



1. Manjula Singh  
2. DR. Anurag Agrawal

## Imagery And Symbolism Signifying Philosophy Mysticism And Humanism

1. Research Scholar, 2. Associate Professor, Department of English J.S.  
University Shikohabad Firozabad (U.P.) India

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**Abstract:** *Rabindranath Tagore, the winner of Nobel Prize for Literature, is the first great writer whose creative endeavours - poetry, prose, drama present a superb Triveni of Philosophy, mysticism and humanism. A literary colossus that he is, he towers over the Indian rainbow - coloured panorama, articulating melodiously the feelings, aspirations and dreams of this motherland, or rather the whole of mankind. Dr. Radhakrishnan justly observes that Tagore "touches the temporal with the light of the eternal". As a consequence, his writings are the most comprehensive expression of the spirit, extrinsic as well as intrinsic, of Indian social, cultural, religious and philosophical heritage, enriched and enlivened by modern western thought. In his literary excursion we come across a transcendental philosopher, a cosmopolitan visionary, a deeply religious mystic and a thoroughgoing humanist, transcending all myopic considerations and territorial or natural boundaries and prejudices. His appearance on the literary horizons of India signalled the diffusion of the renaissance marked by intense socio-political awareness, national resurgence, and patriotic upsurge.*

**Key Words:** Nobel prize, Indian rainbow, modern western thought, territorial, natural boundaries, prejudices.

The fact that Tagore was a versatile genius has been universally acknowledged. His creative period was spread over sixty years during which he produced volumes of sublime poetry, impassioned and thought provoking prose and many plays imbued with humanitarianism. He drew on traditional Hindu themes and lent them universality, poignancy and grandeur of high order. Throughout his soulful writings there emerge deep emotions of joy, sorrow and yearning that reflect his intimate communion with nature: "The Swan has taken its flight to the lake beyond the mountains" and "The Sky Wails in distress and my eyes are sleepless".

Tagore radiated his inner divine grace and was an 'anadamaya purusha'- realized sage, a complete man who has spread out motivation of moral life and was hailed as a 'Maha Kavi', a modern rishi. He pursued a religion of his own, an emancipated religion embracing all the aspects of life in the life of his own vision shaped by the ideals in the Upanishads - a perennial source of inspiration for Tagore. He believed in the Supreme Being in all that was living. The Upanishads made a great impact on him. "For Western Scholars the great religious scriptures of India seem to possess merely a retrospective and archeological interest but to us they are of living importance...." He felt that "All the great utterances of man have to be judged not by the letter but by the spirit - spirit which unfolds itself with the growth of life in history." For him the verses of the Upanishads and the teachings of the Buddha emanate spirituality that he used in life as well as in preaching. He is a mystic philosopher who asks

**'From delusion lead me to truth**

**From darkness lead me to life**

**From death lead me to immortality'.**

By fifty-one years of age, Tagore had already produced more than twenty odd books of verses and a dozen plays besides short stories, essays and three major novels. 'The Great Sentinal' as Gandhi had called him, Tagore believed in cultural progress and imbibed from his father a deep sense of the unity of life. All his values were those of truth, beauty and goodness. The harmony between nature and man was derived from his consciousness of the underlying unity of all beings. He believed that conflicts only arose when men place their own sectional interests on a pedestal. Untouchability was a sore point with him. He felt that it was one of the darkest spots degrading humanity in the estimation of the civilized world and if not foiled, it would remain an everlasting shame and agony. In February



1933 he contributed a translation of a poem to the first issue of Gandhi's new journal on untouchability called Harijan. Followed by this he wrote Chandalika (The Untouchable maid) a drama based on an old Buddhist legend. From truth to love and then love to light, mysticism is the serene grace of All Beautiful. Rabindranath Tagore made an adventure of his own beyond consciousness. He has a pattern of mystic imageries seeking the All Beautiful with every turn of inwardness. With the vision and the purity of truth Tagore makes emotion crystallized in consciousness. To accept the All Beautiful as truth and purity, Tagore looks within and prepares for a beyonding of all consciousness. "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 ever try to keep all untruths but from my thoughts, knowing that thou art that truth which has kindled' the light of reason in my mind.

