless drawings and paintings". They failed to see anything great in them; in fact, they looked upon them as 'childish pranks.' But when these very same pictures were praised and pronounced as highly significant by discerning critics in Europe, when Tagore held his art exhibition at Paris and Berlin in 1930, the whole situation seemed bewildering.

The unfavourable reaction of his own countrymen to his paintings was

* Mulk Raj Anand (see reference at the end)

primarily due to "the trend in painting" that prevailed in the country at that time. For one whole generation the poet's nephew, Abanindranath Tagore and his pupils, had been producing "works of art" which were recognised in respectable circles as the very acme of Indian national splendour and the beginning of a renaissance of the arts. The authority of this new movement, known as the "Bengal School of Painting", had rapidly spread in the art schools all over India.

It was against such a background that Tagore started painting. And no wonder, the local critics, seeped in this newly emerged movement, earnestly frowned upon Tagore's paintings, which were highly imaginative and original in line, form and colour, and were in strong contrast with the wishywashy colours of the new school.

But it soon became clear that this neo-Indian school was essentially revivalist, with its imitation of the Mughal and the Rajput schools and the Ajanta style of painting. People began to talk openly of the feebleness of traditionalist art, with its anemic line, elongated eyes and long finger nails. It merely served old wine in new bottles.

Tagore had been a sympathetic witness of this movement. But he wished strongly that some new blood be infused in Indian painting to give vigour and vitality to it. He seemed frustrated at helplessly watching Indian painting heavily grooved in

traditional styles, for he wrote to his daughter from America : ".....I had hoped that from our Vichitra Society* would flow a great stream of art fertilizing the whole country; but there was nobody capable of dedicating himself to the cause. I was prepared to do all that was in my limited power, but I found no response. I am no painter myself or I might have shown what was to be done. However, someday someone will arise and hew the pathway for the swift progress of the artistic talent that lies scattered all over the country."

When he wrote these lines, little did he know that he was to, consciously or unconsciously, "hew the pathway" himself, and that the new revolution in Indian painting would flow from his brush.

Setting all tradition aside he gave art a new birth. With the boldness of a creative genius he painted in his own original style, and thereby blazed a new trail of his own. His art is something new, something conceived in his own unique vision expressible only through colour. His art has a language of its own, whose mystery we have yet to master completely.

(B) Tagore, the Painter

Tagore's early attempts at painting seem to have been frustrating. It was easier for him to create poetry. His earliest paintings occur in one of the

* Vichitra Society was started at his Jarosanko House in Calcutta in 1916.

family books. In 1909, he secretly showed some head and figure studies to the painter, Mukul Dey. In 1920, he contributed some of his pictures, done in his firm and fine strokes, to an art exhibition held at Shantiniketan. Though it was not till 1928 that he actually started his brush work, there was a constant urge in him to paint. He wrote: "...I watched his (Abnindranath's) with an envious mood of self-diffidence, being thoroughly convinced that my fate had refused me passport across the boundaries of letters." This urge, however, remained latent in him. When he finally started painting in 1928, this latent talent blossomed forth into a splendour of colour. Lines and forms seemed to flow from his brush like a spring.

A latent genius was asleep; that is made plain by the sureness of the design, the beauty of tone, the sense of ornament. For almost a life time this genius had been kept in the shadow. One fine day it revealed itself in painting and the poet felt another person was being manifested in him.

This new form of creation wholly occupied him hereafter. He developed an intense love for painting. He wrote in 1930 (Paris): "As a matter of fact, my flow of writing has already stopped altogether. Whenever I find time I paint," "Painting is the love of my old age", he used to say, "she possesses me like an addiction." This object of his love he wanted to keep protectively away from the critics,

(C) Tagore's preliminary Training

Tagore had no early training in painting technique, as such, but he writes: "The only training I had in my young days was the training in rhythm, rhythm in thought, the rhythm in sound." For rhythm gives reality to that which is insignificant in itself, he would say.

His poetry and art were both marked by rhythm. The inner technique of both poetry and painting is the same. He had no need to learn any technique of painting, for he had already mastered the art of conveying fundamental rhythms. Hence Tagore could easily mature into a painter. For after all "art is not truth; it is not nature; it is pattern or rhythm of design that we impose on nature," says P. Theore.*

With his innate originality, he evolved his own peculiar technique of painting.

(D) Tagore's manner of Painting

His manner of painting was peculiarly his own, he never followed any particular method. Devoid of an earlier training, he fell upon his own originality and genius and devised his own style of painting,

* "My pictures are versification in lines. If by chance they are entitled to claim recognition, it must be primarily for some rhythmic significance of form which is ultimate and not for any interpretation of an idea or representation of a fact."

When inspiration came, he would paint with whatever came handy, a broken piece of pencil, using old scraps of paper and different oils. His niece writes: "The drawings take possession of him and once begun, leave him no peace, until they are finished. They are done at a sitting and in a short time without a single mistake of the pen."

He never conceived a plan as to how and what he would paint. He writes: "When I take my pen there is no previous plan present in my mind—as the pen starts moving the picture emerges at the tip."*

He used all kind of paints and pigments. He would paint with ease on all sorts of paper, even a newspaper sheet, when ordinary sources failed him. Some subtle effects in his masterpieces, depend on his use of peculiar media, such as juices of flowers, different oils—coconut, mustard etc.

(E) Tagore's rise as a Painter:

From his writings it is evident that Tagore made an acutely self-conscious entrance into the world of art. That was chiefly because of his lack of training in painting. He once wrote; "I know I can write, there I am quite sure about my own powers; but as regards painting I have never been able to shake off my diffidence."

* Read : *My Mistress of the Line* on Page 67

You see I never learned to paint, like Nand Lal and Aben."

Despite his hesitant debut, he quickly gained confidence in his painting. He held his first painting exhibition in Paris in 1930. His works were highly praised by Andre Gide and others. He wrote from Paris. "Connoisseurs assure me that these pictures are of first rank."

His next exhibition was held at Berlin, where again the critics acclaimed his works,

His modesty prevented him from admitting to himself his greatness as a painter. Says Comtesse de Noailles : "Tagore is timid before his own creation. We praise him quite naturally, as for him, he doubts, questions, hesitates and smiles."

(F) Tagore, the Experimentalist

In his poems Tagore was a lyricist, in his pictures he was a fearless scientist. Nature's primitive forms he saw with the eyes and mind of a scientist. In an effort to "hew the pathway" for the Indian painting, he experimented with lines, forms and colours. And from the experience gained thereof "he discovered one fact that in the universe of forms there is a perpetual activity of natural selection in lines, and only the fittest survives which has in itself the fitness of cadence."

(II) The Pictures of Tagore

In 1941, when Tagore died he left behind over 2000 pictures of which only about a hundred or so remain in India, the rest being distributed all over the world. The pictures include his paintings (fig. 2) and his famous pen-drawings (drawn mostly with pelican ink). And then there are also his well-known "doodlings" (see fig. 1).

