

Tagore song symphony of life

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Abstract

RabindraSangeet, the songs of Rabindranath Tagore, occupies one of the top positions in the South-Asian classical music. These songs are regarded as the cultural treasure in both Bangladesh and west Bengal of India. Dealing with spirituality and transcendental love, Rabindra Sangeet is liked and adored all over the world by people. The theme of these songs are so wide and broad in range that it covers the ordinary to artistic arena and are able to represent the true feelings of every possible sector of the human society. The general ethos of the people of this part is influenced by the songs of Tagore. So, RabindraSangeet demands educated, reflective and cultured audiences to appreciate the lyrical beauty and depth of thought of his compositions. There was also a representation of the western tunes in his songs. This is for the reason; he could maintain his own distinctive messages even after using varied elements from other musical sources and these tunes can be easily identified even when he has based them on other musical forms because of this quality. So, this paper aims at identifying different artistic qualities of RabindraSangeet, i.e., the songs of Rabindranath Tagore that helped him to be crowned as the World Poet

Keywords: Bangladesh, West Bengal, South Asia, Classical Music, Western tune and transcendental love

Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), a Pirali Brahmin, from Kolkata is a seminal figure of the Bengali speaking people of West-Bengal and Bangladesh. He is considered the greatest writer in the modern Bengali literature. He was a consummate poet, novelist, educator, dramatist, singer, song writer, composer, and painter, as well as a philosopher and spiritualist too. His life work is preserved, in his variegated poetry, incomparable songs and the institution he founded, Visva-Bharati University. He was brought up in such a family where art, culture and music were fostered with great interest. The family was familiar with many western musical tunes. Rabindranath's grandfather, Dwarakanath Tagore, was well versed in western music and his elder brother, Satyendranath Tagore, used to cultivate it as well. This familial environment influenced Rabindranath Tagore to be familiar with the western culture. In his autobiography he has spoken of a book called Irish Melodies that he read in his early life thus Western influenced his literary genius. His knowledge about the western music was enhanced when at the age of seventeen he went to England to study bar-at-law and had an opportunity to live with different English families. So there is a rendition of western tunes in the songs of his musical plays like ValmikiPratibha(1881) and Kalmrgaya(1882). Rabindranath's familiarity with the Folk tunes, Kirtan, Syamasangit and Ramprasadi is seen in the songs he composed between 1884 and 1886. The use of Baul tunes became noticeable since 1905

RabindraSangeet has had a very strong influence on Bengali culture. In his songs Tagore, has given expression to love, loss, emotion passion, hope, desire, and all modes of thinking that belongs to in this part of the world. These songs don't merely render entertainment rather bear a deep philosophy. Tagore's philosophical and spiritual thought transcend all limits of language, culture and nationality. The mystic, through his songs, takes us in a spiritual quest and gives us a glimpse of an infinite in the midst of the finite, unity at the heart of all diversity. His songs don't merely entertain the audiences rather they become a flute of their own hearts. The multi-holed flute plays on scattering multi-dimensional significance of our ever colorful life. Tagore died in 1941, but his sublimity and effect of his songs seems to be eternal. In his songs, pure poetry has integrated the creator, nature and love. Human love (Prem) transforms into love and devotion for the creator (Bhakti). The collection of his 2230 songs is known as Gitabitan (garden of songs). The four major parts of this book are Puja (worship), Prem (love), Prakriti (Nature) and Bichitra (Diverse). However, the categorizations melt away in many songs. A song about rains may reveal longing for the lover. A love song may turn out to be love of the creator. Tagore was an accomplished musician, song writer, composer, and singer. This is very much true to two such works: National anthem of Bangladesh "Aamaar Sonaar Baanglaa" (my Golden Bangla) and national anthem of India. Tagore thus became the only person ever to have written the national anthems of two different nations. The citizen of Bangladesh has a deep sense of identity with Tagore and his ideas. Interestingly, the national Anthem of Sri Lanka was written by Ananda Samarakoon inspired by Rabindranath Tagore.