I shall ever try to drive all evils away from my heart and keep my love in flower, knowing that thou hast thy seat in the inmost shrine of my heart. And it shall be my endeavour to reveal thee in my actions; knowing it is thy power that gives me strength to act" The poet waits for the awakening within himself as he sings the mystic music- "Light, oh where is the light!

Kindle it with the burning fire of desire! It thunders and the wind rushes screaming through the void. The night is black as the black stone. Let not the hours pass by in the dark. Kindle the lamp of love with thy life" .

**With mysticism Tagore prepares to welcome the innermost one.**

**He it is, the innermost one, who awakens**

**My being with his deep hidden touches.**

**He it is who puts his enchantment**

**Upon these eyes and joyfully plays on the chords of my**

**Heart in varied cadence of pleasure and pain**

**Days come and ages pass, and it is ever He who moves**

**My heart in many a name, in many a guise, in**

**Many a rapture of joy and of sorrow"**

Tagore was essentially a poet and contributed greatly to the country's cultural development. More than that, he was intensely human and humane. He loved his people and was a patriot who was loyal to mankind. All his life he voiced his sentiments for social justice, for the right of the poor to material well-being. He spoke for child development and woman for her equal place in society with man. In his poetry and plays is reflected his religion of man and his disgust with base passions. There emerges his constant fight for freedom of the human personality from all strifes, be it tyranny of outside forces or man's own passion for something exceeding limits. His poems present him as a delicate dreamer, a mystic seeking the view of a sunny world. Its poetry is a faithful transcript of his soul generating a creative urge. Over seven thousand poems have been rendered into English, a pale shadow of the original which has limited the true image of Tagore, the poet.

Stopford Brooke read Tagore's Gitanjali with more than admiration, and found great spiritual help, and joy they exuberate and for the love of beauty which they deepen." There is serene mysticism in Gitanjali. His poetry is the path to spiritual salvation for this meaningless existence. The poems reflect his aesthetic and spiritual experiences, his diverse thoughts and his vision into man and nature and into life and reality. His mystical intuitions descend to irradiate his poetry with unearthly lights and reveal his myth-making imagination. His mind is tinted with conflicts that create tensions and enrich his poetry which awakens the reader spiritually. Exquisite lyricism and mysticism of the soul open up vast expanses.

**As is the solitary star of the dark evening star**

**Quivers the light of heaven with its immense mystery**

**In thine eyes, in the depth of their darkness**



There shines a soul beam tremulous with wide mystery. These lines create surpassing beauty. With them we reach the deep sky, watch the light closely yet unfamiliar with the mystery which conveys the version of a spiritual order. Deep mysticism, as revealed in Vain Efforts (Nishphal Prayas), The Soul's Treasure (Ridaya Dhan) The Solitary Hermitage (Nivrita Asram) reveals a swift finality, a desire to escape the pain of love : Nothing, there is nothing : Vain is the quest Vain like the lamp of love His image - seeking imagination becomes a strong desire. His futile search for the elusive spirit in earthly beauty and love is evident. In The Man Speaks he conjures up an image of beauty rising (like Venus) from the sea. The vision brings forth hushed wonder -

"Boundless is the mystery of this universe pulsing with the music of the starry spheres. In their midst you blossomed like a full blown lotus. And standing entranced on the bank I was mad with its fragrance."

Along with love and admiration is his poetry there is an awe of a mystic awareness. He invokes love for serenity which carries a deep meaning. To remain aware of practicality of human existence he creates a mystic endearment where togetherness of the heart and mind of the lover and the beloved is adorned with the presence of a certain resource.

**The flute plays on from morn till evening  
and makes me inactive in all work  
Ah, who plays it on and for what resonance**

The flute alone is aware of the mystery of the word; it is the whispering that none other can hear is the resonance. His true mystic image is revealed in "Love aches one whom one loves."

