

Chapter- IV

A comparative study between Philosophy

Of

Rabindranath and Buddhism

If the Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore and Buddhism are deeply compared, we shall come across some similarities as well as dissimilarities between them. So far as the former is concerned, both Rabindranath and Buddha had admitted 'suffering' (*duḥkha*) as a truth or reality of life. Both of them admit the death or suffering is not an impediment of our progress, rather it is taken as an instrumental to the success. That is why; suffering has been taken as a Noble Truth by Buddha, which is capable of being eradicated. There is a causal chain in suffering, causes of it, possibility of its removal and its final eradication through some means. To Rabindranath the suffering makes a man purified. Being purified with the fire of suffering an individual achieves his own essence (*svarūpa*).

Rabindranath appreciates Buddhism because of its moral practice (*Śīla*) which restricts mankind to do whatever he likes. Being influenced by Buddhism Rabindranath had realized the importance of prohibition or restriction in one's life. In Buddhism the humanity is eulogized in a threadbare manner, which is represented by Rabindranath in his *Candālikā*. A woman named *Candālikā* belonging to lower caste was treated as untouchable by others. She was ultimately given recognition as a human being by a Buddhist monk, Ānanda. It has been taken as a kind of rebirth (*natun janma*) by *Candālikā*— one birth from mother's womb and another through recognition as a human being. In this way, Rabindranath has admitted the importance of Buddhism in his life and philosophy by virtue of the fact that it gives a human being a new life.

Rabindranath's interpretation of the Buddhist concept of *Brahmavihāra* is unique and novel. To him the term 'Brahma' as occurred in *Brahmavihāra* signifies 'love unlimited' i.e.

Bṛhat. If an individual attains this situation, he will have a sense of friendliness (*mettabhāvana*) can rejoice other sorrow by sharing it as reflected in Rajarshi. To think about the wellbeing of all human beings (not the individual wellbeing alone) is the essential feature of Buddhism which has influenced Rabindranath very much. Hence he has also advised others to take the path of sacrifice (*'Eso dnabir dāo tyāg kathin diksa'*). Moreover, the effect of sacrifice is found in the following piece of poem – “*He Bhārata, nṛpatire sikhāyecho tumi, tyajite mukutdanda siṁhasan bhūmi dharite daridrābese*”¹.

If an individual adopts the path of *śīla*, *Brahmavihāra* etc. he will achieve ‘peace’ in mind. The Sanskrit rendering of the term ‘peace’ is ‘*śānti*’ which is derived from the root ‘*sam*’ meaning ‘restrain of the sense-organs’. In fact, in Buddhism and Rabindranath the root cause of the absence of peace from our mind is ‘thirst’ or ‘*tanha*’ which cause cravings for getting more and more consumable objects. Such thirst can never be quenched with the fulfillment of the desire and hence it is an unending phenomenon. The more we get, the more we urge for it. In order to get rid of it we have to search for self-satisfaction, which ultimately leads us to the world of peace. In order to arrive at such stage it is essential to go through some rigorous meditative training so that we can control our sense-organs including the inner one (*antah-karana* or mind).

Objects generally generate in us sometimes pleasure and sometimes pain. In other words, the object which seems to be pleasant in certain time may seem to be painful in other situation. It is also true that an object which is pleasant to someone may be unpleasant to others. An object may create pleasure in one aspect and pain in another aspect depending on the attitude of the

enjoyer. Hence it is very difficult to get a clear criterion of describing something as pleasant and / or painful. In the same manner it is also very difficult to determine the criterion of peace. However, peace has got some connection with happiness and hence a painful situation cannot give an individual peace in the true sense (*śānti*) is often found. One of the functions of such enchanting the *mantra* of peace is to eradicate sufferings or miseries. Through the removal of such suffering we get pleasure as opposed to suffering.

Buddhism in general represents the way of compassion. The Buddha is an embodiment of compassion and hence he is regarded as the compassionate protector of all beings. As such thirst has been taken as the root cause of all worldly diseases (*bhava-roga*), the path as shown by Buddha is to be resorted to and hence he is called a physician of all worldly diseases (*bhava-roga-vaidya*). To him the individual following his path should practice loving kindness, which implies not to harm the life of all beings. It is advised always to protect mankind as well as animals and vegetations. It is his wisdom through which he can see all human beings in the universe as equal in nature. The well-being of human being and animals is inter-related and mutual.