Discussion

Tagore's enormous and myriad creation, which is a proud inheritance of Bengali speaking people, is unparalleled of the writer's uniqueness and has deep influence from the cultural heritage of this subcontinent. Tagore songs are deeply influenced by Classical gharana (Style). The influence of the classical style is also manifested in the tunes, words and articulation of the songs. During his childhood, several music teachers from the Vishnupur gharana (Style) used to come to the Tagore house and left a deep impression on Tagore's mind. Indian Classical tradition, Baul and Kirtan influence, high Imam idealism, the Ragas, with evocative poetry and Western opera made a wonderful and matchless genre, the RabindraSangeet. In fact his liberal milieu at home helped him a lot to absorb so many thoughts, in a great ease, to form a single thread called "RabindraSangeet". In many cases, there were a mingling of Western and Eastern tradition but it did not hamper his rich philosophic overtone. Tagore's was an open cosmopolitan mind. He described his own family as

"a confluence of three cultures: Hindu, Mohammedan, and British"(Tagore, 1961).

Besides, Rabindranath composed tunes for some Vedic and Buddha hymns to create devotional songs. He also composed a number of songs with the help of South Indian tunes. The folk songs of Bengal have significantly influenced Tagore songs. He extensively used tunes and styles from shyamasangeet (Hindu religious song) and Sari Gan (one type of boatman song) to give his songs a distinctive flavor and beauty.

Tagore's songs, of all types seem to be a devotion of a devotee to God. The creator to whom this song is sung is not a Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Buddhist rather it is a prayer or devotion from a (devotee) to the Almighty that comes from the bottom of his heart.

“Rabindranath’s grandfather Dwarkanath was well known for his command of Arabic and Persian language, and Rabindranath grew up in a family atmosphere in which a deep knowledge of Sanskrit and ancient Hindu texts was combined with an understanding of Islamic traditions as well as Persian literature” (Kawabata, 1969).

Debendranath, father of Tagore made his house a domestic university for learning. Almost all his children were taught in the Thakur Bari(their home), hardly in any traditional way, and his door was open to the people with penchant of learning. So the house became a centre of cultural, literary, artistic, centre of creative learning. Debendranath was hugely influenced by Hafez of Persia. The mysticism of Hafez had a far-reaching influence upon Tagore thereby. Tagore’s poetry is deeply dominated by love, beauty and mysticism; common themes in the poetry of Hafez too. When Tagore went to Iran he did go to Hafez's tomb to offer his love for the great poet and cried while listening a song of Hafez being emotional by its tune. The influence of Hafez is very much evident in Kazi Nazrul Islam, national poet of Bangladesh,too. Nazrul used Persian words very skillfully and surpassed all before and after him.

In the initial phase of Tagore’s artistic development, it is obvious that Brahma Sangeet (Hindu religious song) moved him much. His father and elder brother both were connoisseurs of Brahma Sangeet. Historically Tagore’s grandfather, prince Dwakanath and Raja Rammohon Roy were pioneers to establish Brahomism or Brahma Samaj in kolkata in 1830 as a modernization and reformation of Hindu religion. It was quite opposed to the Brahmins, who were believer of several gods. The Brahmos thought that there was only one supreme spirit who is the preserver of our existence; immanent, transcendental, eternal, formless, infinite, most powerful, radiant, loving, light in the darkness and only one ruling principle in the universe. Brahma religion extended further to influence Tagore’s total song pattern.

Spirituality is an innate quality by which our whole life is inspired. Spiritual practice comprises of prayer, meditation, and contemplation. It searches for the connection between the Finite and The Infinite; the temporal and permanent; seen and unseen. These traits are prominent in the great Muslim Sufis like Jalaluddin Rumi, Omar Khayyam, and Muhammad Hafez and also in, the Mystics like Lalon Shah, Hason Raja of Bangladesh and Kabir of India . Spirituality is often experienced as a source of inspiration or orientation of life with infinite. Tagore’s spirituality and mysticism were largely shaped by these great thinkers of the world.