For Tagore love means a promise of mystic beckoning and he is true to it even during most trying times. He projects depth of love at the time of parting and his fondness for its mystic beauty.

**My mind desires not to depart  
Crossing your door I lose myself.  
Immersed as it were, in the unfathomable sea of separation  
Trekking on the way, everything do I behold to be false,  
Timeless does the wide world beckon behind.  
All the time does my mind ache.  
Ah nothing did I offer you,  
When I depart, I halt at every step  
And return for reasons unknown**

These lines reveal immense grief and loneliness. His songs reveal a large mystic world. He delves deep into the introspection of unfolding the mystic beauty of love by portraying simple situations of life.

**"In silence will you remain in my heart  
Like the full moon midnight silent and serene  
My life and youth, my unending world  
Like midnight would you fill in glory,  
Alone would your plaintive eyes awake  
The shadow of your dress end would cover me up.  
My pains of sorrow, my dreams successful  
Like midnight would you fill in grace.**

Tagore's songs are replete with mysticism. They speak of a nearness which is beyond physical contact. It is soul-consciousness. There is a union of mind and heart in extreme contentment. There is an unending beckoning of love in Tagore's poetry that reveals it as a mystic element of profound love. There is an era of awe and wonder. Some songs reveal love as a homeless wanderer. Joy can be seen peeping through the atmosphere promising serene





calmness of mind mingled with mystic ideas and emotions spreading enchantment:

**With timeless agonies does it move**

**In the wind of early spring**

Each experience reveals infinite passion of love in the warmth of nature. His ideas and imagery create mystic ambience which radiate freshness and flash testimony of love with great simplicity. Pain too emanates mystic efflorescence and searches fullness beyond all vision. Quest for spirituality can also be seen in devotion. The changing seasons represent changing aspirations that allow spiritual condour to the poet. Tagore prepares us to pave the way for death. The last days of darkness haunts the journey ahead:

**"Even now the shadow of the very self is creating unending**

**Illusion**

**Even now I know not why in vain is my**

**Self not looking behind**

**The Sudden lightening shudder's the eyes."**

He knows that only spirituality can dispel the darkness of the heart and we find yearning for spiritual advancement which is enkindled with the aura of light. The poet wants to eliminate all that pains him and wants to rise above all sorrow and joy and be in total fusion with the All Serene. Music becomes an endless part of his spiritual vision, which along with love, allows him easy access to the All Love to whom he finds himself in total submission. There is a frantic urge to meet the ALL LOVE, the All Serene. There reflects an anguish for togetherness, with the spiritual vision on the other bank:

**Thou hast remained standing on the other of my song**

**My times beget feet, I fail to love thee And**

**With thee is my play of songs and distance**

**All day long the finite plays on in pain**

**Why wouldn't thou come of they own**

**With my flute playing on**

**in the poignant darkness of right joyous and silent.**

The quest for spiritual excellence is seen in his total submission to the All Serene which is a new found world for him and there is a yearning in the failure to find him

**'In devotion, oh, does make one weep**

**I've failed to encounter thee**

**I ache**

**That, too, is pleasing to my mind**

**There is a mystic interpretation of Beauty in**

**Many a time was I about to rise**

**Leaving indolence run towards the way**

**When you awoke, you departed**

**No more, I think, would we meet again**

**Beauty you come in the morning today.**

Profoundly mystical concepts run through the poem in different ways.

There is no limit to imagination. The poet sees dance and drama of life, the dreams and aspirations of flowers and creepers. An impossible, strange world as transformed into reality as can be done only in poetry. Tagore's readers world over became aware of the real essence of the old Indian wisdom and discarded the misconceptions. His poetry and his deep feelings for beauty blend really well and complement each other creating ever forceful vigour and



brilliance in togetherness and give birth to soul consciousness. He epitomizes the soul of India in his poetry. He is the poet of man in the universe.

