



## **Moral Philosophy Conveyed Through Nature in The Poetry of Ravindranath Tagore and Ruskin Bond**

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*Introduction:*

*Moral philosophy is another part of Tagore's thematic quality. All that has passed into his philosophy and morality has been wrung from experience, felt in the blood, felt along the heart and passing into pure mind. Moral and philosophical ideas become eloquent through the description of various phases of life and they have the real content and complexion of life. Tagore suffered a series of shattering blows in the deaths of very dear members of his family - his beloved wife, his dear daughter and son, and his noble father. Naturally, it was too much for Tagore, who became melancholy and somber. But like a true philosopher and devotee of God he spiritualized his grief and the 'Gitanjali' lyrics were composed during that period.*

As a result of his conviction, and abiding faith in the Upanishads and God he did not find death as something dreadful. On the other hand he welcomes it and gives a moral philosophy about death :-

"Death thy servant is at my door.  
He has crossed the unknown sea  
and brought thy call to my home.

In the above mentioned lines Tagore's moral philosophy about Death is - "Death is inevitable. It is the messenger of God and has to be honoured although its visit cast a gloom over the house it visits."

Tagore's 'Gitanjali' in each and every steps is teemed with moral philosophy and the poet again and again emphasizes on life and death imparting different types of moral philosophy.

Tagore's philosophical ideas about death are per excellence and he

employed them in his lyrics of 'Gitanjali' in a very strong way. According to Tagore 'Death' is not dreadful; it is the last fulfillment of life :

"O thou the last fulfillment of life, Death, come and whisper to me!"

Further Tagore adds about Death - 'Death is not the end of life but it introduces a new life, a new world, the world of God as he himself expresses in the following lines :

"When I think of this end of my moment, the barrier of the moments breaks and I see by the sight of death the world with its careless treasures. Rare is its lowliest seat, rare is its meanest of lives."

Life and Death have been depicted as the two breasts of the Divine Mother. According to Tagore Death is not the end of life, it is a renewal of life. It is not on occasion to be sad and

gloomy. It is an occasion to rejoice :

"The evening star will come out when my voyage is done and the plaintive notes of the twilight melodies be struck up from the King's gate way."

Death is like diving deep into the ocean of Eternity. "I dive down into the depth of the ocean of forms, hoping to gain the perfect pearl of the formless."

Death as Tagore writes, introduces the human soul to another life. The human existence is in the world of forms and shapes. But the life after death is in pursuit of peace, the perfect pearl of the formless which is God himself and can be found in the ocean of Eternity where the soul comes after death. The new world in a world of Eternal Place and Divine Music :

"I shall time in to the notes of for- ever, and when it has sobbed out its last utterance, lay down my silent harp at the feet of the silent."

Death leads the human soul to the place where it can fulfil its most cherished desire of union and communion with the Divine soul. Tagore achieves everything with the help of his songs inspired by the grace to God :

"Ever in my life have I sought thee with my songs. - - - - -."

Death is the culmination and consummation of the human existence of the soul which ultimately returns home to pay its respects and surrender itself at the feet of the Divine Soul, God:

"Life rain-cloud of July  
Hung low with its burden of

unshed showers let all my mind bend down at thy door in one solution to thee."

Tagore imparts a real moral philosophy about the life or man and says Man is weak and helpless when he comes into or leaves this world whatever he earns or gains during the life-time is left behind. It is death which gives him peace :

"When the warriors came out first from their master's hall, where had they hid their power? Where were their armour and their Arms?"

In the song, which has the echoes and impressions, Tagore's personal grief over the loss of his dear wife. Tagore imparts a real philosophy about death and says - 'Death is not a destroyer but a preserver'. Tagore spiritualize his grief and the result is refreshing reassuring and inspiring : "In his desperate hope I go and search for her in all the corners of my room; I find he not. My house is small and what once has gone from it can never be regained."

In his another song of 'Gitanjali' Tagore gives his moral philosophy about as a destruction and says that Death is the destruction and defeat of all that is dress and unworthy of him who is the victor. The victor does not humiliate or inflict injury and pain on the vanquished but showers mercy and grace :

"I surely know the hundred petals of a lotus will not remain closed for ever and the secret recess of its honey will be bared."

Tagore's moral philosophy about

death does not end only here; he further adds about death - 'Death over comes all, in the traditional way of thinking. But God and faith are Eternal even though man may not seem to recognize their existence. These (God and faith) are like the "duty of the ruined temple".

Tagore imparts moral philosophy in 'Gitanjali' not only about life and Death but also about the other matters. He imparts a moral lesson about words :

"----- And when  
old words die out on the tongue,  
new melodies break forth from  
the heart, and where the old  
tracks are lost, new country  
is revealed with its wonders."