The external environment is seriously polluted because of the pollution of the internal environment in the mind having lack of peace. The excessive greed is one of the reasons for the internal pollution, which is the impediment of peace. This disease may be eradicated if an individual finds some satisfaction and contentment through the Buddha's teaching. That the external pollution is related to our internal one is evidenced in the *Dhammapada*, which is translated by Rabindranath himself. It is said that just as the maker of an arrow makes the end of

it straight, so an individual should simplify his mind, which is wavering, fickle, uncontrolled and unprotected.

The contentment in the context of Buddhism does not mean the eradication of all desires but to live in harmony with all beings and nature. It is said in the *Dhammapada* that a pure and developed mind alone can understand others mind.² It is further emphasized that when the world is burning (*prajjalite*) there is no opportunity for adopting laughter (*hāsyo*) and joy (*ānanda*). In the like manner, if our mind is covered with darkness, would we not seek for light?³ Those who believe in the teaching of Buddha will control their desire and live in harmony with nature keeping the environment in healthy condition. It is rightly mentioned in the *Dhammapada* that one who sees only the apparent beauty, who is not self-restraint in enjoying consumable things, who is lazy and weak is always attacked by one's enemies just like a weak tree. On the other hand, an individual refraining from seeing apparent beauty becomes self-controlled and respectful and hence he is not overpowered by the enemies just like a firm and stony mountain.

In the *Dhammapada* it is stated that the house-holders may belong to professions like students, lecturers, labourers, executives etc, but they should not preclude themselves from following the path of truth, purity, listlessness, angerlessness etc. and should practice the virtues like love, compassion, affection etc. If these virtues are practiced in a balanced way, there would be less confrontation and conflict⁴. On proper analysis it is found that tensions and conflicts arise out of desire, cravings and attachment. We can shed desire, cravings and attachment if we understand the true nature of things and life. The control of body may be achieved by controlling the senses of sight, touch, smell etc. and organs like hand and feet. For regulation of mind right

thought and observance of ethical code of conduct is necessary. The *Dhammapada* gives us an insight into the mysteries and true nature of life and existence, and indicate how we can reduce the range of our attachment, cravings and desire⁵. It is clearly prescribed in the same text that he who seeks refuge in the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and *Sangha*, he who sees with right knowledge the Four Noble Truth, sorrow, the causes of sorrow, the transcending the sorrow and the Eight-fold path can get rid of sorrow⁶.

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Though the Buddhism talks about the protection of the mental pollution, it gives emphasis on the three-fold training of human mind and seven factors of the enlightenment, which are the basis ethical sensibility to the environment. The *Mahāparinibbānsutta* of the *Dighanikāya* discusses about the three-fold course of training like cultivation of ethical conduct (*śīla*) meditation (*Samādhi*) and wisdom (*pajñā*). These three are inter-connected in the sense that the first is left behind when the second is undertaken. Without the development of these it is possible for one to lead happy and peaceful life. Wisdom (*pajñā*) goes beyond knowledge attained through reading books or hearing the tales. The practice of morality (*śīla*) and mental development (*Samādhi*) develops a penetrative insight and realization into the nature of everything in its proper perspective. When the realization (wisdom) appears, the trained mind becomes an unshakable dynamic force that can handle any human problem without anxiety and thereby can remove the worldly problems. When the ethical conduct is firmly established, the

meditation becomes effective. Through effect of meditation the transformative power of wisdom becomes possible.

The above mentioned three-fold practice has a tremendous influence on the Buddha's doctrine of seven factors of enlightenment viz., mindfulness (*śānti*), and discrimination of principles (*dhamma-vicaya*), energy in pursuit of the food (*virya*), rapture (*piti*), tranquility (*pāssāddhi*), concentration (*Samādhi*) and equanimity (*upekhā*). It is mentioned in the *Saṃyutanikāya* that these seven are essential for any kind of social or moral development. When a monk remaining secluded recollects and reasons about the doctrine. He adheres to the mindfulness factor of enlightenment, which is followed by other steps. After mindful he can discriminate, can reflect on and can investigate the doctrine with understanding. In this way he can reach to the path of perfection, which includes rapture (*piti*), tranquility (*pāssāddhi*), concentration (*Samādhi*) and equanimity (*upekhā*). The later four are connected with the phenomenon of meditation, which is available through the cognitive and affective refinement.