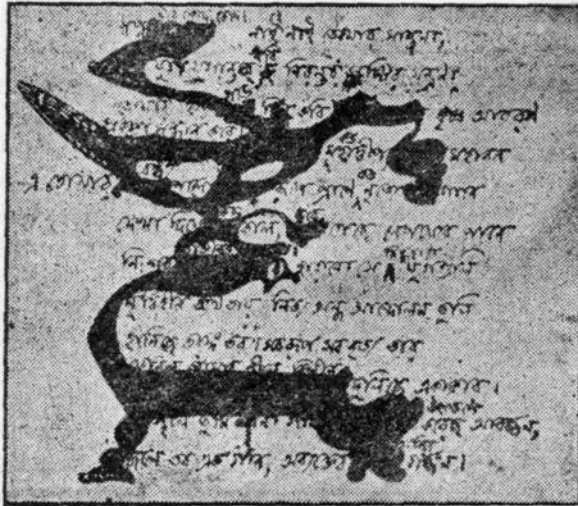


Fig. 1

Tagore's Doodlings

These doodlings, so whimsical and fanciful, had started under the guise of correcting manuscripts in the years 1922-27 before he took to painting. The erasures in his poems he playfully turned into designs and patterns. He writes that "the scratches on my manuscripts cried, like sinners, for salvation and assailed my eyes with ugliness of their irrelevance" so he rescued them into the merciful fina-

lity of rhythm. During these 'aimless' drawings, his mind would roam freely (fig 1) giving him time for thought while writing. He abandoned these doodlings in 1928 and started painting pictures for their own sake.

Tagore's Paintings and Pen-Drawings

(i) The Themes of his Pictures

The *themes* revealed in his paintings range from abstract rhythmical assays in lines, birds and animals from fantasy. characters from stories, masks and portraits of great variety and iridescent landscapes. The subjects of his paintings are quite off the beaten track and take us into new realms.

Generally speaking, his paintings can be grouped into three classes: human faces, birds and beasts, and landscapes.

(a) Human Faces and Masks :

Looking at his human faces, we seem to be confronted with shadows of known faces as they float into the mind. They make an immediate impact on the observer. They are the mysterious products of an imaginative mind. Their expression is so virile and their movement so free; and this is precisely because of their not being subordinated to any cast-iron technique. (See Fig.)

(b) Animals and Birds :

The figures of his animals are

different from the real animals we see : it is almost as if the artist's eye saw through the physical outline the very form of the animating impulse. For instance, from his bullock-like creature emerges some primeval creature of nature, and Comtesse de Noailles has described it as "a hungry greedy, cursed animal." It is really an animal of his own creation. Here the artist has followed his creative bent. Similarly, his picture of the tiger shows violent greed. Even though there is no physical reality with the original, the character of the tiger remains fixed in lines of his drawing.

Those who are accustomed to seeing things from their 'meaning' will fail to enjoy these pictures aesthetically.

(c) Landscapes :

Turning to his landscapes one sees splashes of bright colours. The question may arise, why call these daubs of paint landscapes? The answer is that in these pictures of nature he has not followed the rules of line and perspective; rather he has manipulated the vibrations of light and shade, in variegated colours. Synthesis of light and shade, his pictures are often a play of the meeting and parting of black and white.

(ii) The Composition of his Paintings

He displays masterly skill as regards composition. Once he determines the subject of his picture, the

outline and spacing comes off spontaneously, without any faltering or indecision. The work progresses with a series of sweeping movements and the balanced composition remains intact. The lines are drawn with a sure hand.

What strikes most in a Tagore composition is its primeval intensity. Apparently there is no attempt at organization. But the inner rhythm is obvious enough. The drawing and the colour scheme being untutored are inevitably naive. The use of colour is entirely emotional. But they have a plasticity that a few professionals achieve in their life time.

(iii) Classification of his Paintings :

As a matter of fact, it is not possible to place these pictures in any definable category. They express such a basic truth of creation as defies codification; they are meant only to be enjoyed.

What name shall we give to these queer shapes, arising from the unplumbed sub-conscious mind? They are at once personal and universal. His painting always remained his private amusement.

One who tries to affix a label to the poet's composition, such as coding them under this 'ism' or that in painting, can never understand them. His paintings exist in their own right independent of all modernistic stuff.

Tagore, however, unwittingly seems to have affiliations with the

Surrealists, like Picasso, Max Ernst, Dali and with Paul Klee. His certain forms have resemblance with Modigliani and Expressionists, Nolde and Munch. He had not seen much of the work of these contemporaries. He seems to have absorbed whatever came his way, fairly easily, into a personal style of his own.

(iv) The meaning of his pictures :

Many people fail to find any 'meaning' in Tagore's pictures. He, himself, however, refused to explain them. He wrote; "People often ask me about the meaning of my pictures. I remain silent even as my pictures are. It is for them to express and not to explain."

Again, he says : My pictures are my versification in lines. If by chance they are entitled to claim recognition, it must be primarily for some rhythmic significance of form which is ultimate, and not for any interpretation of an idea or representation of a fact."

Coomarswamy very correctly observes : It would be a mistake to search in them a hidden spiritual symbolism ; they are not to be deciphered like puzzles or code messages. This is a genuinely original, genuinely naive expression."

If one can understand them through the mind's eye, well and good; else, their splendour remains hidden like a gem within the mine. These pictures are to be enjoyed aesthetically, not to be understood.

(v) The Unconscious as the Source of his Art.

After all this talk, one may like to ask, what was the real compulsion from which the strange formless forms of his pictures emerge? Tagore remains silent on this point.

Mr. W. G. Archer traced "the influence of the unconscious on these paintings." Tagore's early 'doodlings' seem to point towards this conclusion too.

Tagore, however, proclaimed that "creation springs from an abundance of energy." His actual method of creation was from the flux of Universe. He writes : "The world of sound is a tiny bubble in the silence of the infinite. The Universe has only its language of gesture..... Every object in this world proclaims by the dumb signal of lines and colours the fact that it is not a mere logical abstract or a mere thing of use, but it is unique in itself, it carries the miracle of its existence".

(vi) A Critical appraisal of his Pictures :

(a) Vitality of expression

Tagore's paintings, though simple, are full of vigour, while his pen-portraits are the very embodiment of vitality of expression, of his art. Abanindranath Tagore said, that it "had something volcanic about it".

(b) The play of imagination

His drawings are the work of a



Fig. 2. Imaginary Animal
Fig. 4. Alankar

2
+

3
+

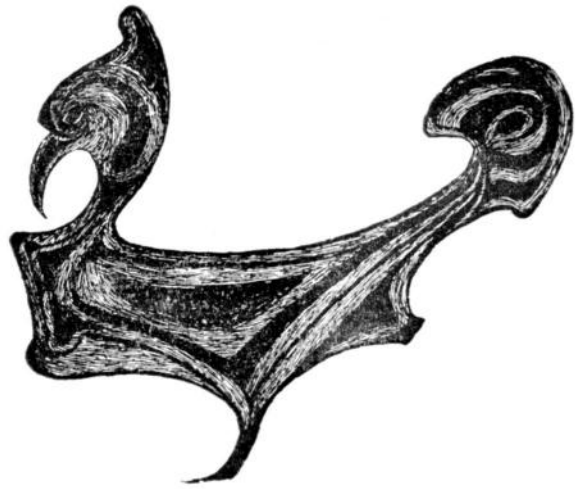


Fig. 3. From Fantasy
Fig. 5. Natkiya



4
+

5
+



'The artist is the lover of Nature, therefore he is her
slave and her master.'

