

Tagore's Fruit Gathering: An Epitome of Indian Mysticism and Transcendentalism

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Abstract:

Tagore is undoubtedly one of the most read poets coming out of India and the only one to date to have bagged a Nobel among all the poets and writers India has produced. His range, volume, and variety are exceptional, but one thing that makes him universal is his love for nature and his mystic expressions binding man, animal, soul, and God in one string. Much effort has gone into analyzing his poem 'Gitanjali,' but the remaining works have been under-explored. Thus, in the present paper, the emphasis has been to explore his poetry collection, "Fruit Gathering," which has 86 poems. Fruit Gathering is a collection of Tagore's poetry that reveals his profound connection to the natural world. In these poems, he creates intriguing juxtapositions by blending descriptions of various breathtaking landscapes with statements of his inner emotions. This produces engaging poetry to read and see the whole world colored in the ecclesial light. This light is spiritual in tone and looks beyond the apparent: mystic, transcendentalist, and otherworldly. The present paper tries to read Tagore's Fruit Gathering from this perspective.

Keywords: Rabindranath Tagore, Mystic, Transcendentalism, Pantheism, Nature, Ecology, Posthumanism, Fruit Gathering

Rabindranath Tagore, often known as the Bard of Bengal, is regarded as one of India's finest writers. Tagore is unquestionably the most

famous poet of the twentieth century, and his works, poems, and ideas have influenced generations of people. Tagore's works were praised for their originality both in India and beyond.

Rabindranath Tagore was born into an affluent family in Calcutta and grew up in a wealthy environment. His family radiated intellect. Nature, they believed, was one of the universe's most pristine and lovely creations. Tagore's sensitivity and perception of nature were unremarkable. Debendranath Tagore, his father, was a fantastic wanderer with a penchant for the Himalayas. Due to his ancient age, his contemporaries gave him the pseudonym "Rishi," Tagore liked nature, yet he believed that human structures were the closest to the heart. Tagore's rivers are not desert streams left without a sail for extended periods; instead, they run through meadows, pastures, and the joy of earth and ecology. His flowers and bees are housed in a nursery and plantation, respectively, and his "forest" is located at the settlement's entrance. Humans are essential to him. Despite his numerous references to rain and rivers, trees and clouds, twilight glow, and first light, we must hear nothing about mountains in his poetry.

Tagore is the supreme mystic because his poetry is replete with instances in which nature and God intersect. The poem's sincere feeling is enhanced with comparisons inspired by nature. Ultimately, it is a small representation of the universe and God's private garden. The poet's mind is so full of thoughts, feelings, and experiences that it obscures his relationship with God, like a cloud heavy with rain. The

effectiveness of the contract requires the reader's undivided attention. When we encounter God's grace, it is as if a dam has burst, releasing all of our pent-up emotions and ideas. Tagore feels more at rest after opting to place his concerns at the feet of God.

Even more impressive are the closing words, which convey the poet's hopes for his life. He desires that his life would resemble a flock of Cranes returning to their nests at the end of the day. Tagore appears to have dived far enough into his life to discover a level of fulfilment that propels him forward. The nighttime return of birds to their nests is a contrastive metaphor for the conclusion of the day and the completion of duties. In literary contexts, the term "night" can be interpreted in various ways. In this view, death is the last stage of existence. The closing words of Gitanjali express the poet's desire for the afterlife. Gitanjali's journey begins with an imagination of God and a desire to meet Him and concludes with a feeling of detachment; it is the ideal path to spiritual consciousness. Given that it encourages individuals to halt amid a chaotic existence to contemplate, reflect, and redirect their course towards spiritual enlightenment, Gitanjali's Nobel Prize is scarcely surprising.

Ravindranath's spiritual perspective is not that of a philosopher but rather one of concrete practicality. It is a natural consequence of his experiences and a necessary aspect of living. It has come to him in phases, beginning with a pleasant disposition untainted by narrow selfishness and progressing via disappointment with ordinary earthly goods, the anguish and toil of his soul, and detachment from worldly concerns. Each of these steps has to lead him to the realization that he no longer has to worry about material matters (Muley 111).