An individual having such moral qualities would be able to have sensitivity towards our mental environment. It is rightly mentioned in the *Tanhavāgga* chapter of the *Dhammapada* that the thirst for enjoyable object makes a man blind of his own future and hence he can go to any extent for his enjoyment adopting injury to human and non-human beings including environment. This thirsty person is compared to a monkey desiring fruits (*sopravati hurahuram phalamiccha va vanasming vanaro*). It is so dangerous that it is metaphorised as poison (*viṣattika*). Hence it is advisable to eradicate the root of such thirst through the weapon of wisdom (*pajñā ccindatha*), which is dependent on the paths mentioned above.

To the Buddhists the Eight-fold path (*aṣṭāṅgika-mārga*) is the correct path to know the right knowledge of reality, which ultimately leads to the control of sense-organs. If it is realized that each and every object is transitory or momentary, essence less (*śūnya*), our mind, being controlled, can reduce the thirst for enjoyment. An individual, being free from mental pollution, can achieve peace. That is why; Buddha himself is called an embodiment of peace and an aesthetic pleasure called *śāntarasa*. By virtue of worthy of it he is called *śāntatmā* and *śānta-mānas*, which is admitted by Rabindranath in the following piece of poetry – “*Śānta he, mukta he, he anantapuṇya karuṇāghana-dharanitala kara kalankasunya*”⁸. Moreover Rabindranath has shared and substantiated the above thought of Buddhism in his essays – *Dhammapada* and *Buddha Prasaṅga*.

What attracts Rabindranath more is the theory of *Pratītyasamutpadavāda* of the Buddhist which entails that everything is causally connected. Though there is no permanent self, the law of *Karma* and rebirth is admitted in Buddhism. It is possible through the changing network of the five *Skandhas*. To Buddha life started with sorrow and lived in happiness. Everything is routed through change *orgativāda* as found in the *Upaniṣadic mantra-caraveti*, etc.

He was so impressed by the teachings of these poet-philosophers that he tried to popularize their cause. In each of his philosophical dramas Rabindranath introduces a character which is supposed to be his supreme creation. Needless to say, in its creation he is influenced by the plain living and high thinking of the *Bāuls*. Another trend of ideas that has influenced him creating such a character is the teaching of Buddhism. Buddhism and the *Bāul* cult have offered him the matter; and he created the ideal of humanity a man, fearless, out-spoken, God-

intoxicated, truth seeker, poet-philosopher, singer and friend of the poor. The *Bāuls* are baptized in the faith of *Ahiṃsa*. The *Ahiṃsatattva* is routed from Buddhist thought.

Peace and Love have been preached by Jesus Christ from a religious point of view, while Lord Buddha teaching the same from an ethical standpoint. Christianity as a religion requires God to be the object of worship but Buddhism has no need of God, for its ethical excellence lies in the elevation of character, in the culture of *Maitrī* (Brotherhood), *Muditā* (happiness in everything), *Upekṣā* (indifference) and *Karuṇa* (compassion). Salvation is the goal of all religious and philosophers but the paths differ from one another. Some are based on intellect while others on feeling.

Rabindranath Tagore, the humanistic philosopher, and the mystic poet was influenced a lot by the unsophisticated philosophical sects of Bengal i.e. *Bāul*. *Bāuls* do not believe in on any particular forms of religion and they never use to go to any Church, temple and Masque. It is better to call them the self-learned person who is wandering for ‘*Maner Manuṣ*’ or the man of the heart. They form a way of life without any complicated religious bindings. They believe in man alone which is metaphorically expressed as – ‘*Acin pākhi*’ or ‘self’. The *Bāul* cult has reduced from *Sahajiyā*, which is transform from the Buddhist *Sahajyān* version.

