



REVIEW OF RESEARCH

ISSN: 2249-894X

IMPACT FACTOR : 5.7631(UIF)

VOLUME - 10 | ISSUE - 6 | MARCH - 2021



RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S THOUGHTS ON LOVE: A STUDY IN BRIEF

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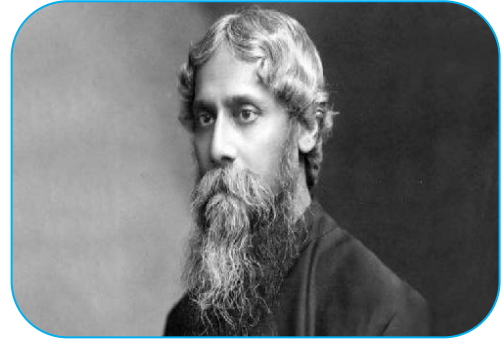
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ABSTRACT

Rabindranath Tagore (7 May 1861- 7 August 1941) who wrote in Bengali, a provincial language in India was the first Asian to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 for his volume of poems Gitanjali (Song Offerings) which was translated into English free verse by the poet himself. W.B. Yeats wrote the Introduction. Other than poems, short stories, novels, plays etc. he wrote 2200 songs all of which are rich in content and are highly admired. His was a new style of singing, a special tune which was absolutely unique. Those who listen to his songs can identify them by the very tune even if the name of the composer is not known.



KEYWORDS: *rabindranath tagore's, love, thoughts,devotion.*

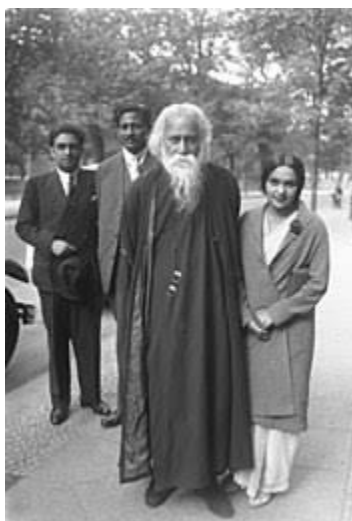
INTRODUCTION

Rabindranath Tagore's songs on Love were compiled by Tagore himself and chiefly find place in Volume II of Gitavitan under the title Prem, a word in Bengali in which Tagore wrote. They are three hundred ninety-three in number. Besides them, there are quite a number that are found in his dance dramas. Substantially, these are contextual, but even if taken off from the contexts, these are free by themselves.



Prem primarily means 'love'. But love eludes any definition. Its synonyms are tenderness, fondness, predilection, warmth, passion, adoration. Love, affection, devotion - all mean a deep and

enduring emotional regard, usually for another person. While 'love' refers to bisexual relationship, having its origin in divine instinct – all instincts in beings are all God-gifted, it is also manifest in different forms. Men prefer to restrict the applicability of the term to bisexual relationship because that is a natural instinct elemental to the process of creation or procreation and hence, the other forms of love are named affection, loyalty, devotion, adoration, regard, admiration, inclination, fondness, friendliness and the like. Actually, love, even as a bisexual relationship comprises all emotions just spoken of. Friendship is the highest form of love even when it happens between a man and a woman, sexually or asexually. Love of God, considered a superhuman entity, is called worshipfulness or devotion, but such a feeling is impossible without an element of love. Love, in the right sense, is closeness or affinity and seeks togetherness, which is communion or consummation. When it is so, it is called fulfillment. The test of fulfillment is in separation; if separation brings about sadness and evokes a keen desire for re-union, it can be said that love is fulfilled. However, true love – the marriage of the true minds as Shakespeare calls it in his Sonnet No: is never fulfilled. The deeper it is, the greater is the aspiration. Passion is a divine urge and so is lust, excessive passion, which is a 'musth' or 'must'. Lustfulness, however, is not an appreciable emotion as that leads to rape, molestation and other acts that harm the society. Society is a repressive institution, and however strong our argument be, we must accept it. Love is a pure emotion, not sans passion, but in no way does it leave room for perversion. Actually, if 'love is too often profaned', it is our civilization that has profaned it and perverted it. And this perversion owes a great deal to bio-technology. Experience of orgasm through physical intercourse is also a divine experience; it effects a catharsis which is necessary for maintenance of sound health and mind.