The songs of the Bauls and their life-style influenced a large swath of Bengali culture; the mystical Baul music celebrates celestial love. Baul songs of Kushtia, Rajshahi region of Bangladesh and especially that of Lalon Shah, can be merited with much certainty, had a profound impact upon Tagore. Simple Baul songs, sung with a one-stringed violin seemed to Tagore the greatest expression of Love for God. God, to the Bauls, was ‘Love’ in its supreme form. Tagore was fascinated by their simplicity of language and dulcet rustic music which made an eternal appeal to Tagore; to capture profound philosophies of life. Tagore’s own compositions were powerfully influenced by Baul ideology. His music also bears the stamp of many Baul tunes. Kazi Nazrul Islam, as well, was influenced by Baul music and its message; which offers non-sectarian devotion through love. Rabindranatha’s “Jeevan Devata” (Deity of life) is somewhat similar to that of “Moner Manush” or “Man of Heart” of Lalon Shah.” As Reba Som(Som,2009) hints

“It dawned on Tagore that the baul’s ‘Man of my Heart’ (monermanush) was no different from his jeevandeavata.”

The mysterious and mystic, “Jeevan Devata” of Tagore is his spiritual attempt towards the search for the eternal as he says in a letter to Mohit Chandra Sen

“my Jeevandeavata too, my companion in many worlds, is building for me a beautiful, eternal link of love as bridge towards a spiritual, mysterious and eternal union with God”(Tagore, 1902 in Som, 2009).

Bauls came from both low cast Muslim and Hindu communities and were almost illiterate but were amazingly rich in an evolved philosophy of life. Lalon’s song give subliminal exposures to the reality or truth that lies beyond our material plane or realism .As the Hindu Pujaris (worshipper) called them “Bhakta (devotee)” Lalon and his followers called him “Fakir” or beggar. The thought of unity, classlessness, simplicity of language along with a search for the Universal Being impressed Tagore, in a great extent. Fakirs (Bauls were called Fakir or Begger)are poor in material ability but rich in spiritual wisdom. Lalon and his followers felt the celestial pretence in their own heart and body. Their treatment of humanity and equality stirred Tagore’s cosmopolitan mind. In this regard, Tagore says, ‘The first Baul which I heard with any attention profoundly stirred my mind.’ The Baul sang:

“Where shall I meet him, the Man of my Heart?
He is lost to me and I seek him wandering from land to land” (Som, 2009).

Baul songs showed Tagore a selfless path of love. A love spreading in all the directions, even from ordinary to The Divine:

“The bold assertion of equality between man and God and the conversational tone used to address the divine deeply inspired Tagore” (Ibid).

In consequence, Tagore wrote numerous songs modeled upon Baul songs and kirtans; unknown bird or “AchinPakhi” is another motif of Lalon Sha’s song is used by Tagore as well. Being inspired by the Caged bird theme of Lalon, Tagore wrote a melodious song ‘Dui Pakhi’ (Two Birds) which appear in his collection in ‘Sonar Tori’(Golden Boat).Bhatiali and Shariganof the boatmen of rural Bengal also was heard by Tagore and he was impressed by their living in hazards and joys of the river risking their lives. This inspired Tagore to write his celebrated song:

“Let your unfettered breeze catch my sail and tear to shreds my moorings
For I am willing, I am willing to take the plunge,
.....
As the waves continue to play with me,
I will make the storm my friend
And not be daunted again by its frown
Release me, oh release me, for only in a tempest can I find
myself”. (Song No: 25, Line: 1-12)

Apart from a rich resource of philosophical wisdom, Tagore had found more valued thoughts to be impressed by the Bauls :

“ Tagore was attracted to the simple and rustic expression of harmony and equality that he found in folk music which incorporated in many of his songs and which ,over time , endeared him to Bengal’s middle classes” (Ibid).