Tagore, Aurobindo Ghose, and Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, along with others of their ilk, are instances of modern mystics who steered Indian English literature along the grand route of mysticism, as demonstrated by our research. Other examples of contemporary mystics include similar individuals. Saint and seer Aurobindo Ghose centered most of his work on

personal spiritual experiences and revelations. His poetry has received much attention. His epic work, Savitri, is divided into several sections and focuses on various religious and spiritual experiences. The journey undertaken by King Aswapathy and his daughter Savitri exemplifies the extraordinary transformations that may arise from a spiritual awakening. There is a chance that Sri Aurobindo personally watched their souls' journey and imparted this knowledge to us. Aurobindo's explanations of the multiple levels of spiritual planes and regions of the cosmos might be compared to a route map for someone interested in spirituality.

Much effort has gone into analyzing his poem 'Gitanjali,' but the remaining works have been under-explored. Thus, in the present paper, the emphasis has been to explore his poetry collection, "Fruit Gathering," which has 86 poems. Fruit Gathering is a collection of Tagore's poetry that reveals his profound connection to the natural world. In these poems, he creates intriguing juxtapositions by blending descriptions of various breathtaking landscapes with statements of his inner emotions. This produces poetry that is engaging to read. The poet is so enamored with the variety of things that may be discovered in nature that he does not mind being illiterate to achieve his aim of dedicating more of his time to being at one with nature rather than wasting it on obtaining bookish knowledge or studying "books." The fact that he is illiterate does not bother him since he is so enamored with discovering new things in nature. In his opinion, the information and experience gained by reading books and attending lectures are far less valuable than the information and knowledge gained by spending time outside. When the poet describes the activities of an illiterate flower collector, he adds that he is in no way embarrassed by the flower collector's illiteracy.

Through the use of adjectives such as "poorest," "lowliest," and "lost," the poet's innate sense of humility emerges throughout the poem. Tagore emphasizes the spiritual aspects of the phrases, which depict modest individuals whose earthly possessions may be meager but whose

hearts are brimming with the spiritual wealth that God has showered upon them. The poet's humble prayers, which are free of both anger and a desire for worldly goods, are portrayed in the poem in a manner that does them honor and is true to their nature. The author's thoughts are conveyed with a sense of modesty from the very beginning of the book *Fruit Gathering*, as seen by the following lines:

In the very first line of the poem, the poet shows his admiration for the God he personifies as an abundance of fruits. He compares features of his personality, such as ego, humility, greed, etc., to the qualities of the fruits. "good fruits" and "bad fruits" relate to the positive and poor qualities of a person's character that he begs God to accept and forgive, respectively. In other words, the terms "good fruits" and "bad fruits" are interchangeable. Unripe fruits symbolize the poet's spiritual development, which is still in its undeveloped state. On the other hand, the lost fruits may be seen as a symbol of the poet's lost purity and compassion as he aged. The poet has a fantasy that he would one day reach God's paradise, symbolized by the courtyard of the King. The poet's ambitious objective is to cover the yard with as wide varieties of fruit as possible. The fruits serve as analogies for his numerous emotions. He desires to be able to pray more successfully, so he asks God to bestow him with a personality resembling a bowl brimming with many types of fruit. The poem opens up by comparing the narrator to a flower:

In song number five, the poet alludes to nature's incomprehensibility. Once upon a time, while the poet was still young, he could not comprehend the enigmas concealed by nature's cloak. As he got older and wiser, he realized that divine beauty could be found in every aspect of wildlife, including the petals of flowers, the foam of waves, and the peaks of mountains. To put it clearly, every manifestation of nature reveals a secret.

It appears that the song describes the poet's early feelings of immense passion for nature, which only intensified as their relationship evolved. In other words, they were the first

indications that the poet had a "deep ecology" perspective towards his relationship with the surrounding natural world.

God, who transcends earthly wealth, does not reside in a gilded castle, according to a great doctrine, since he is above such things. The human mind and heart are incapable of experiencing the necessary longing to travel to the existing home, which is located far away from this world, since these traits prohibit them from doing so. He continues by stating that we should appreciate the company of the poor and humble, gaining features from them that would help us progressively eliminate the ego and dust that have gathered in our spirits due to our monetary goals. As a result of our earthly aspirations, our souls have gathered ego and dust, and he tells this so that we might acquire the virtues that would enable us to eliminate them progressively. He says we should place a premium on the company of those less fortunate than ourselves since they will teach us humility. According to a quote ascribed to Tagore, a person's location is where they might begin their journey to God. The highly humble sentiments that Gurudev expresses to us serve as an inspiration. He proceeds by declaring:

“Be ready to launch forth, my heart! And let those linger who must.