Love is an emotion of strong affection and personal attachment. In philosophical context, love is a virtue representing all of human kindness, compassion, and affection. Love is central to many religions, as in the Christian phrase, "God is love" or Agape in the Canonical gospels. Love may also be described as actions towards others (or oneself) based on compassion, or as actions towards others based on affection. In English, love refers to a variety of different feelings, states, and attitudes, ranging from pleasure ("I loved that meal") to interpersonal attraction ("I love my partner"). "Love" may refer specifically to the passionate desire and intimacy of romantic love, to the sexual love of eros, to the emotional closeness of familial love, or the platonic love that defines friendship, to the profound oneness or devotion of religious love. This diversity of uses and meanings, combined with the complexity of the feelings involved, makes love unusually difficult to consistently define, even compared to other emotional states. Love in its various forms acts as a major facilitator of interpersonal relationships and, owing to its central psychological importance, is one of the most common themes in the creative arts. Love may be understood a part of the survival instinct, a function keep human beings together against menaces and to facilitate the continuation of the species.



The word "love" can have a variety of related but distinct meanings in different contexts. Often, other languages use multiple words to express some of the different concepts that English relies mainly on "love" to encapsulate; one example is the plurality of Greek words for "love." Cultural differences in conceptualizing love thus make it doubly difficult to establish any universal definition.

Although the nature or essence of love is a subject of frequent debate, different aspects of the word can be clarified by determining what isn't love. As a general expression of positive sentiment (a stronger form of like), love is commonly contrasted with hate (or neutral apathy); as a less sexual and more emotionally intimate form of romantic attachment, love is commonly contrasted with lust; and as an interpersonal relationship with romantic overtones, love is sometimes contrasted with friendship, although the word love is often applied to close friendships.



Tagore in his love songs, if not in his songs on worship, makes us join him, as the emotions that he inlays in his songs are identical with ours. It is quite possible that ordinary men cannot identify with Tagore in their attitude to love, not having frames of mind like the poet's, it is undeniable that he touches the chord of every heart now or later. The note of sublimity that is marked characteristic of Tagore's song on love is not an ordinary human emotion, but it is human. Tagore's songs on 'love and languishment', of ecstasy and dejection, the keen desire to be akin, and calm acceptance of lot when love remains unrequited, - in any one or more of these moods, we share with Tagore for his gamut is extensive. In Tagore, we find no fury and he does not sing to quiet his fretful nerves. His love songs are spontaneous effusions in moments of emotions when they come, but all his love songs are string with a chord which is spirituality. The emotions are human, yet they are transcendental. Desire for communion is present, but the passion is cool and sedate sans sensuality. His desire for communion is the desire for fulfilment; and Tagore is all sedate if it does not come that way. His core accent is on everlasting love - mingling of the two souls having connexion with the Supreme Soul. Unrequited love does not lead to dejection; the mood is overcome by a magnanimous spirit of satisfaction with what has been attained. Tennyson says in In Memoriam : It's better to have loved and lost / Than never to have loved at all." Tagore insists that human love is real, but more fulfilling is the bond of the souls. Love, in its glory, quietens the desire, but at the same time sublimates the mind. That makes sense when it is said that it difficult to distinguish Tagore's songs on worship and those on love. Human love acquires purity in Tagore, and more often than not, forms the foundation of worship. This is so because Tagore

never ever looked at human hearts as separated from the cosmic principle. The heart that craves for union with human frame also aspires to be linked up with the Brahman or the Supreme Self. Varied are the thoughts, feelings and emotions of man; but the variety which is real ultimately loses itself in blissful communion with the ultimately reality. Hence, the song :

Amara parana jaha chay...

You are the sole object of my heart's desire, my Love,
None else this world offers me, nothing else, indeed ;
If you find no joy with me, you may go elsewhere at your will,
But you shall dwell in my heart – nothing else do I need.

Doleful, I shall miss you, yet you will hold my heart
Endlessly for days and nights, for months and years;
If someone captures your mind, and you never turn back to me
I shall be pining, but may you have all your cheers.



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