Tappa is yet another form that has enriched Tagore songs. The use of Tappa in giving expression to Bengali emotions has been noteworthy. His Tappas utilize no discernible combination of Tals (rhythm). The use of folk tunes is also obvious in Tagore tappas.

Rabindranath has used many Tals and created himself in composing songs. These included dhamar, adatheka, surfanktachautal, adachautal,yat, jhanptal, trital, ektal, teoda, dadra, kaharba and adkhemta. In poetic measures too, Rabindranath showed some distinctiveness, especially in using multiple times. He has occasionally used multiple tempos in a single song and has skillfully mixed times and tempos to create a very unusual musical form.

“For many of his later songs Tagore chose to creat new talas just as he had formed new variations of ragas” (Ibid).

The ragas and raginis heard in his childhood managed deep influence on his songs. Rabindranath established his uniqueness by applying multiple ragas and raginis in a single song. For instance, he applied four ragas - in his song 'Achhe duhkha ache mrtyu, biraha dahana lage'.

There is sorrow, there is death, and there burns the fire of separation.
(Song No: 27, Line: 1)

Still, to him, theme was more important than ragas. In fact, RabidraSangeet is a rare blend of music, expression and emotion even in folk tunes he experimented with a mixture of ragas to create a genre of his own.

“Throughout his life Rabindranath remained intrigued by the immensely affective power of the ragas and their profound spiritual message” (Som, 2009).

There is a harmony between his lyrics and melody in the songs. It seems that his melodies come from the fathomless depth of an unknown and painful world. Tagore could invent extraordinary language for music. His language had a deep esoteric, bucolic and nostalgic whiff with which Nazrul only can be compared. His songs are sung in a restraint and each word was supposed to be articulated well. The feelings should have to be spontaneous. As it is said regarding the approach of singing Tagore’s songs,

“His advice was to sing with full-throated ease without becoming self conscious about the various expressions of the face.” (Ibid)

Suchitra Mitro, a prominent Rabindrasangeet singer, explained that

“Tagore’s songs have to be first visualized” (Ibid)

Reba Som further says that the purpose of art on other hand he felt was

“not to give expression to emotion but to use it for the creation of significant form” (Ibid)

The songs of Tagore, from a song of ordinary lover, gradually become songs of worshipper or Bhakta (devotee) to his Almighty. “Gitanjali” embodies the essence of Tagore’s poetic spirit. Gitanjali is a collection of mostly devotional and all major songs of Tagore. The word gitanjali is composed from "git", song, and "anjoli", offering, and thus means - "An offering of songs"; but the word for offering, anjoli, has a strong devotional connotation, so the title may also be interpreted as "prayer offering of song". So it can be said that the songs are written in “Bhakti Tradition”.

Gitanjali is a masterpiece of devotion. The songs of Gitanjali, philosophically conceived, are a prayer begging spiritual love to the beloved. Tagore’s coming to this state, of course, is due to his accomplishment in Brahmo songs beforehand. The poems of Gitanjali express a largely metaphysical outlook, talking about a union with the "supreme". The language suggests the union of two earthly lovers. His metaphysical journey takes him from earthly love to the type of anthropomorphic depiction of celestial love. It is quite common in the [Vaishnava](#) literature of India since the 12th century. Rabindranath Tagore encountered it also in his interactions with the [Baul](#) community in rural Bengal. The longing for surrender to the God is apparent in Gitanjali:

“I am only waiting for love to give myself up at last in to his hands.”
(Song No: 17, Line: 1)

The mentionable thing regarding Gitanjali is its Introduction. The prose translation of the book helped Tagore achieving the most prestigious Nobel award. The famous introduction is a great tribute by the great Irish poet to the bard of the East. W.B Yeats (1971, 14) could, most unhesitatingly, envisage the most enduring future of the Tagore songs in great aplomb:

“ but as the generations pass , travelers will hum them on the highway
and men rowing upon rivers, lovers , while they await one another ,shall
find , in murmuring them,”

And the continuous appeal of Tagore’s song proves Yeats to be fully correct in his prophecy.