Stray Birds : XLVI

X X X

'In the playhouse of infinite forms I have had my play
and here have I caught sight of him that is
formless.'

Gitanjali : LVIII

X X X

'God finds himself by creating.'

Stray Birds : CCLXXVII

never dates. Secondly, its strength lies not in other peoples' convictions but in his own. Thirdly, it is not only creative but communicative also, despite its abstract look. Fourthly, there is an inner harmony and rhythm, though apparently devoid of design and structure.

(ix) Tagore and purpose of drawing.*

His paintings are like his poetry, thought-provoking and mysterious. His drawings constrain us to pause and ask ourselves anew, 'What is the purpose of drawing, of painting, of art generally.' Is it to be a pretty toy to amuse and flatter us, or is it to convey the deepest feelings from soul to soul ?

The popular artist, like the popular preacher, is careful never to offend our prejudices, or to call us to make any great mental or spiritual effort, while the true poet or the painter, like Tagore, asks us to see what we have not yet seen.

Tagore's drawings prove that the poet though a master of use of words, feels that certain things can be better expressed, or perhaps only expressed, in the language of line, tone and colour. These things are not outward facts such as those of anatomy and perspective and the rules that can be taught in the academies which often become a hindrance to the freedom and vitality of imagination.

* From the Review of Tagore's paintings by Joseph-Southal.

His drawings are the work of a powerful imagination.

But there is more than this; there is a deep feeling and apprehension of the spiritual life and being of men and animals, expressed in their features, their movements, line and colour.

Can one describe all this in words? Can one say this drawing means this and that means that? Certainly not for if anyone could say it, the poet himself could do so, and if he could say it, then why draw or colour ?

We look and look silently and immerse ourselves into his pictures and thus here and there, if we are humble enough, we may learn about their profound significance.

A whole generation has passed since Tagore's death and perhaps he is just beginning to be understood.

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- (1) Gurudev's Paintings by Pratima Tagore
- (2) Marg : issue on Paintings of Rabindranath Tagore by Mulk Raj Anand
- (3) Tagore as Painter by Krishna Chaitanya (article in the Statesman)
- (4) Drawings and Paintings of Rabindranath Tagore. Introduction by P. Neogi (Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi)
- (5) Rabindra Chitrlekha by Shri Manoranjan Gupta.

MUKTA - DHARA*

By R. K. Sud

(A play of abiding significance and historical interest)**

उकाबी रह जब बेदार होतो है जवानों में ।
नजर आती है उन को अपनी मंजिल आसमानों में ॥

(इकबाल)

"MUKTA-Dhara, from which the play of Gurudev, entitled the *Mukta-Dhara*, takes its name, is a mountain spring whose waters, rushing down the slopes of Uttrakut, irrigate the plain of Shiv-tarai, whose people are held in subjection to the king of Uttrakut, King Ranajit. In order to enforce this subjection more effectively, the king of Uttrakut desires to control the source of their economic well-being, and to that end has had a great dam erected to prevent the waters of Mukta-Dhara from reaching the plains below. It was a difficult and hazardous task, but the skill of the royal engineer Bibhuti, utilizing the resources of modern science and technique and with the help of conscripted labour, has at last successfully achieved the feat, though with considerable loss of life." For example, the death of Suman, the only son of poor, heart-broken, madwoman Amba of Janai village, leaves her roaming over the place calling for her son who heeds her not. Needless to say that such a

sacrifice of human life goes waste. In the words of Batuk, the mendicant in the play, "when no life springs from the life laid down...when death is the only fruit of death...It is utter loss. Bhairava (i.e. Lord Shiva) will never endure it." Building dams is perfectly legitimate but not as a means of stifling life and enforcing death and servility. Bibhuti's creation is marked by a mighty engine-tower, out-soaring the trident of the Temple of Shiva on a mountain peak. It is not only a challenge to man but also an insult to the gods. How callous, how proud and how cruel-hearted he is! His words make it clear. "The purpose of my dam was that human intelligence should win through its goal, though sand and stone and water all conspired to block its path. I had no time to think of whether some farmer's paltry maize crop would die." To (the folk of Shiv-tarai) the gods gave only water; to me they gave power to imprison the water..." That is to say, to him the gods gave the power to smother life and inflict death.

* From *Three Plays : Mukta-Dhara, Natir Puja, Chandalika* translated by Marjorie Sykes (Oxford University Press) with Appreciation by K. R. Kripalani.

** Specially written for the young readers who were born during the post-Non-Co-operation period.

What a colossal misuse of the knowledge and the power of modern science. Man defying the will of the Creator : replacing life by death. Needless to say that generations of man have lived on 'paltry maize' grown here and there but not on sights of wonder-inspiring heights of engineering and mechanical skill, or for the matter of that, even the masterpieces of art, literature and architecture.

The play opens with the King and the citizens of Uttrakut preparing to participate in a religious festival in honour of the new god—the god of Bibhuti's machine. What greater travesty of truth could there be : an affront to God and to man's faith in benevolent godhood. The King and his people are very proud of the devilish machine and quite confident that the poor and defenceless people of Shiv-tarai will now for ever be at their mercy. When Bibhuti arrives on the scene they acclaim him with thunderous applause, which triumphant Caesar might have envied, and break forth into a deafening chorus in praise of the infernal god, the Machine.

"All hail, Machine, we worship thee,
 we bow to thee, we honour thee,
 Machine, O Lord Machine.
 Thy flames and thunders rend the sky,
 And all thy rumbling wheels reply
 In swift and sonorous majesty ;
 We bow to thee, Machine.

 Thou grim magician, binding still

The very elements to thy will,
 All hail to thee, Machine."

This is the very devil's incantation; the death's-head dance; the mockery of gods and man alike ! But power-intoxicated men are no better than robots and robots have no soul or sense of humanity. Neither the recurring wail of the poor demented, sonless mother, Amba :—"He is the light of my eyes, my Suman, the breath of my life.....They took him away somewhere.....I had gone to worship in the temple, when I came back they had taken him.".....; nor the warnings of the simple god-fearing folk, who presage ill for such colossal pride, greed and lust for power, touch their hearts. In vain does the Pilgrim say:" Ugh : It looks like a demon's head, lying in wait to devour your city in its sleep. To have it before your eyes night and day will dry up your souls like dead wood." And the Messenger warns them : " The god of destruction does not always travel by the highway. The cracks that await him are seen by no human eye."