The *Bāuls* and the mediaeval Indian saints attracted the attention of the poet and left a permanent impression on his mind. He was so impressed by the teachings of these poet philosophers that he tried to popularize their cause. He translated one hundred poems of *Kabir*, the mystic saint of India and all though his writings paid glowing tributes to the memories of

Kabir, Nānak, Dādu, Rajjab and others of the Indian *Bhakti* school. The *Bāuls* are the wandering saints who sing in praise of the eternal One. They do not enter any temple, church, or mosque. Nor do they believe in image worship. “According to the cult of the *Bāul*, in order to gain real freedom, one has first to die to the life of the world whilst still in the flesh—for only then, can be rid of all extraneous claims”⁹. The *Bāuls* think of the body as the temple of God and urge to keep it clean. They fervently hope that one day true vision of the finite will flash forth and its union with the Man of the mind will be effected. The *Bāuls* are baptized in the faith *Ahiṃsā*. In each of his philosophical dramas Rabindranath introduces a character which is supposed to be his supreme creation. Needless to say, in its creation he is influenced by the plain living and high thinking of the *Bāuls*. Another trend of ideas that has influenced him in creating such a character is the teaching of Buddhism. Buddhism and the *Bāuls* cult have offered him the matter; and his own genius, the form of the character. He has created the ideal of humanity – a man, fearless, out-spoken, God-intoxicated, truth-speaker, poet-philosopher, singer and friend of the poor. He is the Dhananjaya Vairagi of the dramas *Prāyaścitta* and *Muktadhārā*, *Thākurdādā* or grandfather of *Śāradotsav*, *Dākghar* and *Rājā*, *Dādāthāḥur* of *Acalāyātan* and *Bāul* of *Phālgunī*.

Next to the *Bāuls*, the Indian mystic saints have endeared themselves to the philosophical mind of Rabindranath. Kabir, Dādu, Rabidas, Nānak and others have added the aroma to his thinking. The faith of love which he gets from the *Vaiṣṇavas* is strengthened by the songs of the *Bāuls* and teachings of Kabir and others. Rabindranath sings and he considers singing to the best art of human beings on earth. In this respect he simply maintains his lineal connection with the *Bāuls* and the Indian mystics.

Tagore was well acquainted with the *Bāul* sects in his childhood. Every year there has been a fair at Bolpur and Baul sects use to gather to sing the *Bāul Sangṭ* (one kind of song composed by Lalon Phakir). Those *Bāul* songs influenced him. Tagore was the first person who had collected folk songs and had drawn the attention of educated society to the folk songs and its literary and cultural value.

Bāuls are the lower in status from the both Hindu and the Muslim communities of Bengal. Economically and socially they belong to the poorest sections. They had their basic outlook anchored in the *Ujāān-sādhanā* or *Ulto-sādhanā*. It eulogizes the philosophy of the reverse path and this is the fundamental tenet of all the *Sahajiyā* traditions in Bengal and elsewhere. They like to proceed to an opposite direction from that where is followed by the general people. They avoid all kinds of formal and institutional religion in which the natural pity of the soul is over shadowed by the useless paraphernalia or ritualism and ceremony on the one hand and pedantry and hypocrisy on the other. That is why the *Bāuls* and other *Sahajiyās* call their path *Ulto-sādhanā* (i.e. the reverse path). They use to say that their process is a kind of spiritual advance as because it the method of movement against the current i.e. *Ujāān-sādhanā*. It can be understood by their own composed song.

Reverse are the modes and manners

of the man who is a real lover

of the true emotional life.¹⁰

The main purpose of the *Bāuls* for their *Ulto-Sādhanā* or reverse journey is to return to one's own self which is Sahaja or inborn in nature. It is one of the paths like other theistic

philosophy. (i.e. Sankarachariya, Ramanuja etc.) It is the path which is not so complicated and artificial but the easiest path or self-realization. This reverse journey of the *Bāuls* for self-realization is *Sahajiā* (easy) not because the path is easy to travel but because it is the most natural part to reach the ultimate reality.

Unsophisticated theology of *Bāuls* and the simple ways for self-realization of the *Bāul* had impressed Tagore very much. He was against the so called traditional institutional religion. Tagore had described how, he was attracted to one of the basic philosophical features of the *Bāul* songs. While he was stumbling upon the formal constraints of the monotheistic Brahma Church, he wrote in his “*The Religion of Man*” – I came to discover that in my conduct I was not strictly loyal to my religion, but only to the religious institution. After a long struggle with the felling that I was using a mask to hide the living face of truth. I gave up my connection without church. About this time one day I got a chance to hear a song from a beggar belonging to the *Bāul* sect of Bengal. What struck me in this simple song was a religious expression that was neither grossly concrete full of crude details, nor metaphysical in its rarified transcendentalism. At the same time it was alive with an emotional sincerity. It spoke of an intense yearning of the heart for the divine who is in man and not in the temple or scriptures, in images and symbols. The worshipper addresses his song to man, the ideal, and says:

*Temple and mosques obstruct the path,
and I fail to hear thy call or to move,
when the celeries and priests angrily crowd round me.¹¹*

He did not follow any tradition of ceremony, but only believed in love. According to him, love is the magic stone that transmutes by its touch greed into sacrifice. He said:-

*For the sake of this love
Heaven longs to become earth
And God to become man.*¹²

Man possesses all the quality and most important thing is that he is alive. Man amongst all the animal can raise his head and has the authority to say ‘*soham*’ i.e. I and my father are one. There is union between you and me. All the man in any case, region and sect possesses this quality to say ‘*soham*’. Tagore recognized the same thing from the *Bāul*’s song, which are represented in an unsophisticated way. Kshitimohan Sen collected most of the *Bāul*’s songs and one of the songs which changed the mind and made more thoughtful is:-

*Jībe Jībe cāiyā dekhi
Sabi ye tār abatār
O tui nutan līlā ki dekhābi
Jār nitya līlā camatkār.*¹³

The English rendering of the song is as follows:

*Seeing the God’s creature
All are his prophets
You get nothing to show
As because always he is showing.*¹⁴

The human beings are showing his proficiency through his daily works. People are showing it in the form of wisdom, love and sacrifice. Tagore himself realized this in his

childhood and he expressed these through his '*prabhāt sangū*' and '*prabhāt utsab*'. One of those are given below:

My heart opens to day

*All the world come and meet on my heart and hug me.*¹⁵

All the human beings which reside on the earth come to me and enjoy themselves. This is the wave of the heart of all human beings. They are having love devotion and affection within themselves. *Bāuls* realize and express their feelings in easiest way which makes Tagore more curious.

The chief philosophical theme in *Bāuls* is the man who are called '*Maner Mānuṣ*' or the Man of the heart. The same philosophy of life can be noticed in the other sects, like *Vaiṣṇava*, *Sufi* and *Kabir's* school. The *Bāul* conception of man of the heart brings in the question of its similarity or dissimilarity with *Vaiṣṇava* conception of love. The *Vaiṣṇava* formulation is based on a principle of duality, theological, but not metaphysical. Theologically the *Vaiṣṇavas* have conceived a kind of duality between God and the individual and this principle of duality invites the question of *Saguṇa-bhakti*. It culminates in the concept of passionate love. In the metaphysical point of view the relation between God and man is incomprehensible – a relation of dualism in non-dualism. But the *Bāuls* have a non-dualistic approach between them.

The *Bāuls* have criticized the view of the *Vaiṣṇava* followers. They use to raise the question in the following manner;- had these *Vaiṣṇavas* proper understanding of the duality they would have known it in a better way than that Candidas, Vidyapati and others were good

Vaiṣṇava poets, simply because they had glimpses of ‘*Sahaja ideas*’. But are their followers competent to understand their messages? They took the idea of *Radha* from us, but have dragged her down to the level of their low desires. Devoid of the realization of the simple, their minds obsessed with the complexities of their literature fail to do justice to the wealth they have inherited. At best they make an attempt at simplicity and naturalness in their songs and festivals, but in their lives, their temples and their religious observation; they are unable to get free of the shackles of their scripture. They have made a jumble of love and desire, the working of the spirit and the want of the senses. Once the *Bāuls* were asked by the *Vaiṣṇavas* as to whether they are aware of the different kinds of love as classified in the *Vaiṣṇava* scriptures. *Bāul* answered them by singing a song:

A goldsmith, I think, has come

Into the flower garden.

He would appraise the lotus

By rubbing it on his touchstone!

*Oh the fun, what a pity’.*¹⁶

But *Bāuls* have a soft corner toward Chandidas and his philosophy of man. Tagore mentioned in his ‘*The Religion of Man*’ that Chandidas reached the mountain in the philosophy and literature. It also always brings a positive feeling in the *Bāul*’s mind and they song out.

Listen, O brother man,

The truth of man is the highest truths

*There is no other truth above it.*¹⁷

The *Bāul's* 'Maner Mānuṣ' or 'the man of the heart' gets transformed into '*Jīvan-devatā*' of Tagore. God in his philosophy has been humanized. Tagore did this without being anthropomorphic in the undesirable sense. He does not mean humanization in the sense of God. It also means that it is the God in man.