In the 7th century A.D. the Bhakti Cult propagated worship accompanied by music and dance. The Bhakti poets believed in surrender to the Godhead and in praising the name of the lord in order to attain “Mukhti” or salvation. The Bhakti yoga had two aspects to it-The Nirguna Bhakti and The Saguna Bhakti. In Nirguna Bhakti, God or the Supreme power was a formless energy or force that had to be deeply felt or realized. These poets spoke of everyday activities as a service to God. They believed in love, surrender and in a universal religion. Saguna Bhakti tradition believed that God is endowed with supernatural qualities and human form. These poets illustrated Vishnu or Siva as God with concrete form. But the God in Gitanjali has no name and cannot be identified with any specific Indian God. God has been shown here as an all loving and engulfing essence who takes care for every one of his creation. It is interestingly near to the Nirguna Bhakti. The very music that the Bhakti poets render is a gift from God, a divine expression that cannot be realized without the Grace of God. The writer chants in the song II of the Gitanjali:

“When thou commandest me to sing it seems that my heart would break
with pride”. (Song No: 2, Line: 1)

He says again in the same song,

“All that is harsh and dissonant in my life melts in to one sweet harmony”
(Song No: 2, Line: 2).

The word ‘sweet harmony’ is significant because it has a deeper connotation; it means the harmony of his songs and the harmony of the microcosmic self with that of the Universal Being. The song again shows that only through song the poet can come near to the Infinite:

“I know thou takest pleasure in my singing.
I know that only as a singer I come before thy presence” (Song No: 2,
Line: 14-15).

The last lines of the song II remind us of the song of the Nightingale of Keats’s Ode to a Nightingale where the poet says,

Fade far away, dissolve and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;

.....
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new love pine at them beyond tomorrow (Line: 21-30).

This song of the Nightingale shows Keats the sublime vision of a spiritual world of love and joy.

Tagore’s God is very easy with the simple and loves the simple expressions of devotion than extravagant displays of religious fervor that is expressed in Gitanjali in this way:

“Here is thy footstool
...where live the poorest, and lowliest and lost” (Song No: 10, Line: 1-2).

English Romantics and British literature were guiding forces upon Tagore’s idealism. It was due to his family where thoughts from diverse sources were welcomed; Tagore’s study in London was furthered along with his liberal outlook. Interestingly enough, the Letter 33 of Philostratus, a Greek poet and sophist of the 3rd century was later adopted by Ben Jonson as the Popular English song, To Cellia of The Forest.

“Drink to me only with thine eyes” (Song No: ix, Line: 1).

And consequently, the song of Tagore “Katobaro Vebesinu Apna Vulia” (How often have I thought, that forgetting myself / I will lay my heart bare at your feet.) is a superb adaptation of Ben Johnson’s.

Tagore was a great admirer of “Irish Melodies” compiled by Thomas Moore (1779-1852). The song,

“Go where glory waits thee, But while the fame elates thee, Oh! Still
remember me (Melody Name: Maid of the Valley).

This song from famous “Irish Melodies” has been translated as the illusionary song “Aha Aji a Basante” song. (Ah! In this beautiful spring, so many flowers bloom,)

Scottish celebrated Folk Song; Auld Lang Syne of 1788 collected by Robert Burns is heard from an old shepherd.

“Should auld acquaintance be forgot,

And never brought to min’? (Line: 1-2).

This song was translated fully by Tagore in lyric and in tune as a deeply nostalgic song “Purano Sei Diner Kotha, vulbi Kire Hay O Se Chokher Dekha Moner Kotha Se Ki Vola Jay”. (Memories of those days, can one forget them, ever!).

