

संशोधक

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प्रकाशक : इतिहासाचार्य वि.का.राजवाडे संशोधन मंडळ, धुळे



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या संस्थेचे त्रैमासिक

॥ संशोधक ॥

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विशेष सूचना : संशोधक त्रैमासिकाची वर्गणी चेक/ड्राफ्टने 'संशोधक त्रैमासिक राजवाडे मंडळ, धुळे' या नावाने पाठवावी.

मुखपृष्ठ चित्र : चंद्रावरील उतरलेले यान

महाराष्ट्र राज्य साहित्य आणि संस्कृती मंडळाने या नियतकालिकेच्या प्रकाशनार्थ अनुदान दिले आहे. या नियतकालिकेतील लेखकांच्या विचारांशी मंडळ व शासन सहमत असेलच असे नाही.



Tagore's Gitanjali : Unveiling Bhakti Marg (path of devotion to God) for the Liberation of Mankind

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Abstract :

Rabindranath Tagore is the most adorable poet in India and one of the influencing spiritualists of his age. He is among an epoch making poets like Emerson, Walt Whitman, Goethe, Wordsworth and Aurobindo who enlightened people with their poetry full of faith, love, compassion, and feeling of surrender to Almighty. If Emerson transcends through his physical self and immerses into Supreme Being. Whitman realises the universal non-duality in his 'Song of Myself'. If Wordsworth feels God in every manifestation in Nature, Aurobindo realises the element of consciousness in every Creation. In this sublime tradition of spiritualists, Tagore's abode is above all. He appears like a magnanimous lighthouse showing the path of devotion to God and thereby attaining liberation through the purification of soul. Prayer, surrender, faith, love and compassion. This research paper explores how Tagore has revealed the Bhakti Marg (the path devotion to God) in his epic work Gitanjali for the liberation of mankind; how every song of him arises the feeling of dedication to Almighty and transforms reader into selfless pure soul which helps him to liberate from the pains and sufferings of worldly life.

Keywords : Bhakti Marg, liberation, surrender, purification of soul, transformation, prayer, love, compassion.



Gitanjali which means 'song offerings to God' is a collection of 103 devotional songs praising the power of Creator. In this anthology, Tagore directs the whole humankind towards the ultimate truth that all beings are in the hands of Supreme Power; the eternal immortal God is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient and the ruler and master of every living and non-living phenomena. So the ultimate wisdom for a man should be to surrender and submit himself to the power of God and sing the songs in the praise of Him. Such sublime feeling will purify the soul of human being and liberate him from all the pains and suffering of earthly life. In the very first song in Gitanjali, Tagore in invokes God with the feeling of deep surrender :

Thou hast made me endless, such is the 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 hills and dales, and hast breathed through it
melodies eternally new.¹

In this way, the poet has been completely merged into the infinite power of Creator and forgot his trivial and micro existence. He has become a non-entity as if a drop merged into the ocean or a paper boat is being floated on the tremendous waves of the infinite ocean.

Even W B Yeats has also showered all his praise for the poet in his famous introduction to Gitanjali as he says :

to read one line of his to forget all the troubles of the world.²

India has a rich tradition of Bhakti poetry (devotional poetry) from ancient times. It was more flourished in medieval era when great saints like Kabir, Rahim, Mirabai, Surdas, Tulsidas, Gyneshwar, Eknath, Namdev, Tukaram and Ramdas popularised there devotional songs (doha, chaupai, abhanga etc.) These



devotional songs are sung everywhere in India in the congregations in temples and various religious places. These devotional songs, which are called 'bhajans' are sung by group of singers accompanied by musical instruments such as harmonium, tabla and cymbals. While singing the bhajans whole congregation is entranced admiring Almighty. These bhajans help the rural folk to forget the pains and troubles of their day-to-day life.

The ancient scriptures like Vedas and Upanishads have described three paths for the liberation or the salvation of mankind. These are Gyan Marg, Karma Marg and Bhakti Marg. Gyan Marg means 'the path of knowledge'. According to Indian scriptures, 'knowing' the truth liberates mankind from ignorance and leads him towards wisdom. It emancipates the individual from the darkness of ignorance and takes him towards the light of knowledge. The Karma Marg is the path of action. The liberation through Karma Marg is best preached by Lord Krishna in the holy scripture Bhagavad Gita. Lord Krishna insists on the selfless action or the action without any grudge or expectations. When the doer undertakes any action selflessly then he is free from the joy or sorrow arising from the result or the fruit of that action and enjoys the feeling of freedom. The third path of liberation is Bhakti Marg i.e. the path of devotion to God. If a man surrenders himself to the eternal, immortal universal power or the Creator; if he dedicates himself at the will of Almighty, at once he feels emancipated from the painful bondages of day-to-day life. Then all the evil thoughts in him are melted and he attains purity of soul and refracts love, bliss, peace and compassion for his fellow brothers.

In Gitanjali, Tagore seems completely submitted at the will of God. Like an ardent devotee, he listens and follows every command of Almighty. He is so overwhelmed by the unseen presence of God in him that tears start flowing in his eyes and his heart is purified



and he feels free from all the pains. The poet expresses his experience :

When thou commandest me to sing it seems 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.³

After being one with the Supreme, the poet feels blessed and in response, as an act of gratitude, he shows determination to keep himself away from all evils and untruth. He will keep his body pure knowing that God resides in him; he will keep his heart innocent knowing that God dwells in the innermost shrine of his heart. The poet utters :

Life of my life, I shall ever try to keep my body pure,
knowing that thy living touch is upon all my limbs.
I shall every try to keep all untruths out from my
thoughts, knowing that thou art that truth which has
kindled the light of reason in my mind.⁴

Conclusion :

In this way, Rabindranath Tagore's Gitanjali is a saga, a journey towards salvation. The legendary work Gitanjali revives Bhakti Marg (path of devotion to God) for the liberation of mankind that has been taught by many saints in India through their immortal verses. His all 103 songs refract an urge to merge into the infinite power of Supreme Being and thereby purifying oneself from all the feverish evils and nuisance and transforming him into a pure soul full of love, peace, prayer and compassion for the whole humanity. In Gitanjali, Tagore reveals the power of surrender and prayer to God and the miraculous which takes place in the heart and mind of the devotee. It is the sublime creativity of the devotional verses in Bhakti tradition of India.



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