



HUMANISM IN POETRY FOR AN IDEAL SOCIETY – THE STUDY OF SELECT POEMS FROM TAGORE'S GITANJALI

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ABSTRACT

Literature has a direct impact on any Society. The study of Poetry gives us a glimpse of the ideas, ideologies of the poet. Any work of art is didactic in the sense that any poetry, prose, short stories or drama directly or indirectly generate from a particular Society and address a Society belonging to any age. This is the reason why the poets, the authors, the writers, the playwrights voice the Human thoughts, ideas, sensibilities, Human values of a particular age. Human values are the subject worth discussing and mentioning everywhere. Nowadays, this topic is of great importance. This paper deals with some of the poems from 'Gitanjali'. Rabindranath Tagore is a great Indo – Anglian poet of all times. In his poetry, the ideology on humanism is very significant. It is the essence of his poetry. 'Gitanjali' is not a devotional poetry alone. It has a universal appeal to mankind. It revokes the human values of the present day generation. Any one approaches this great poetry, he finds an answer to the present day problems in this. We don't want poverty - stricken heart. We are not the slaves of materialistic pleasures. We are rich by our values. We love the poor, the needy. We extend our helping hand to the deprived sections of the society. In song '37', Tagore's thought breathes the feel of fresh air to mankind. The poet compares us all to tired travelers. We are exhausted of our lives. We are tired of the frustration. There is devastation, inhuman treatment; there is the incidence of atrocities everywhere. We are tired of our existence. But, this is not the time when we tend to give in. We build up courage by the poet's ideology. When we feel there is no way, we have to continue with more strength of mind. At this juncture, we are inspired by the fresh melodies of our poet. We hear the new songs. We are continuously inspired even in the midst of this discouraging world. The study of Tagore's poems is a great inspiration to mankind. He gives a call to anyone who understands the universal appeal of his poems.

KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION

Human Values have a large impact on any Society. Values make a person refined of his ideas, behaviour, attitude and actions. The idea of Human values and its importance has been realized by every Society. The only difference lies in their application. The mankind turn to human values when its survival is put to risk. During such times, the application of Human values change according to the circumstances from time to time. They keep changing from time to time. They protect the society from being ruined. They are a check for human behaviour. Human values existed when there was even no law existed. Gradually, these human values transformed themselves into law and legislation. These values manifest themselves into the great actions of some people in any part of the world.

Love, sacrifice, help, generosity, magnanimity, nobility, broad thinking, etc., All these are the human values. They pass from generation to generation. We learn these values from the noble actions and great deeds of people and we practise them in our day to day life. We come across the experiences of life by application of these values. In our constant struggle, to have a Society transparent of its values, some times, we may or may not reach out. But, still we adopt them without giving in. Success or failure, we keep trying to have a Society with strong values that protect the mankind. When we protect 'dharma', 'dharma' in turn protects us. The Sanskrit sloka says "Dharmo Rakshathi Rakshithaha". This is a proven truth throughout.

In Rabindranath Tagore's song 36 of Gitanjali the poet prays God to remove his poverty at heart. In song '36' of 'Gitanjali', Tagore prays for the strength of mind and mankind. He prays God to strike at the penalty at heart. To remove the poverty of the heart and to arrive at its richness through broad mindedness, generosity, helping nature are the virtues Tagore enunciates in this poem in Gitanjali.

He further prays to Him to give him strength to treat all his joys and sorrows equally. He prays to God to make him serve the mankind till his end, with love and sympathy. He prays to God to make him mentally strong so that he may never flatter the powerful, insolent and proud and so that he may always befriend the poor and protect from the oppression of the mighty. Above all, God should give him

strength enough to surrender himself gladly and willingly to His Will and service. The great virtues of mankind - love towards poor, sympathy, service, mental strength – are discussed here.

In poem "Where the Mind is without Fear", Tagore prays for the knowledge which is free and which is not broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls. Tagore dreams of words that come out from the depth of truth. He looks for tireless striving which stretches its arms towards perfection. The poet prays for the clear stream of reason which has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit. Tagore prays for ever widening thought and action for his countrymen.

In song 37 of Gitanjali, the poet compares himself to a traveler. Because of the wide travel, the traveler gets tired. He looks ahead and finds that the road before him is closed. The traveler is disappointed that he may have to stop his journey. Then, it is a great surprise to him. To his great pleasure, he finds new paths open before him. He gets more strength and keeps moving on. For a man's journey, there is no limit. We draw inspiration from various sources and gets rejuvenated and resume our journey. This poem is an inspirational poem and in the face of discouragement also, one can think of new sources to continue the journey.

In song 11 of Gitanjali, the poet advises the religious masters, saints and monks to give up their chanting and singing of mantras and the worship of God in a secluded corner of the temple with their eyes half shut. God is there where the tillers are tilling the hard ground and where the path makers are breaking the stones. God is seen with the people who toil day and night for their livelihood. The poor and the wretched are the companions of God. Tagore advocates an acceptance of life and its activity, but not a rejection of it. He is a humanist to the core.

In one of the most famous poems of Gitanjali, Rabindranath Tagore highlights the importance of mind without fear and knowledge which is free. He prays further to lead his countrymen to reach their goals and objectives without any fear or limitations.

Tagore preaches Humanism through his poems. His Humanism and his Idealism are evident in almost all his works. His poetry, especially

'Gitanjali' is a document of human values. There is no end of poetic thought in any of the poems of 'Gitanjali'. The thought continues with many sided revelations to its readers. This poetic imagination of Ravindranath Tagore inspires his readers to read his poetry any number of times. Each time, it is a new meaning, a new focus, a new understanding or a new observation, the readers experience in 'Gitanjali'. His poetry shows a deep concern for a number of human problems, human sufferings. According to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Tagore is a great humanist. Tagore's poetry deals with Humanism, Idealism and such virtues. For any Society of any age, Ravindranath Tagore's Gitanjali is an ever- cherishing Humanistic poetic document.

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