“Phule Phule Dhale Dhale Bahekiba Mridu Bae” (It blows sweetly with the flowers) is the clear influence of another colourful and typical 'Robert Burns' song in Scottish dialect. The song has a dreamy, playful character; in its arched contour exhibits a slight nostalgia in its mostly chromatic sonorities. The song in Tagore's hand has got slightly melancholic character which is also a trade mark of Robert Burns' poem, “Ye Flowery Banks”.

“Ye flowery banks o' bonnie Doon,

How can ye blumesae fresh and fair?” (Line: 1-2)

These songs show that Tagore was much impressed by the lyrics, the orchestral movement and applied successfully in the adaptation of his songs.

Wordsworth explores the spiritual significance in Nature. While Keats's dealing of nature is purely sensuous. Tennyson believes along with Coleridge that we interpret the mood of nature according to our own mood and that nature is happy or otherwise. Nature was regarded as a phenomenon to which one could turn for guidance, spiritual sustenance and psychic restoration. Tagore saw nature emotionally and sentimentally. Nature, like Keats, is his vehicle of imagination. Like Wordsworth, it is his close companion in loneliness. Also like Shelly he invokes the noble power of nature to sweep away the corrupting forces developing on earth. Tagore also deeply felt a spiritual communion with the nature. Through nature he becomes one with the universe and to the infinite.

Nature poetry is not new to literature. Eco-criticism is an emerging critical theory this also makes us think in a bio-centric way. It allows us to study a poem from a new perspective; that is from nature's perspective. In “The Gardener” Tagore brings out the plight of a tamed bird. One bird is in a cage and the other in the forest. Both of them meet and fall in love. The poem has been rendered to a beautiful song. The free bird cries,

“O my love let us fly to the wood.”

The caged bird whispers,

“Come hither, let us both live in the cage”

The free bird says again,

“among the bars, where is there room to spread one's wings ?.

Alas! The cage bird cries,

I should not know where to sit perched in the sky.”(Line No: 4-18)

Here both the birds are of same type but the problem is their brought up. One is a domesticated bird and the other is a free bird. The cage bird even has forgotten how to sing but it can imitate its master's voice. The free bird knows that the song of nature can never be taught, they all are the part of the system of the birds. Here the question of the culture versus nature arises.

It is also a problem with Wordsworth; the growing civilization and mushrooming urbanization of the then England had an adverse effect upon nature. The Industrial Revolution and its aftermath began to destroy the ecological balance. That is why; the river, Wye was weeping with the poison of civilization and the poet hears:

“The still, sad music of humanity,” (Tintern Abbey, Line: 93)

On the other hand, nature was the source of unlimited joy for both Wordsworth and Tagore; as with the lovely scenery of Daffodils Wordsworth would be enchanted. He says in Daffodils,

.....my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils, (Line: 23-24)

In the similar fashion Tagore achieves his sublime bliss. In one of his songs:

“The sun and star-studded skies---a world throbbing with life
In the midst of which have I found my place
In wonder thus, does my song arise!
.....
On blades of grass have my feet stepped along the forest path
My mind has started at the heady fragrance of flowers
The gift of your joy are scattered all around
In wonder thus, does my song arise!” (Song No: 19, Line: 1-11).

Unlike the conservative notions of his time, Tagore would write his work modeled upon the western writers; in fact he had a clear grasp of the minds of the great Romantics of England. In a well known song of Tagore, he praises the beauty of the Paush (Autumn) which remarkably reminds Keats’s Ode to Autumn, Keats, almost, made Autumn a paradise, with its natural beauty, delicious fruits and capabilities of elation.

In the same manner, Tagore also discovers the heaven in this world, in disguise. The similarities between Tagore and Keats are not fortuitous rather Tagore ardently followed the romantic quest that was paved way by the great English Romantics. The charming similarity of Keats and Tagore starlets the careful readers. The song 'Paush toder Dak Diase'or Autumn hails you ,is a remarkable song:

“The season of Paush hails you, come hither, come hither
Her platter is filled with ripe harvest, come let us celebrate,
An intoxicating breeze rouses forest nymphs in the paddy fields
.....
The flute of the fields gladdens the skies
Who can stay at home –come unbolt the doors
The light smiles upon the tip of dew-drenched paddy stalks
And the earth can scarcely contain her overflowing happiness
Come let us celebrate” (Song No: 36, Line: 1-10).