It is the Crown Prince Abhijit, the ruler of Shiv-tarai on behalf of King Ranajit, however, who professes open sympathy for the people of Shiv-tarai and vehemently protests against Bibhuti's soulless achievement and nefarious designs. But who cares for the tiny protests of good-intentioned men, more so if they are just youngsters. King Ranajit's Minister was the only person who smelt danger ahead and read in the words of the Prince the writing on the wall. He said to the King:" We should not

despise the young in matters of government. When things get intolerable, the young by the power of their suffering grow greater than their elders." Prince Abhijit is the darling of the people of Shiv-tarai and the pupil of the King's eye. He has won the hearts of the people of Shiv-tarai by his love and devotion to their welfare instead of by fear, show of force and exploitation practised by the King and his officers. He stands for freedom and sympathizes with the poor folk of Shiv-tarai... as does the water of Mukta-Dhara. Imprison its free and life-giving flow and you deprive it of its destiny: its sweet and refreshing water must flow unimpeded for ever on and on to the arid lands and through them to the far distant sea where alone it finds peace. Likewise Prince Abhijit, too, understands his destiny; the purpose of his life, the meaning of his birth... nay, the significance of all human life. This becomes clear to him when he learns that he is not a prince by birth but a foppling picked up by King Ranajit from near the bank of Mukta-Dhara; in fact, he is the son of a vagrant mother who left him to his fate on the bank. Once he has heard the call there is no going back for him. To Rajkumar Sanjaya he says; "I know it is my destiny on earth; my river of life must run free overleaping the palace-walls..... Somewhere or other in the external world, God writes for us the secret mystery of each man's spirit. Mukta-Dhara is His word to me, bearing the secret of my inner being. When her feet were bound in the iron fetters, I was startled out of a dream. I realiz-

ed the truth—the throne of Utrakur is the dam which binds my spirit. I have taken the road in order to set it free." To his uncle King Visvajit, when he visited him (the King) earlier in the course of the eventful year, Prince Abhijit said, "I see roads, that are not yet made, the roads of the future across those forbidding passes, roads that will bring the distant near." True to himself he decides to give up all royal privileges, cast his lot with the people of Shiv-tarai, and fight against tyranny and injustice that stifle freedom and deny life. "Does he seek glory in austerity?" asks Prince Sanjaya. "Has the grace of life no value for him?" Prince Abhijit replies, "What is true must be defended—even by life and all that it may mean." Should not the people of Shiv-tarai surrender perpetually to King Ranajit of Utrakut and thereby live in peace and plenty?" asks Udhav, the Captain of Guards, who keeps a watch on the prisoner-Prince. "No," replies Prince Abhijit, "I cannot bear to see a poverty that depends on charity." Put Gandhiji in place of Prince Abhijit and every word sounds true.

The struggle begins. The people of Shiv-tarai find a leader—an apostle of non-violence—in Vairagi Dhananjaya. His source of strength is in his faith in God, in the just cause of the people of Shiv-tarai, in the ultimate victory of Truth: *Satyameb jayate nanritam.* His weapon is non-violence: the 'Sword of the Spirit.' The songs that he sings speak for the man he is. It is the self-reliant

and fearless spirit of these songs that infuses a new spirit into the hearts of the people of Shiv-tarai : the hitherto dumb-driven nothings awake all of a sudden into a new consciousness of being, alive and human, having inviolable rights and privileges essential for honoured and honourable living. Life with honour and freedom or else death with glory as martyrs : such is their resolve and no terror or force or threat can dissuade them from it. In Vairagi Dhananjaya we meet a replica of Gandhiji.

A hurricane of tempest,
 A sea of sorrow wide,
 In fearless, proud assurance
 My fragile boat shall ride.
 Hearing Thy word, and lifting
 Torn sails that scorn the seas,
 My boat shall reach the haven.
 Cool shadows of Thy trees.

Who thus my soul desireth,
 He shall my Pilot be;
 My only part, the fearless mind
 That puts my boat to sea ;
 And landing in the sunset,
 To bring an offering meet:
 Red lotus of my sorrowing days,
 For mercy to Thy feet.

These words are couched in the true Gandhian spirit. Those who fight the battle of Truth need not fear even the worst of tyrants. What matters is not beatings given but beatings received without retaliation and ill will. "Can't you show him (the bully) what not-beating is ? That needs too much strength, I suppose : Beating the waves won't stop the storm. But hold your rudder steady,

and you win," says Vairagi Dhananjaya to Ganesh, a fire-brand resident of Shiv-tarai. We did not lack these fire-brand fighters in the cause of our liberty. The non-violent resisters, the Satyagrahis as they were called then, must have no angry look or angry hearts but march forth with a song on their lips : a song of daring and sacrifice for the sake of Truth and Justice :

Strike yet again, my Lord,
 Strike O strike on.....

Shrinking, I hide from thee,
 Fear drives me on.
 Wrest thou my all from me.....

Do what thou willest do,
 Let the blow fall ;
 One of us, you or I,
 Goes to the wall.

I've played in the haunts of men
 Gay through the years.
 Shall all your buffeting
 Force me to tears ?

What shall Vairagi Dhananjaya demand ? Kingship ? "No," replies he. "Kingship is crippled, if it is the King's alone, and not the people's. "They and the people of Shiv-tarai must demand the people's kingship... and that-too in the name of God." "No claim to the throne can stand; neither the King's nor the people's, if you do not recognize it to be his. A throne is no place for getting puffed up, but for folding the hands in prayer." This is Gandhiji's political ethics and the basis of what he called Rama Rajya. "Politics divorced

from religion" was for Gandhiji, "a corpse, fit only to be burned."

Vairagi Dhanajaya gives the first call for the battle of freedom; the people of Shiv-tarai will not pay taxes to the King of Uttrakut. This was the first plank in Gandhiji's struggle against the British Government in India. "We cannot give you what is not yours," he told King Ranajit, "...our excess food is yours; the food of our hunger is not... What you seize by violence can never be yours for ever, Clutch at it and it is gone." He, however, is not happy that the people of Shiv-tarai look upon him as god. "They think," he says to King Ranajit, "that I am greater than the gods... So they shut their eyes and hang on to me... Yes, they stop short at me, so they never reach their true God. He could have guided them from within, but I from the outside have blocked his way. If I could run away from it all! They spend all their worship on me; inwardly they are bankrupt..." But he cannot leave the people yet lest they should behave violently and thereby injure themselves and the righteousness and the sacredness of their cause. His fears are exactly the same as those of Gandhiji's during the thick of our fight for freedom. It takes time to understand the efficacy of the weapon of Non-violence and Satyagraha.

King Ranajit threatens to lock up the Vairagi behind the bars if he will not stand aside. But the prison is no terror for him.

"Nor stony tower, nor walls of

beaten brass,
Nor airless dungeon, nor strong
links of iron,
Can be retentive to the strength
of spirit;..."

wrote Shakespeare. The Vairagi is firm like a rock and the battle for the rights of the people gathers increasing momentum every day that passes. The greater the oppression by the authorities the greater is the stiffness of resistance and the zest for it. As it happens at such moments leaders are criticized, misunderstood and even calumnized. What is still worse, motives are attributed to them. Even Prince Abhijit is not spared: he is maligned by a few silly women who are simply incapable of appreciating that men live for ideas and ideals and not always for power and wealth, the usual loaves and fishes of office. But the Prince knows better: "What would he want with the throne when he has won the whole nation's heart!" Did we not, too, during the early days of the Non-co-operation movement call Gandhiji the 'Uncrowned King of India' ?...

As days roll by all misgivings and misunderstandings vanish and the silliest of the silly and the most incredulous of the incredulous come out to praise and trust their selfless leaders. They are simply carried away by the swelling tide of their enthusiasm and are vying with one another to sacrifice themselves for the nation: their bodies, hearts, souls and possessions... all are dedicated to the service of the country. Their cause is the cause of Truth, Justice,

Right and Freedom. In one word, it is the cause of their personal and nation's honour. And when honour is at stake nothing else matters.

This is the stage when the whole nation of Shiv-tarai is, as it were, electrified: the spark has travelled from the hearts of the leaders to the hearts of the people and become a conflagration, that no power known to man can extinguish.