For your name has been called in the morning sky.

Wait for none!” (FG VIII)

Addressing God, Tagore finds the presence as very simple and straightforward, and it is for us humans to see and feel it.

“Your speech is simple, my Master, but not theirs who talk of you.

I understand the voice of your stars and the silence of your trees.

I know that my heart would open like a flower, that my life has filled itself at a hidden fountain.

Like birds from the lonely land of snow, your songs are winging to build their nests in my heart against the warmth of its April, and I am content to wait for the merry season.” (FG XV)

At a later stage in part 21, he explains the spiritual presence to be inside us, and it becomes our moral duty to find it. Once found, it will remove the idea of loneliness from our existence:

“I will meet one day the Joy without me that dwells behind the screen of light—and will stand in the overflowing solitude where all things are seen as by their creator.”(FG XXI)

The presence of God, the supreme power, is universal, but unless we get synced to the tune of God, we feel the world to be full of pain and sorrow. Tagore explains the worldly miseries and sadness and the cause of our ignorance:

“The pain was great when the strings were being tuned, my Master!

Begin your music, and let me forget the pain; let me feel in beauty what you had in your mind through those pitiless days.

The waning night lingers at my doors; let her take her to leave in songs.

Pour your heart into my life strings, my Master, in tunes that descend from your stars.”(FG XLIX)

The music of humanity runs throughout the universe and flows equally among humans, animals, nature, and everywhere irrespective of shape, size, and situation:

“Listen, my heart, in his flute is the music of the smell of wildflowers, of the glistening

leaves and gleaming water, of shadows resonant with bees' wings.” (LXVI)

The moment we are one in unison with the supreme power, that moment is illuminating and liberating:

“My bonds are cut, my debts are paid, my door has been opened, I go everywhere.

They crouch in their corner and weave their web of pale hours; they count their coins sitting in the dust and call me back.

But my sword is forged, my armor is put on, and my horse is eager to run.

I shall win my kingdom.” (FG LXXIV)

Addressing God, Tagore claims that birds sing in praise of the supreme power, and it is humans that remain to make complaints and cribbing about life, though the voice is given to humans to sing hymns and be one with the supreme:

“To the birds you gave songs, the birds gave you pieces in return.

You gave me only voice, yet asked for more, and I sing.”(FG LXXVIII)

Towards the end of the collection, the poet becomes more forthright, speaks in a simple and direct tone, and explains the objective of human life and his duty in trying to sing the praise of the Lord. He compares the Earth and God to our mother and us as a child:

“I will utter your name, sitting alone among the shadows of my silent thoughts.

I will utter it without words; I will speak it without purpose.

For I am like a child that calls its mother a hundred times, glad that it can say “Mother.” (FG

LXXXII)

Finally, towards the end, he names section LXXXVI as Thanksgiving and pays his tribute in unequivocal terms:

“But I am thankful my lot lies with the humble who suffer and bear the burden of power, hide their faces, and stifle their sobs in the dark.

For every throb of their pain has pulsed in the secret depth of thy night, and every insult has been gathered into thy great silence. And the morrow is theirs.” (FG LXXXVI)

Tagore's poetry has several experiences with God and nature, which is one of the reasons we consider him the greatest mystic of all time. The poem is brimming with tremendous emotion, and it does this by drawing exquisite comparisons from natural events. In addition to being a gift and a garden from God, the earth is a copy of the universe above it. In the poem, an analogy between the poet's mind with a cloud laden with rain illustrates the poet's overloaded condition, in which his mind is filled with so many varied emotions and experiences that it cannot reach God. Because the contrast is so well-placed and enticing, it requires the reader's undivided attention to enjoy it truly. When we come into contact with God's grace, it is like a cloud accumulating water and then dumping it all at once; similarly, we humans get a variety of sentiments and emotions, which we then release all at once when we are finally able to do so. Tagore decides to pass over all of his worries to God, at which moment he begins to feel a sense of serenity.