Keats sees life through the nature; Tagore also sees life through phenomenal beauty; like Keats he discovers the presence of god in disguise in Beauty and Love that is revealed to us in the clandestine nature.

In the same way the iconic and symbolic song of 'Boishakh', the first month of Bengali year, "Eso he Boishakh" seems to be an imitation of 'Ode to the West Wind' by P.B Shelly where he says,

wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an encounter fleeing. (Line: 1-3)
.....

He again considers the west wind as,

The trumpet of prophecy.....! (Line: 70)

In the song "Eso he Boishakh" too Tagore, like Shelly invokes the fierce power of the wind to clear away the injustices and obsolete orders to usher the new:

Come on O Baishakh, come on, come on!
By the force of your ascetic breathe
Get rid of everything moribund.

Blow away the refuse-heap of yesteryear.
Let all sad memories go,
Let forgotten song remain so;
Let steamy tears vanish in the sky.
Let all tiredness go,
Let infirmity be whisked away,
Let the earth be purified by fire.
The languor of the wet and damp:
Dry it up with your heated breath.
Please blow, blow on your conch-shell
to announce your arrival;
And disperse all illusory mist. (Translated by Shafi U Ahmed, Page: 181,
Line: 1-15).

The symbolic meaning is same for the both to drive away the deadened and weaker systems and to foretell a newer and fresh system to rule the future. The symbolic words of this song like 'ascetic breath' and 'conch shell' reminds Shelly's 'breath of Autumn's being' and 'trumpet' prove most fascinatingly the great writers were thinking alike.

Tagore wanted to teach us that the universe is a manifestation of God and there is no unbridgeable gulf between our world and God's, and that the God is one who can provide the greatest love and joy. This is evident in the songs of the Gitabitan and in the songs of Gitanjali.

This song from Gitanjali shows his spiritual affinity with God:

"The light of thy music illumines the world.
The life breath of thy music runs from sky to sky.
The holy stream of thy music breaks through all stony obstacles and
rushes on" (Song No: 3, Line: 3-5).

The ubiquity of god in Tagore's work is a devotional mode where the philosopher or the seeker of the divine becomes all with the world. Tagore finds the glory of God in everything and everywhere. He experiences the urge of a complete surrender to The Divine. Tagore's Upanisadic ideas are expressed in his book 'Sadhana', where he discusses the individual's path to divine consciousness.

In Sadhana (p, 159) the necessity of an apprehension of God is reiterated in this way

“Man becomes true if in his life he can apprehend God; if not, it is the greatest calamity for him”

The poetry supported by music becomes the expression of the vibrant mind and soul which is tuned with the rhythm of the universe. According to Tagore, music serves our endeavor to feel the infinite. He says in a song

“You are there, Oh lord of the world,
Shrouded in endless mystery.
Silent and secluded you always are
beyond a veil of Majesty.” (Translated by Shafi U Ahmed, Page: 39,
Line: 1-4).

Tagore songs link the human with the cosmic world; music raises our mind to that cosmic sphere where we feel we are in communion with the universal being.

In the flow of endless time
The world swings in ebb and tide.
And the blood flow within my pulse
Is governed by its might.
And so, my songs rise in wonder! (Ibid, Page: 165, Line: 1-4)

To Tagore True Time is an illuminated Moment when the clandestine presence of God, awakens him spiritually. As he contemplates:

On the green fringes of the deep blue seas
Have I seen her in passing ---the unparallel one!
And realized the truth that can never be disputed
That she remains in the universal consciousness of beauty;

Again in the same song he says about his sudden spiritual wake

In spurts and moments will I find her” (Song No: 50, Line: 1-6).

