

Research Paper

Tagore's The Suicide of a Star: A craving of Lover

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India is celebrating 150th birth anniversary of Tagore. In 1913 an unknown Indian poet who had published a slim volume of a hundred and three poems entitled *Gitanjali*, created sensation and was awarded the Nobel Prize. Rabindranath Tagore was a prolific writer with a many sided genius. He comes from which is reputed for its high culture in arts, music and philosophy. His literary output is so extraordinary that the phrase "myriad minded" which Matthew Arnold has used for Shakespeare can appropriately be used for him too. He has written about 300 volumes- poems, plays, short-stories, novels, critical essays, poetic translations and discourses etc on religion, history, culture, and philosophy. Love to Tagore is not an emotional nonsense. To him it is an irresistible spiritual urge. To him, love is a varied idea, its facets are many. Tagore was never successful in his love affairs. His need for a feminine touch in his daily life as well as his deeper artistic need to be inspired by a woman remained with him, to be filled, from time to time by various women of the family. His love poems presents the sad side of love-affairs. His poetry is full of the "unfinished business" of grieving. He often evokes the image of a woman who has gone away, leaving him with the pain of an incomplete communication, of things left unsaid. In "Suicide of a Star" through the symbol of a star, he depicts the suicide attempt of his sister-in-law Kadambari with whom he was in love. He presents the world's indifference to her in the poem.

"The Suicide of A Star" by Tagore is a touching poem taken from his collection *Sanshya-Sangit*. The poems of *Sanshya-Sangit* presents Tagore's spiritual voyage. The poet discovers his true inner voice. In *Sanshya-Sangit* the poet is overwhelmed by pain, sorrow, disappointment and he finds no relief. The present poem reveals the same emotion. The poem was written in 1882 and it refers to a first suicide attempt made by Tagore's sister-in-law Kadambari Devi with whom he was said to be in love. She had committed suicide in 1884. But before that in 1880 she had made an unsuccessful attempt of suicide. Tagore was deeply pained by this incident and the present poem represents Tagore's reflection over that incident. So, the poem reflects a generalized mood of youthful romantic agony. The incident is represented through the suicide of one star.

"From a luminous shore into an ocean
Of darkness,
Leaped a star,
Like a madman."

The poem starts with the suicide of one star who just like a mad-man jumped from luminous shore into an ocean of darkness. The world, in which this star was living, was a world of light and from that world he decided to go to the world of darkness. By the word 'luminous' Tagore made a pun on the name of his brother 'Jyotindranath.' Luminous means Jyoti and Jyoti always gives light to others but here one of the inhabitants of that luminous shore decides to commit suicide. The other stars were amazed by the sudden suicide of their neighbour.

"He's gone
To the bottom of that ocean
Where lie the corpses of
hundreds of dead stars."

The world in which the star entered was a dark ocean and there it was not alone but had the company of other stars who

had committed suicide like him. Because of mental torture, frustration, or misery they decided to extinguish the light of their life.

"O why? What was the matter with him?
Not once did anyone ask
Why he abandoned his life!"

No one tried to know the reason of his suicide. The world is self-centered and all are busy in their life although they are shocked and amazed by his suicide, they never think about the reason of his suicide.

"I know what burned him
As long as he was alive.
It was the torments of laughter,
Nothing else!"

But the poet says that he knows the reason. When he was alive he kept his face smiling but burnt from within. The laughter provided him an energy to live.

Just as a coal in order to hide its darkness keeps on burning, the star also maintained laughter and it burnt from within. And this way it put an end to his life.

"The more it laughs, the more it burns."

He was living with thousands of stars yet he was alone as he could not share his feelings with anybody. He was living in a world of solitudes and from that world it decided to go to another solitude world- the world of death.

The poet is too much pained by the suicide of the star. The other stars are mocking and laughing at him because they think that he had not courage to face the life with its misery. So, he escaped from the life by committing suicide. So, the poet asks the stars why they are mocking at him because they are not harmed. They are shining as before. He was not jealous of other stars and by killing himself he did not want to darken them.

"He'd never meant
To darken you by quenching himself."

He knew it very well that the world is lit not only because of his shine and even after his death the other star will provide

light to the world. After his death, other stars will never give up shining or will become dark but they will live the life as it is.

“Drowned! A star has drowned.”

Thus, the star committed suicide by drowning. He drowned in the ocean of darkness during the deep midnight. The poem reaches to the climax when the poet also wishes to commit suicide and accompany the star in the world of death.

“Heart, my heart, do you wish
To sleep beside that dead star.”

This poem, nicely depicts Tagore's feelings for his sister-in-law and the world's indifference to her feelings. By using so many symbols Tagore presented the suicide of the star,

References:

1. Rabindranath Tagore I Won't Let You Go: Selected Poems, Translated by Ketaki Kushari Dyson. UBS Publishers' Distributors Ltd., New Delhi.