King Ranajit has still one way open to him : to plead with or coerce Prince Abhijit to give up his resolution. But he fails, as he is bound to. Not only that, even Prince Sanjaya throws his lot with Prince Abhijit : "I have followed him all my life, let me follow him to prison also," says he to the King's Minister. "One man alone is not a whole, but a half. He is only made whole by union with another. My union with the Yuvaraja is like that." The reply of the Minister clearly shows that though he is in the royal pay he is, like the people and Prince Sanjaya, for Prince Abhijit. Not a few officers of the Government sympathized with Gandhiji's fight for freedom of the country. He too breathes the same atmosphere. Accordingly he says to Prince Sanjaya: "...where true union exists, there is no need to be outwardly united. The cloud in the sky and the water in the sea are one; their outward separation only perfects their unity. The Yuvaraj is seen in you to-day though he himself is absent." Every Indian in the days of the struggle for freedom was potentially and effectively a Gandhi and a Jawahar. This

was how they felt whenever Gandhiji and other leaders were in prison. "His words are in the very air we breathe; I use them, but I forget whether they are his or mine---it is his work I shall do while we are separated," says Prince Sanjaya to the Minister. This is the spirit that Gandhiji's personality and example infused into our hearts who were of your age then.

Bliss was it in that dawn to be
alive,
But be young was very heaven!

The Indian nation became overnight, as it were, a nation of fearless heroes believing as their forefathers had believed, in the great truths of the Gita:

- (a) नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहती पावकः ।
न चैनं केकलेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥
- (b) कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।

In the fight for India's freedom India not only gained political freedom but her lost soul. Our emancipation was not simply political but also a spiritual regeneration.

The people of Shiv-tarai have heard the call; they are waiting for the light. Let the moment come and God, the repository of Satyam, will show it ?

O Master Minstrel, 'neath Thy
hand

The strings are taut and true ;
The tuned harp waits for Thy
command---

Hast Thou no more to do ?

If Thou wake not the music pent
Within the sleeping strings,
Mute shame shall mar Thine
instrument—
Touch it, and lo, it sings.

Thy hand alone the song can free ;
The strings are taut and true,
The tuned harp waits Thy
minstrelsy—
Hast Thou no more to do ?

“When all seems lost, then His time is at hand,” Prince Abhijit chooses to lay down his life for his people. He is seen by the madwoman Amba going all alone on the road in darkness. Where is he going and why in darkness and that too all alone ? To breach the dam and to liberate the water of Muktheadhara : the Mother of his soul. “The Prince has broken the bonds of Muktheadhara,” reported Prince Sanjaya to King Ranajit after the death of Prince Abhijit. And the King replied, “And in her freedom he has found his own.....” In

despair the people of Shiv-tarai tell one another : “We shall never find him now.” No, they are wrong. Dhananjaya says to Ganesh, “Nay, you have found him. He is yours for ever now.” He does not exaggerate : he only talks in the language of the parable: in giving yourself shall ye find yourself ! All of them have imbibed the spirit of Prince Abhijit and thus found him in themselves. Henceforth to be true to themselves they must be true to the Prince and vice versa. The theme of the Muktheadhara may be summed up in Tagore’s oft-quoted words: “Life is given us, we earn it by giving it.”..... “We gain when the full price for our right to live is paid.”..... “Only that remains which is utterly given away.”

The *Muktheadhara* is Gurudev’s everlasting testimony to our non-violent struggle for freedom and our faith in God, humanity and the intrinsic values that constitute the warp and woof of our existence.‡

‡ Life finds its wealth by the claims of the world, and its worth by the claims of love.

Stray Birds : XXXIII.

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“The mighty desert is burning for the love of a blade of grass who shakes her head and laughs and flies away.”

Stray Birds : V.

‘लाल कनेर’ और उसका संदेश

(श्री रामलाल वर्मा एम० ए०)

रवीन्द्र नाथ ठाकुर की प्रतिभा सर्वतो मुखी थी। कविता, नाटक, कहानी, उपन्यासादि जिस क्षेत्र में उन्होंने लेखनी चलाई उस में उन्हें अभूत-पूर्व सफलता मिली। रवि बाबू की कविता की ख्याति गीतांजलि के गीतों में अपनी चरमसीमा को पहुंच गई थी। उन्होंने मुक्तधारा, नटीर पूजा और चांडालिका जैसे एकांकियों द्वारा समाज एवं विश्व को महान् और उदात्त संदेश दिये थे। प्रस्तुत लेख में उन के बंगला नाटक ‘रक्त कर्वी’ के हिन्दी अनुवाद लालकनेर* की चर्चा की जायगी जिस में उन्होंने आज के मानव को—जो वस्तुतः मानवता की सहायभूतियों को भूल कर भौतिक साधनों की प्राप्ति में संघर्ष निरत है और मानवताके सच्चे मूल्यां से परांमुख हो गया है उसे महान् संदेश दिया है।

‘लाल कनेर’ का संक्षिप्त कथानक इस प्रकार हैयक्ष पुरी का एक राजा है जो अज्ञात प्राणी के रूप में शासन करता है। उसके शासन में समाज का प्रत्येक वर्ग — अध्यापक, मजदूर, धर्मव्यवस्थापक, पुराणवागीश, भय और दण्ड से शासित हो कर चल रहा है। ये सब उपरोक्त व्यक्ति अपने शासक राजा को कभी नहीं देख पाते तो भी ये सब उस के भय एवं आतंक से शासित होकर निरन्तर कार्य रत हैं। यद्यपि इन के जीवन में असंतोष एवं विद्रोह की ज्वाला

लाल कनेर—अनुवादक डा० हजारी प्रसाद द्विवेदी
प्रकाशक—राज कमल प्रकाशन दिल्ली।

सुलगती रहती है तो भी ये मूक बनकर अपना जीवन यापन कर रहे हैं।

इस घुटे हुए वातावरण में जहां व्यक्ति के व्यक्तित्व का कोई महत्त्व नहीं अपितु उसकी पहिचानसंख्या के रूप में होती है—(जैसे आजकल कक्षा में छात्र नाम की अपेक्षा रोल से, हस्पताल में मरीज बिस्तर के नम्बर से पुकारा जाता है।) ऐसे घुटे-घुटे वातावरण में लाल कनेर (लाल फूल) के प्रतीक के रूप में एक नारी का प्रवेश होता है जिसका नाम है नन्दिनी, नन्दिनी वस्तुतः मानव की चेतना और संस्कृति की प्रतीक है। उसके आगमन मात्र से समस्त यक्षपुरी में एक उथल पुथल मच जाती है। एक समय ऐसा भी आता है जब उस नगरी का अदृश्य शासक राजा भी नन्दिनी के प्रभाव में आ कर, उन बन्धनों को जिनमें वह स्वयं निबद्ध था, तोड़ देता है और बाहर आता है। फलस्वरूप सर्वत्र एक नए वातावरण का संचार होता है। सब लोग उम विषक्त एवं घुटे घुटे वातावरण से मुक्ति पाते हैं। अन्त में गोकुल कहता है कि ‘लाल कनेर’ लाल रोशनी की मिशाल है।

आज का मानव मानवतावाद से बहुत दूर जाकर सांस्कृतिक धरातल से अपना संबन्ध विच्छेद कर चुका है और भौतिक साधनों की और उन्मुख होने वाले मानव के भीतर सहज करुणा की शीतल धारा सर्वथा लुप्त हो गई है। परिणाम स्वरूप वह

