

## **AN OUTLINE SKETCH ON R. N. TAGORE AS A POET**

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**Abstract-** This article elaborates the poetry and poetic genius of R.N. Tagore who talks about nation beyond caste, colour and religion. As a world poet he explored the theme of peace, love and divinity through his poems. In his poems Tagore considers several metaphysical issues too, relating to body and soul, birth and death, mortality and immortality, bondage and salvation. The main aim of this paper is to analyse the poetic genius and poetic versatility of Tagore as a world genius.

**Keywords-** Multifaceted, Testimony, Devotional, Spiritual, Demonstration, Musicality, Verbosity and sentimentality.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Rabindranath Tagore's literary genius was indeed multifaceted, Tagore was a poet, a dramatist, a novelist, a short-story writer, a philosopher, a musician, a painter, an educationist, a dreamer, a humanist, a prophet, a nationalist, and on top of all an international. It was Indeed our great good luck that he got time Nobel Prize for

Literature in 1913, and up to this day no other writer from India or Asia has been able to receive this Coveted literary prize, Tagore wrote primarily in his mother-tongue, Bengali, but he had a superb mastery also over English language. He translated several of his poems, into English, and these translations constitute a magnificent testimony to his excellence in English. (Introduction to Tagore; 1982)

### **II. TAGORE AND HIS POETIC DIVERSITY**

Rabindranath Tagore wrote the largest number of lyrics ever attempted by any poet so far, and he could be able to do so because his active literary career covered a period of almost sixty-five years. Although a few collected volumes of his poems and plays have already come out, his better known books of poems are Gitanjali, The Crescent Moon, The Gardener, The Fruit-Gathering, Lover's Gift, Crossing and the Fugitive, The Child is his only poem of considerable length that he wrote originally in English. Tagore

wrote a number of plays, of which Mukta-Dhara, Chitra and Red Oleanders deserve special mention. We may refer to The Home and the World and Gora as the more important novels among his fictional works. Similarly, Tagore is widely acclaimed as a thinker on the strength of such of his philosophical books as Creative unity and The Religion of Men. He tells us a good deal about himself in his autobiographical masterpiece entitled Reminiscences.

At the very outset we have to make this amply clear that we should consider Tagore's English poems not really as translations but as poems in English in their own right. As a poet he was deeply influenced by the Bengal Vaishava cult, by the Indian devotional poetry, by Chandidas, Vidyapati and Kabir, by the nineteenth-century English Romantics as also by the Victorian poets. As we go through his poems, mostly the Gitanjali poems, we feel as if we are being wafted into the realm of spiritual ecstasy and trance. The theme that he deals with in his poems are indeed the elemental subjects of all lyric poetry, God, Nature, Love, Childhood or Innocence, Life and Death. The Gitanjali poems are, truly speaking, the songs of bhakti or devotion, and in them we do find the unmistakable quality

of prayer, pleading and exultation. All these poems or songs are characterized by a great variety of moods and approaches, but they all lead to a quest for the Divine. What is still more important about these poems or songs is the fact that the images, the concepts the longing, the realization, the basic experience underlying the poems ...all these are qualified by the uniquely quaint flavour of Indianness.

### III. THEMES OF HIS POEMS

In his poems Tagore considers several metaphysical issues too, relating to body and soul, birth and death, mortality and immortality, the Finite and the Infinite, bondage and salvation. However, he offers us the conclusion that true salvation does not lie in escaping from the problems, according to him, it lies, instead in facing them with boldness and courage. Tagore has written poems on children, on child's innocence, and these poems present to us a peculiar amalgam of fact and fantasy, humor and mysticism, reality and fancy. We may say with a reasonable degree of sureness that though he writes about love, both in its sublime and sensual aspects, his poems have purity and an intensity of their own, and it is extremely difficult to be indifferent to the

philosophical overtones of his poems in general. Tagore's poems are indeed the poems of longing and hope, of helplessness and agony, of dejection and optimism. (IWE;1962)

#### IV. NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE OF HIS POEMS

Tagore's poems are written mostly in poetic prose, and though the lines vary in tone, mood and length, the poet makes a perfect demonstration of his verbal control, precision of imagery, and his sense of disciplined rhythm. It is only natural that in this respect he is compared with Walt Whitman who is supposed to be the pioneer of free verse in the modern times. Tagore may be compared with Whitman in yet another respect, for their poems have more or less a similar kind of allegorical or symbolical make-up.

Tagore's reputation as a poet has been swinging between the two extremes of uncritical praise and downright condemnation. Even Ezra Pound and W.E. Yeats, who at one time admired him as a poet, later turned sharply critical of him. It is generally said that Tagore's poems are vague and unnecessarily clumsy in thought, that they suffer from dreaminess and mistiness, that they present to us a

poor and thin spectacle of dissolving colours, that they are cheaply traditional, and that they suffer from excessive musicality. Some of these charges may seem to be a little exaggerated, but the others have plenty of substance in them. In this regard we may take up an instance from Tagore's poem ;

All my boughs break into blossom,

At your passing breath and whisper,

All my leavers break into tumult of surrender at your kisses. (**Breezy April, line- 13-16**)

#### V. CONCLUSION

To a modern mind that has fed itself upon the poetry of Pound and Eliot and Auden, these lines would make absolutely no sense and appeal. There is indeed sublimity in his poetry, but we do also get in it a good deal of padding and verbosity and sentimentality. Tagore is indeed an unequal poet. However, with all his shortcomings he has his own greatness as a poet, and his contributions to Indo English poetry are indeed great.

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