In '*The Religion of Man*' Tagore says that-

For the sake of this love

Heaven longs to become earth

And gods to become man."¹⁸

'*Jīvan-devatā*', to Tagore is the God as immanent in man. That can be compared with the *Vedāntic* doctrine of '*Tat Tvam Asi*' (i.e. I and you are identical). Thou as '*Jīvan-devatā*' is identical with '*Tat*' as God. It is not a complete and unqualified identify, because '*Jīvan-devatā*' is 'God in man'. It is like the pantheism in Greek philosophy. But in Greek theism everything is in God and man has no separate room. In Tagore's theism, God comes down to this world from the heaven and resides in the human heart. There is no inconsistency in this relation of identity in difference, because it is possible to comprehend such a relation even in ordinary experience as for example in the experience of love. Tagore said-"in love, at one of its poses you find the personal, and at the other the impersonal. At one you have the positive assertion-there I am; at the other the equally strong denial-I am not"¹⁹. Without this ego what is love? And again with only this ego, how can love possible? He added more "In love all contradictions of existence merge themselves and are lost. Only in love is unity and duality not at variance. Love must be one or two at the same time"²⁰.

So, it is better to say that '*Jīvan-devatā*' is God in man. The *Devātas* or gods always find completeness in the human ideal form. Tagore said more "I felt sure that some being who comprehended me and my worlds was seeking his best expression in all my experiences"²¹.

Prof. D.S. Sarma remarks that, "This being (*Jīvan-devatā*) is not exactly God, but rather his own higher self not the universal consciousness, but a special centre of that consciousness"²².

In this context Prof. B.G. Ray regards '*Jīvan-devatā*' as a *Viśva-devatā* the universal deity"²³.

In the '*Bṛhadāranyokapaniṣad*' the relation between man and the deity or God are cleared by this hymns:

Atha yonyam devatām upaste

Anyosan anyoham asii

*Na Sa Veda, yatho pasurevomsa devanam.*²⁴

In *Racanāvali* (collection of his writing) Tagore said the man who worshiped the external God and thought the dual existence of them can be compared with a beast, by keeping his deity outside of him. He condemned himself by his own God. The *Bāul* expresses the *Upaniṣadic* thoughts in a very easy and natural way by the songs – *Moner Mānuṣmonermājhe koro anweṣan* (Find out your own God with-in yourself).

Sufi and Kabir's influence:

Besides the *Bāuls* the poet was influenced by the mystic Sufi and Kabir's song also. Tagore perhaps heard the songs of Sufi from father Maharshi Debendranath Tagore and his father's friend Sri Kantha Singh.

Maharshi Debendranath at the time of spiritual exercise recited from the collection of Sufi poets Dewan Hafez in a very loud voice. Debendranath got inspiration during his journey on the hill or on the way to *Śimla*. So it is natural that Tagore was deeply influenced by the Sufi theism. The Sufism was enriched by accepting the other modern unorthodox religious views and combining them with the Islam. They never neglected any particular view but the main thing of their philosophy of life was unlimited love. Here knowledge and love come together and emerges as a new religion. The main thing of the Sufism is to realize the soul at first and then together a sound knowledge of the individual (subject). Through this way the propagators of Sufism gathered knowledge of simple supreme authority. So, it is a kind of monism gathered knowledge of single supreme authority. So, it is a kind of monism and non-qualified (i.e. Advaita) monistic theism. The Sufistic overview in this regard can be located in Aliraja's Sufi text '*Jñāna-Sāgar*'. There it is said that God in his absoluteness could relies his love and a second or dual out of its ownself. The '*Jñāna-Sāgar*' upholds that the universe had its origin in love, and the chaos was systematized into the cosmos through the bondage of love. Man is the microcosm in which all the attribute of the absolute are united. Man thus synthesizes two aspects of existence within his nature.

In *Sufism*, two aspects of man are called ‘*Nasut*’, which is his human personality and the ‘*lahut*’ which is his divine personality. In the *Upaniṣad* the something is ascribed as the ‘*Jīvatman*’, the human soul and the ‘*Parama Uman*’ the Divine soul. But while the *Upaniṣads* speak of the love between the Divine personality and the human personality. The whole emphasis of the Sufi is on love. Here the Sufis come closer to the *Bāul*’s conception of the man of the heart. So, the Sufis and *Bāuls* find a happy blending of the finite and infinite being. The *Bāuls* express their view rightly with the help of their famous song.