अर्थ-लिप्सा, संघर्ष, संग्राहक भावना को ही अपने जीवन का चरम लक्ष्य और सत्य मान बैठा है प्रस्तुत नाटक में युग द्रष्टा रवीन्द्र ने उसे नन्दिनी के माध्यम से उसे जहाँ प्रकृति की ओर उन्मुख होने का संकेत किया है वहाँ उसी के चरित्र के माध्यम से मानव चेतना एवं सांस्कृतिक मूल्यों को पहचानने का स्पष्ट निर्देश भी किया है नाटक के विभिन्न पात्रों के साथ वार्तालाप करते हुए नन्दिनी ने इस प्रकार के अनेक तथ्यों का स्पष्टीकरण किया है जिनमें से एकाध उदाहरण यहाँ प्रस्तुत किया जाता है।

प्रस्तुत नाटक में राजा प्रत्यक्ष रूप में कहीं नहीं आता उसकी बात प्रायः नेपथ्य (पर्दे के पीछे) से ही कहलाई गई है। अपने ही बन्धनों में निबद्ध राजा को नन्दिनी प्राकृतिक गान सुनने की एक प्रेरणा देती है जो कि इस प्रकार है—

“पौष तोदेर डाक दियेछे आये रे चले आये,
आये, आये।

डाला रे तार भरेछे आज पाका फसले भरि,
हाय, हाय, हाय ॥

पौष तुम्हें बुला रहा है आ जाओ, आ जाओ। आज उस की डलिया फसल से भर गई है। आह यह दृश्य कैसा सुन्दर है। नाटक का अंत भी इसी पद्य से किया गया है।

इसी प्रकार नन्दिनी के प्रभाव से प्रभावित विशु नन्दिनी के प्रभाव में आकर कह उठता है—

आमार भावना तो सब मिछे,
आमार सब पड़े वाक् पिछे।
तोमार घोम्टा खुले दाओ,
दाओ हासिते मोर पराण छेये।

मेरी मारी चिंताएँ भूठी है; मेरा सब कुछ पीछे

रह जाये। तुम अपना घूँघट खोल दो, अपनी आँख उठा कर देखो और अपनी हंसी से मेरे प्राण आच्छादित करलो।

इस प्रकार प्रस्तुत नाटक में जहाँ एक ओर मानव को उदात्त संदेश मिलता है वहाँ रवीन्द्र की कविता का आस्वाद भी प्राप्त होता है। वस्तुतः नन्दिनी रवीन्द्र का Mouthpiece-character कहा जाना चाहिए जिस के माध्यम से कवि ने अपने विचारों की अभिव्यक्ति की है। इस नाटक का एक प्रतीक अर्थ भी है जिसे नाटक की भूमिका में स्वयं उन्होंने व्यक्त किया है उसका भी संक्षिप्त उल्लेख इस नाटक के समझने में सहायक है। लेखक के अनुसार राम-रावण युद्ध दो व्यक्तियों का युद्ध नहीं था अपितु दो वर्गों का युद्ध था। राम कृषि सभ्यता या वर्ग का प्रति-निधि था और रावण पूंजीपति वर्ग का प्रतिनिधि। रावण ने जब कृषि वर्ग के प्रति-निधि राम की समृद्धि (सीता) को पंचवटी (ग्राम-का प्रतीक) से चुराया तो उस सीता (समृद्धि) के ही कारण रावण का विनाश हुआ उस विनाश में रावण का भाई विभीषण (सद् बुद्धि का प्रतीक) भी का मुख्य काम था। लेखक ने इस नाटक में यक्ष-पुरी के राजा को रावण का रूप दिया है और नाटक की सीमित परिधि के कारण उस राजा के भीतर ही (सद्मति) विभीषण विद्यमान है। नन्दिनी का यक्षपुरी में प्रवेश सीता का लंकापुरी में प्रवेश प्रायः एक समान है। सीता रावण के विनाश का कारण बनी और नन्दिनी इस राजा की भौतिक एवं धन लोलुप भावना के विनाश का कारण बनी। इसी तथ्य एक प्रतीक के रूप में यहाँ बड़ी ही सफलता से प्रतिपादित किया गया है। संक्षेप में ‘लाल कनेर’ नाटक उद्देश्य एवं कला तथा कविता के आस्वाद की दृष्टि से एक अत्यन्त ही महान् एवं सफल कृति है।

THE 'CHILD' POETRY OF TAGORE

By Miss Aruna Bhattacharya, M.A.

Rabindranath Tagore has been almost universally hailed as one of the greatest exponents of 'child' poetry. Although it is an exaggeration to suppose that the interest of literary men in the composite mind of the child came first with Tagore, it is certainly a fact that before Tagore we find no regular and systematic treatment of the subject. References to "the child" we find as early as in the poetry of Sappho, Homer, the author of the Bhagwad and later on in Chaucer, Shakespeare, Walter De la Mare and Bridges. But whereas these poets are content to dwell merely on the beauty, playfulness and affection of the child it is Tagore who first makes any serious attempt at grasping its' psychological essentials: i.e. the working of the child mind.

The first question is from where the child comes. Is he just 'born' and no more? Or is he something more besides?

"Where have I come from, where did you pick me up", the baby asked its mother.

She answered, half crying, half-laughing, and clasping the baby to her breast,—“You were hidden in my heart as its desire, my darling.

You were in the dolls of my childhood's games; and when with clay I

made the image of my god every morning, I made and unmade you then.

You were enshrined with our household deity, in his worship I worshipped you.

In all my hopes and my loves, in my life, in the life of my mother you have lived.

In the lap of the deathless Spirit who rules our home you have been nursed for ages.

When in girlhood my heart was opening its petals, you hovered as a fragrance about it.

Your tender softness bloomed in my youthful smiles. like a glow in the sky before the sunrise.

Heaven's first darling, twin-born with the morning light, you have floated down the stream of the world's life, and at last you have stranded on my heart.

As I gaze on your face, mystery overwhelms me; you who belong to all have become mine.

For fear of losing you I hold you tight to my breast. What magic has ensnared the world's treasure in these slender arms of mine?""*

* *The Crescent Moon : The Beginning*

The mother and the child fulfil each other's destiny in the most miraculous manner. A soul yet-unborn and a woman-not-yet-a-mother—are both incomplete. To be a 'mother', to be called 'mother' are as precious rewards for a woman as to have a mother is for any one of us. The relationship between the mother and the child is not biological but spiritual. Do we not love to call our country, "Bharat Mata": our Motherland!

The child lives in a fairy world—an enchanted world of dream and song, built up from the lilting tunes of the mothers' voice, the jingling of her bracelets and the beautiful expression in her long dark eyes brimming with love. The sleep that flits on the baby's eyes comes from the fairy village where among shadows of the forest dimly lit with glow-worms there hang two shy buds of enchantment", The smile that flickers on his lips while he sleeps comes from the "pale beauty of a crescent moon touching the edge of a vanishing autumn cloud.* The sweet soft freshness that blooms on his limbs is the tender and silent mystery of love, hidden in the heart of the mother of all these. The mother sings clasping the baby to her breast while the stars glimmer between the jack fruit trees and the crescent moon smiles through the branches of the golden Kadam.