The poet's concluding lines are even more beautiful, which shows his hopes for his and others' lives. He believes his life journey would resemble a flock of cranes returning to their nests after a long day of labor. Tagore appears to have engaged in a substantial amount of self-reflection and introspection throughout his life to achieve a level of contentment that propels him gradually toward his objective. The contrast of birds returning to their nests,

especially at night, is a metaphor for the end of the day and the conclusion of work. When analyzing literary works, the term "night" can relate to various distinct concepts. In this meaning, it indicates that an individual's life has ended. In the last words of Gitanjali, the poet proclaims his desire to reach the home of the gods. Gitanjali begins her trip by picturing God and desiring to meet Him. This desire ultimately results in the sense of detachment, which is why it is the most effective path to spiritual knowledge. Gitanjali was awarded the Nobel Prize because it encourages people to pause during a chaotic existence to contemplate, reflect, and reorient their path towards spiritual enlightenment, which is more significant than any other accomplishment in the world.

Most of Tagore's works are devoted to spiritually significant explanations of this fundamental fact. In his whole collection of works "In "Sacrifice," which he defines as "highlighting the brutal ways in which spiritually devout persons make sacrifices," he shows the act of animal sacrifice. This is defined as "highlighting the hard sacrifices made by spiritually dedicated persons." He emphasizes the essential reality that we cannot contribute anything beyond what God has already made available via His mercy and goodness. It is fruitless to seek out the sacrifices on an external platform and then present them to God again. It is the same as repaying His works, but we are not required to provide something that demands our labor. Actual labor consists of reawakening our spirits, which provides God delight since it reveals that his plan is being executed as intended. Regardless of the outcome, we may express genuine gratitude and love for God even if our efforts prove futile. Tagore's voice may be detected in the final lines of each of the previously studied poems. In these lines, he describes the sublime message he wishes to give to the Supreme Being. Jesus emphasizes once more that the act of prayer is superior to any other sacrifice that might be made. His petition is extraordinarily diverse, and he treats it with an extraordinary degree of care. It appears that the only things the poet wishes from God are one

last encounter with him and the chance to merge with the cosmos.

God, who is his only dwelling place in the cosmos. The poetry in *Crossing* is written in his voice and style, most closely resembling a collection of prayers. The poet is becoming spiritually closer to God, not in the sense of practicing religious procedures. This is a rather lengthy journey, but it should not be too challenging. Because he proclaims a desire to become one with God, yet we do not observe him begging because he is impoverished, the explanation is plain. Tagore argues several times throughout his writings that the way to communicate with God is via nature.

Tagore has made it his life's purpose to discover the Eternal and Unchanging Being inside all things, in addition to the Infinite within the restricted and the Divine within the human. This has been his mission ever since he came into being. A poet's mind is filled with joy when they realize that God exists, even though God is not apparent in the visible world, which encompasses nature and human life. After one's ego has been shattered, one can expose the universe's most potent mysteries. When this occurs, humanity will no longer be viewed as an alien race on earth. The entirety of the cosmos is a demonstration of God's love. God's vastness, might, and infinite love are evident everywhere: in the night sky, the stars, the rivers, the flowers, the birds, the grass, and the leaves. As a direct result, it is claimed that "through your stars, you gaze deep into my dreams; you send your secrets to me in moonbeams," and that "I muse and my

eyes grow dim with tears" The natural environment provides as a platform for dialogue between the poet and the infinite. In *The Religion of Man*, the poet writes that "the first stage of my realization was through my feeling of intimacy with Nature" (10).

According to this school of thinking, the collection 'Fruit Gathering' is also a testimony to Tagore's ideology that the most effective technique for reconciling with God is to worship nature rather than appreciate it. Only admiration is a harmonious relationship between humans and nature. If nothing changes, his ravenous desire and materialistic mentality will lead to the exploitation and destruction of the natural environment. Tagore believes those whose thoughts are constantly focused on acquiring wealth and money pose the greatest threat to preserving the domain. As a result, they lack empathy for the natural world. Tagore is speaking about the encroachment of persons motivated primarily by money into society. He thinks these particular people constitute the most significant obstacle to protecting the natural world. People with such a mindset pose the greatest danger to the natural world as a direct result of their unquenchable need for both greed and money.

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