Just like his urge to be one with the All Serene, Tagore was equally concerned Tagore's plays represent great scope for realism. He experimented with the newer world of thought. In both his love songs and drama much stress is laid on truth and he felt that of all practised good, evil would easily be overcome. He believed in the power of truth. One can almost visualize an appeal to the reader to follow truth and achieve human feelings for all living things.

The image 'emaciated ascetic' becomes a symbol of desolation in nature. Tagore illustrates the cycle of life from birth to death and then rebirth. The parched earth, the quiet birds and dried up streams are all images of hope waiting sweet smell of rain, the lush green grass and joyful hearts of all living beings. In his mythical imagery, one can get a glimpse of the rich spiritual heritage of India. He vigorously explores for images in the Upanishads as well. He uses colours to create symbolic images of emotional situation. None of his images is obscured by any confusion. "My heart is like a river" suggests the tranquil but quiet love in the poet's heart. The image of joyous peace can be felt in the following lines "The morning smiles like a friend at my gate, the evening droops down like a flower by the edge of the woods." Then elsewhere "my heart become silent at once like a deserted theatre with its lamps out."

Tagore's idea of love brings in a new meaning as he transfers love to a private world of imagination. The reader is introduced to another concept wherein love becomes a pious passion, very spiritual, ready for adoration and worship. His concept of love is almost like the musk of deer. Man runs after love which is already within. Now this image suggests some mysterious enchantment about love like he says 'I seek what I cannot get, I get what I cannot seek.' For Tagore if the lover fails in his pursuit, he succeeds in achieving much more. To him love is an 'eternal pilgrimage' For him not to love is a sin. Love for him is the highest manifestation of consciousness. It is associated with piety in the poem 'Meditation' he craves to meditate on the radiance of the soul of the sky Soulfully I meditate on thee

**In solitude, far from humanity, I welcome thee  
Thou art there, filling my life and death to the brim  
Endless in thy mystery, matchless thy love that swells in my heart.  
My soul, like the radiant rising sun,  
Gazes upon thy depth with a winkless eye"**

Tagore, an orthodox Indian aesthetic, associates beauty with truth and goodness. Music to Tagore is a strong living force whose ultimate aim is the Eternal. In his poetry too there is an image of the Eternal. The idea of movement suggests that in nature everything is old and yet new.

In *The Post Office*, the sick boy Amal has symbolically a desire - a desire to see the world outside, to be a part of it and do what others are able to do. This play is the story of a sick boy who is destined to die. He loves to look out of his sickroom windows at the bright and happy life outside. He watches a curd seller who comes from a village near the hills, then there is a little girl with a basket of flowers and groups of cheerful children, an alert watchman and a postman who gets letters from the king.

Amal longs to be with the world outside and the irony is that he is destined to go beyond the world outside. The lack of communication with those outside is symbolic of society forcing anger on harmless beings who are unnecessarily tortured by unknown forces. Amal is a simple, affectionate and a harmless adopted child. The adaptation also symbolize that the child anyway not wanted in this world. Madhav loves the child earnestly and joyfully works hard to earn money for the needs of the child.

Amal wishes to become one with the people outside and though his creative mind knows the view of all those around. He sometimes wishes "Make me your postman, that I may go about, lantern in hand, delivering your letters from door to door" . He finds happiness in the thoughts of the king's post office and becomes a symbol of



innocence. In this play Tagore moves on two planes: the naturalistic and the symbolical and human and spiritual. There is the desire of the soul to be free of shackles which is symbolized by Amal's death. The play has a deep kind of symbolism. A symbolic pattern emerging can be felt by the reader the. The symbolism of freedom works on the transcendental level. Towards the end when the royal physician advises the doors and windows to be opened, it is symbolic of the freedom of the soul when "All pain is gone? In this play symbol plays the role of evoking the readers Jadu Saha "Songs of Rabindranath Tagore : English Translation in Rhyme. (p. 83).

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