"The world of the child," Tagore seems to say, "is a magic world of

* Ibid : The Source

songs and laughter where ruling in glory as the queen of the realm is the Mother."* Nowhere else in literature do we find this deep consciousness of the bond between mother and child. How minutely Tagore records the child's observation of his mother, as she smiles down on him from the open windows, as she returns from the river with her brimming pot balanced on her hips, her wet hair hanging down her back; or as she stands on the threshold clapping her hands while he dance; or as she sits by the window reading her Ramayana, the shadow of the Champa tree falling on her lips and hair. She is his sweetest and dearest companion and the wealth of her love at once mystifies him with a feeling of security and warmth. She is—as it were—the axis on which the whole life revolves. He cannot leave her for a moment—"but when in the evening you went to the cow-shed with the lighted lamp in your hand, I should suddenly drop on to the earth again and be your own baby once more and beg you to tell me a story.** The mother is the source of all his knowledge. "Leave off your work, mother; sit here by the window and tell me where the desert of Tepantar in the fairy-tale is;† She is the confidante of his joy—the solace of his miseries—the eternal fount of love. "Baby has a heap of gold and pearls yet he came like a beggar on to the earth——this dear little mendicant pretends to be utterly helpless so that

* Ibid : The Baby's Way

** Ibid : The Champa Flower

† The Land of the Exile

he may beg for mother's wealth of love."^{*}

Perhaps Lewis Carroll alone has rivalled Tagore in his delineation of the absurdity of the child's mind and imagination: "Suppose I became a champa flower, just for fun, and grew on a branch high up that tree, and shook in the wind with laughter and danced upon the newly budded leaves, would you know me, mother? ‡ "If I were a little puppy, not your baby, mother dear, would you say 'No' to me if I tried to eat from your dish:" † How fantastically the child mind is revealed in the beautiful poem : *The Flower School*.

"When storm-clouds rumble in the sky and June showers come down,

The moist east wind comes marching over the heath to blow its bagpipes among the bamboos,

The crowds of flowers come out of a sudden, from nobody knows where, and dance upon the grass in wild glee.

Mother, I really think the flowers go to school underground,

They do their lessons with doors shut, and if they want to come out to play before it is time, their master makes them stand in a corner.

When the rains come they have their holidays.

* Ibid : *The Baby's Way*

‡ *The Champa Flower*

† Ibid : *Sympathy*

Branches clash together in the forest, and the leaves rustle in the wild wind, the thunder-clouds clap their giant hands and the flower children rush out in dresses of pink and yellow and white.

Do you know, mother, their home is in the sky, where the stars are.

Haven't you seen how eager they are to get there? Don't you know why they are in such a hurry?

Of course, I can guess to whom they raise their arms: they have their mother as I have my own."

The essential difference between the imagination of Tagore's 'child' and that of Lewis Carroll's is that where as Alice (in *Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice in a Looking-glass*) finds herself lost in the world of fairy-tale, Tagore's 'child' forgets himself in the world of Nature.

One of the strongest desires of the child, as seen by Tagore, is the desire to grow up to be like his father. He expresses peevish resentment at being scolded for picking up father's pen or pencil and writing upon his book. After all why should he be scolded when his father spends day after day spoiling sheets and sheets of paper with black marks? *One fine day even he will grow up and no one shall find fault with him any more.

* Ibid : Authorship

"I am small because I am a little child. I shall be big when I am as old as my father is. My teacher will come and say, 'It is late, bring your slate and your books.' I shall tell him, 'Do you not know I am as big as father? And I must not have lessons any more.'"

And again,

"I shall dress myself and walk to the fair where the crowd is thick. My uncle will come rushing up to me and say, 'you will get lost, my boy; let me carry you.' I shall answer, 'Can't you see, uncle, I am as big as father. I must go to the fair alone.'"

The desire for recognition is one of the primary instincts of the child. He imagines he is travelling with his mother and passing through a strange and dangerous country. Suddenly there is a fearful yell and figures come running in the darkness. The bearers, shaking in terror, hide themselves in the bush but the little hero shouts, 'Don't be afraid, mother' and vanquishes them single-handed. The mother presses her child to her bosom and says, 'I don't know what I should do if I don't have my boy to escort me.' And the villagers say in amazement: "Was it not lucky that the boy was with his mother?"†

When a child is 'recalled' as many are because of heaven's false economy, it is the poor, unfortunate mother

* Ibid : The Little Big Man ;

† Ibid ; The Hero;

who misses the child the most of all. Her grief cannot be described for who can measure the unfathomable depths of the sea. Tagore in his inimitable manner pictures the desolate heart of the mother who longs for the child who has gone to return no more.

"The night was dark when she went away, and they slept.

The night is dark now, and I call for her, 'Come back, my darling; the world is asleep; and no one would know, if you came for a moment while stars are gazing at stars.'

She went away when the trees were in bud and the spring was young.

Now the flowers are in high bloom and I call, 'Come back, my darling.'

The children gather and scatter flowers in reckless sport. And if you come and take one little blossom no one will miss it.'

Those that used to play are playing still, so spendthrift is life.

I listen to their chatter and call, 'Come back, my darling, for mother's heart is full to the brim with love, and if you come to snatch only one little kiss from her no one will grudge it.'*

By minute observations Tagore is able to penetrate into the recesses of the child's mind : its visualizing tendency---its sensitiveness to certain

* Ibid . The Recall

kinds of impression. He delineates faithfully and accurately the child's joys and fears, hopes and desires---its endless questioning and absorbing affection.* But above all he finds in the child an image of the Great Maker, a spark of that divine creative spirit that is God's. The child is a poet of Nature gazing at the beautiful world, created by Him. Regardless of the tempests that rock the earth and storms which rend the sea, the children meet on the "seashore of endless worlds and play",† for the world of the child is one of happiness and love: of joy that creates life and of life that creates joy. He is the symbol of Eternal life that laughs in the face of death. He is the perpetual reminder and proof positive that the Creator delights in his Creation, notwithstanding what Man makes of man. How true and meaningful are the words of Gurudev : "Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man."‡

No wonder that Gurudev gives to the child his benediction and his gifts.

"Bless the little heart, this white soul that has won the kiss of heaven for our earth.

He loves the light of the sun, he loves the sight of his mother's face.

He has not learned to despise the dust, and to hanker after gold.

Clasp him to your heart and bless him.

He has come into this land of an hundred cross-roads.

I know not how he chose you from the crowd, came to your door, and grasped your hand to ask his way.

He will follow you, laughing and talking, and not a doubt in his heart.

Keep his trust, lead him straight and bless him.

Lay your hand on his head, and pray that though the waves underneath grow threatening, yet the breath from above may come and fill his sails and waft him to the haven of peace.

Forget him not in your hurry, let him come to your heart and bless him.†"

For him are meant the songs of Gurudev : "his fond arms of love around him."‡

* *Ibid* : *The Astronomer, The Sailor, The Further Bank, and The Merchant.*

† *The Seashore.*

‡ *Stray Birds* : *LXXVII*

† *Ibid* : *Benediction*

‡ *Ibid* : *My Song*



**NE of the few, the immortal names,
That were not born to die."**

(Tributes)

The Great Sentinel

DR. RABINDRANATH Tagore was not only the greatest poet and artist of modern India but was also a great sentinel of India whose high moral principles stood out uncompromisingly on all occasions. For fifty years and more he was a great teacher—the Gurudev as he was lovingly called—of India. He is gone but he has left behind enough of immortal value for India and for the world to give them light in their hours of trial. We needed his presence today more than ever before when the affairs of the world are in a topsyturvy condition.