‘*Khānchār bhitar acin pākhi kemne āshe jāi*’

How does this unknown bird or *Acin Pāhki* come into the cage and then fly away?

It may otherwise be explained as follows. How our ‘man of the heart’ metaphorised as unknown bird is perceived to be playing the eternal game of self-manifestation and returning once more to itself.

It is compared with the Sufi song:

The bird of my heart is a holy bird,

*The ninth heaven is its dwelling.*²⁵

How Tagore was influenced by the Sufism can be evidenced from a letter which he had written to a devoted Hindu lady on 20th Āsār (Bengali 3rd month), 1317 Bangabda. The letter runs as follows:

‘If you read the devotion for love in Sufism then you can see that how sophisticatingly they blend love with wisdom. Their love does not come from nothingness. That is very realistic and intimate. They did not mix up any fictitious garbage with their theory’²⁶.

Influenced by Kabir, the mystic Saint:

Kabir, the fifteenth-century mystic saint, is one of the few poets who believed in the religion of love. He is the child of ‘*Āllāh* and of *Rām*’ as he called himself. He achieved a synthesis of Hindu and Muslim elite and freely used symbols from both religions in his poetry. Tagore, the saint of the 21st century, was influenced by Kabir’s mystic poems and songs and he himself translated so many poems in English. Kabir had enriched himself from the surrounding and contemporary religious views and it is one of the outstanding characteristics of Kabir’s genius that he fused all the views in one. We can see a wide range of mystical emotion as present in all his poems. From the loftiest abstraction the most other worldly passion for the finite to the most infinite and personal realization of God, expressed in homely metaphors and religions symbols drawn in differently from Hindu and Muhammedan belief it is impossible to say of the author of the poems that he was Brahmin or Sufi, *Vedāntin* or *Vaiṣṇava*. He sings:

“Mo ko kahan dhunna bande

O servant, where does thou seek me?

Lo! I am beside thee.

I am neither in temple nor in mosque:

I am neither in Kaba nor in Kailash:

Neither am I in rites and ceremonies not in yoga and renunciation.

If thou art true seeker, thou shalt at once see me:

Thou shalt me in a moment of time.”²⁷

Kabir said, ‘O sadhu! God is the breath of all breaths.’

Tagore said more on Kabir’s poem in his “*The Religion of Man.*”

“I close not my eyes stop not my ears nor forment my body.

But every path I then traverse

Becomes a path of pilgrimage

And whatever work! Engage in becomes service;

This simple consumption is the best.”²⁸

In his *Gūāñjali* Tagore said the same thing

Leave this changing and singing and telling of beads!

Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple?

With doors all shut?

Open thine eyes and see thy

*God is not before thee!”*²⁹

Therefore the whole apparatus of piety, Hindu and Muslim alike all the religious places, temples, mosque, Churches, idol, holy water are nothing but the external symbols. These are the impediment to our unity and making love with each other.

Kabir said – ‘*Tirath men to sab pani hai*’³⁰ there is nothing but water at the auspicious holy bathing places; and I know that they are useless as I have bathed in them.

The images are all lifeless they cannot speak. I know for I have cried aloud to them.

The *Purāṇa* and the *Korāṇa* are mere words; lifting up the curtain, I have seen. Kabir gives utterance to the words of experience; and he knows very well that all other things are untrue.

How easily Kabir expressed his view like the *Bāuls* and *Sufi* saints.

He said Brahma never be found in abstractions. He is the one love who pervades the world, discerned in this fullness only by the eyes of love; and those who know him thus share, though they never tell the joyous and ineffable secret of the universe. The soul's union with him is a love union, a mutual inhabitation. This dualistic relation which, all mystical religion expresses not a self-emergence, which leave no room for personality. The eternal distinction, the mysterious union in separation of God and the Soul, is a necessary doctrine of all same mysticism. Beside the *Bāuls Kabir* and *Sufist* the other mystic saints like Dadu, Rabidas, Nanak etc. always had similar thinking. Under influence of those mystic saints, Tagore introduced his own conception of religion, the elements of mysticism and simplicity.

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