How to feel that time: that spiritual illumination. It is one type of intuition; the deepest Nirvana and one type of revelation .Which happens as well in the mind of The Scholar Gipsy of Matthew Arnold “Bur it needs heaven sent moments for this skill”. Furthermore, The Epiphany (sudden moment of truth) of James Joyce's hero Stephan can be compared with that of Tagore's spiritual awakening. Wordsworth by “spots in time” in Prelude means it in the same way. It can be called a superior type of Nostalgia.

Platonic or spiritual love is rarely as sweetly and deeply captured as Rabindranath did in Bengali literature; it is realization of the heavenly love as contrasted with physical

gratification. It is pacific, slow and profound. It is a pure type of quintessential feeling; a metaphysical feeling. The following song very exquisitely captures this mood.

With love my Dearest, quietly, and with due care
Write my name as your devotee
On the temple of your mind.” (Translated by Shafi U Ahmed, Page: 42,
Line: 1-4).

The words ‘love’, ‘Dearest’, ‘quietly’, ‘devotee’, ‘temple’ etc. used above denote spiritual love at its best. Tagore must have read Spenserian sonnets before writing this song. The “Sonnet 1” by Edmund Spenser from ‘Amoretti’ cycle, of 1595 has some fascinating closeness, in ideas, with the above song of Tagore. Spenser’s using of ‘Lilly hands’ ‘bleeding book’ ‘dying spright’ ‘sacred brooke’ ‘Angels blessed look’ ‘heavens bliss’ all are in the same line as Tagore’s sanctified love offering.

Conclusion

Tagore was opposed to nationalism and insularity, as a matter of principle, and instead promoted spiritual values and the creation of a new world culture founded in multi-culture, diversity and tolerance. He served as a spiritual and creative inspiration, indeed, to the whole world. He was quite knowledgeable to the western culture. His works are an outstanding fusion of the East and the West; classical and the modern; ordinary and the sublime to show his vision of universal brotherhood of man. He was remarkably the first one to do this. He is truly a man of the whole earth who transcends all limits to scatter the love of God; practice of Goodness; and meaningfulness of the creation of the creator.

Notes

1. All textual references of John Keats and P. B. Shelly, Robert Burns and William Wordsworth are to the Norton Anthology of English Literature, Sixth Edition, Vol. 2, 1993 Abrams, M. H. (ed.). New York: Norton.

2. All textual references of Rabindranath Tagore are to Rabindranath Tagore, *The Singer and His Song*, Reba Som, 2009, Penguin Group, New Delhi,; Sadhana, *The Realization of Life*, 2002, Rupa & co, New Delhi ; Gitanjali (Song offerings), Rabindranath Tagore, With an introduction by W B Yeats, 1971, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York.; *Gitabitan* . Md. Moksed Ali (Pub.), 2006, Salma Book Depot. 38/2 Banglabazar, Dhaka, 1100, and *Songs of Rabindranath Tagore*, Shafi U Ahmed, 2010, Purana Paltan Lane, Dhaka 1000

3. The textual references of ‘To Celia’ are to *The Forrest*, song no .ix by Ben Jonson, First folio, Printed and published by Willam Stansby, in 1616, London.

4. The textual references of ‘Maid of the Valley’ of Thomas Moore’s melody, *Maid of the Valley* are to *Irish Melodies*, Vol.No:1, 1808.

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1. Som, R. (2009). *Rabindranath Tagore, The Singer and His Song*, Penguin Group, p.38-143

2. Tagore, R. (1961) *The Religion of Man*, 2nd Edition, London Unwin, p.105.

3.Kawabata, Y. (1969), *The Existence and Discovery of Beauty*, translated by V. H. Viglielmo, Tokyo: The Mainichi Newspapers, p.56-57.

4. Yeats, W.B. (1971), *Gitanjali, (Song offerings)*, Introduction, Macmillan Publishing Company, 866, Third Avenue, NY10022, p.14.

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