(*Dr. Rajindra Prasad*)

'Most dear to all the Muses'

In all his writings of great diversity and depth, he expressed the quality of the individual spirit that is indestructible. In his best poems there are things which move the heart and fill the mind and which will live for long. As for each man's work, 'everything will pass away' said Tolstoy, 'money, great posses-

sions, even kingdoms, all are doomed. But if in our work there remains one grain of true art, it will live for ever.'

jayanti te sukrino rasasiddhah
kavisvarah
nasti yesam yasah kaye
jaramaranajam bhayam.

(*Dr. S. Radhakrishnan*)

A Modern Rishi

He was in line with the *rishis*, the great sages of India, drawing from the wisdom of the ancient past and giving it a practical garb and a meaning in the present. Thus he gave India's own message in a new language in keeping with the *Yugadharma*, the spirit of the times.

This great and highly sensitive man was not only a poet of India, but also a poet of humanity and of freedom everywhere, and his message is for all of us. More particularly that message is for his own people. Even as he tried to create an atmosphere in his school at Shantiniketan, so he tried to produce that atmosphere in the whole of India. I earnestly trust that that living message will always

be with us, guiding us in our life and our endeavours.

(*Shri Jawahar Lal Nehru.*)

A World Poet.

Tagore stands to us for pure beauty, for the universal, because he was not involved in politics. His poetry, his poetic prose reached deep and far, because he spoke to us of mind and soul, leading the human spirit towards God. No narrow God created by man, but the spirit of the universe itself, creative, broad, and deep, transcending formal religions and race.

In a very real sense, he was a world poet. His words—the tools which he used—are words of beauty, sensuous but not sensual, comprehending not only love of God and relationship between man and God but human love. The profound sense of beauty pervades Tagore's work and ennobles that and makes it understandable to every heart. The world needs such poets. ... His eyes were fixed upon the future of mankind, when goodness and beauty shall flower out of inspired love. But he lived in the present and his words are valid for the present.

He spoke out of his own soul, mind and heart. To him beauty is eternal and invincible, the indispensable source of refreshment for the soul, the mind, the heart of mankind. This truth is instinct in the great poet whose centenary we celebrate.

(*Mrs. Pearl S. Buck*)

Noble and Harmonious thinker

Tagore, the Goethe of India, gives expression to his own personal experience that this is the truth (life affirmation) in a manner more profound, more powerful and more charming than any man has ever done before him. This completely noble and harmonious thinker belongs not only to his people but to humanity.

(*Dr. Albert Schweitzer*)

A Spring of Inspiration

...As our thoughts dwell lovingly on your noble and wise work, we are lifted to a higher level of effort and devotion. To realize the meaning of your message of friendship and co-operation is to deepen the furrows from which shall spring richer harvests of inspiration.

(*Miss. Helen Keller*)

In the Galaxy of Immortals

(vii) The name of Tagore takes its place in the galaxy of immortality; in achievement worthy of comradeship of the masters of unforgettable imaginative utterances of Kalidasa, Shakespeare, Goethe and Hugo, and their kindred, but with a vision and purity of ideal and speech that set him in deep intimacy with the little band of supreme prophets of the spiritual ascension and destiny of humanity, with Blake and Shelley.

(*Dr. James H. Cousins*)

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'We come nearest to the great when we are great in humility.'

(Stray Birds : LVII)

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x x x x
'Let this be my last word, that I trust in thy love.'

(Stray Birds : CCCXXV)

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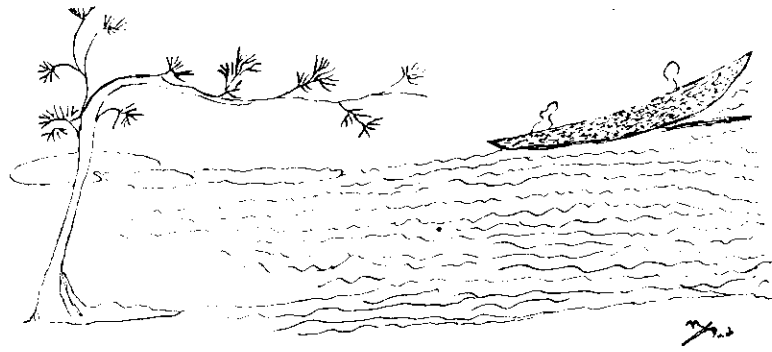
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In front lies the ocean of peace,
Launch the boat Helmsman.
You will be the comrade ever.
Take, O take him in your lap.
In the path of the Infinite
will shine the *Dhruva-tara*.
Giver of freedom, your forgiveness,
your mercy
will be wealth inexhaustible
in the eternal journey.
May the mortal bonds perish,
May the vast universe take him in its arms,
And may he know in his fearless heart
The Great Unknown.*

* Poems : No. 130



Homage to Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore

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Thus according to Tagore the real problem of Indian nationalism was more social than political. To him a nation "is the very aspect of a whole people as an organized Power."*

Where Tagore and Gandhiji differed

As early as in 1920 Tagore had prophetically put his finger on the sterling quality of Gandhiji when he observed : "His is a liberated Soul." Gandhiji had also recognized in Rabindranath Tagore a fearless conscience-keeper of the Indian People when he described him as "a Great Sentinel."

If these two dominating personalities of the country had high regard for each other, they also often differed. During the early twenties, when Gandhiji had already launched the Non-co-operation Movement Rabindranath raised the voice of independent thinking against the Movement which, he thought, was thriving on blind following and mass hysteria. Tagore's misgivings sparked off the controversy. Gandhiji excelled in the controversy. Gandhiji was clear-cut, precise and eloquent while Tagore at times, like all artists, appeared to be discursive and rambling.

In answer to Tagore's charge that 'our present struggle to alienate our heart and mind from those of the West is an attempt at spiritual suicide,' Gandhiji said, "our non-co-operation is neither with the English nor with the West.

Our non-co-operation is with the system the English have established, with the material civilization and its attendant greed and exploitation of the weak Our non-co-operation is a refusal to co-operate with the English administrators on their own terms.**

Though one may not be sufficiently convinced by Tagore's argument against the Non-co-operation Movement and its different facets, one certainly finds much in his articles that is full of wisdom and foresight and also much that is prophetic. The following statement made by Tagore in 1921 could as well have been made by Nehru in 1961. "From now onward any nation which takes an isolated view of its country will run counter to the spirit of the New Age, and know no peace The war has torn away a veil from before our minds. What is harmful to the world is harmful to each one of us".

The country has become free today. But an unexpected problem has arisen with the attainment of this freedom. On the one side is our attainment of political power and on the other the question of maintaining unity and solidarity among the diverse elements. We have been able to overthrow the Britishers from power but have we been able to make the country our own? Perhaps, Rabindranath had foreseen this state of affairs, for he had written the following words a long time ago. "If it

* *Ibid*

** *Tagore Gandhi Controversy* : Compiled
By R.K. Prabhu