Tagore also imparts a moral about 'Time' in 'Gitanjali' and says :

"Time is endless thy  
hands, my lord. There is none  
to count thy minutes.  
Days and nights pass and  
ages bloom and fade life flowers.  
Thou knowest how to wait."

In his another collection of songs 'Stray Birds' Tagore has a philosophical views on flowers and leaves and expresses them in a nutshell in the given lines :

"The leaf becomes flower when  
it loves. The flower becomes fruit when  
It worships."

In the another song of the same collection Tagore expresses a moral philosophy about 'This World' and says :- "This world is the world of wild storms kept to me with the music of beauty."

Moral and philosophical ideas are, in essence, an outcome of Ruskin's close, keen and correct observation of life. He does not see life in philosophy and morality; he sees morality and philosophy in life. As a result, his moral and philosophical poems are alive with life, have the real throb of feeling and refreshens, and warmth pulsates through them .In his long narrative poem 'A Song For Lost Friend' Ruskin provides philosophy about death and adds that death is not an end of human life but it is the out and out conclusion of life. It is a wise saying of a high esteemed oldman of the village. The old man is delighted to see the beautiful sun-set in the Himalayas but he says that this beautiful sight does not fill up their belly. So the poor people remain satisfied with the sight of natural surroundings and try to forget their poverty. Ruskin provides it in the following :

"Not death but a summing-up of  
life, said the village patriarch, as we  
watched him. The people were poor, and  
the patriarch said :

I have heard it told that the sun  
Sets in splendour in Himalaya -  
But who can eat sunsets?  
The patriarch was old in years".

In 'The Words' Ruskin says that Gautam Buddha imparts Ananda moral lesson; human body contains with in itself power which can renew its strength for a moment and it can remove the causes of its destruction. Then Gautama preaches to all his disciples 'that which

causes life comes also decay and death' and always keep it in your mind because it a universal truth. Through it Ruskin displays his moral philosophy and mentions it in the following lines :

beloved that which causes life causes also decay, and death, Never forget this. I called you to tell you this."

In 'Love Is A Law' Ruskin says about love that love is itself a law. It is true that when it is gained, it is often lost and lost love is once again regained. The whole world is going on well only on account of love. Without love there can be no existence of man and society. If love disappears from the world, there will be universal chaos and disorder. Truly speaking love is nectar. Therefore, everybody should receive a moral lesson to love all the creatures whether lifeless or living beings. Ruskin expresses it in the following lines :

"Who shall set a law to lovers?  
Love is a law unto itself  
Love gained is often lost

And love that's love is found again." In his nature poem 'Walnut Tree' Ruskin explains that when walnut tree loses its leaves, the fruits are ripe. It loses something on the other side it gives an important things also. When it gives up its skin, the hard nut comes up. It means if we lose something, we provide others with other thing. Ruskin writes in the following lines :

"The walnut tree is the first to lose its leaves, But at the same time the fruit ripens, The skin splits, the hard shell

of the nut."

In 'We Must Love Someone' Ruskin says that the main purpose of human being is to love someone or the other. Only then the purpose of human life will be meaningful. Even birds and animals realize the importance of companionship. If a crane loses its companion, it is beside itself with grief. Ruskin writes it in following :

"We must keep loving all our days, Someone, anyone, anywhere Outside ourselves;

For ever the sarus crane

Will grieve over its lost companion,"

In 'What Can We Give Our Children' Ruskin delivers a good speech to parents to enable their children to cultivate good habits. He teaches them that they should try to give their children knowledge, honour, a noble character and cheerfulness on the faces. These are simple things, free of cost but they are greater than gold.

Knowledge, honour, noble character and cheerfulness are the real gold of man. Ruskin describes this moral philosophy in the following lines :

"What can we give our children  
Knowledge, yes and honour too,  
And strength of character."

In 'A Quiet Mind' Ruskin expresses his philosophical ideas on benevolence that is the highest quality of a man. He prays to God to give him a quiet mind and a gentle voice not for his own sake but for the comfort of others.

What he asks God for is not for his own use but it is for the advantage of others

:- "Lord, give me a quiet mind,  
That I might listen;  
A gentle tone of voice,  
That I might comfort others."

Expressing philosophical ideas Ruskin also adds towards forests. These forests give us several essential herbs which are used as medicines for the sick persons to recover from their sickness. These forests not only give herbs and medicines but also give shelter and food to animals and birds. Ruskin writes it in the following lines :

"Without your help to Nature's thrust This land would be a bowl of dust.  
A land without its wealth  
Must suffer a decline in health."

In his poem 'Silent Birth' Ruskin teaches a moral lesson through the process of a tree coming out of the seed from the earth. The birth of trees, flowers and fruits in quite silent without any noise and displays but when a human being takes birth in this world, there is a lot of cry from his mouth. This cry goes on through out his life. Our desires, our necessities and our ambitions all are the causes of our cries when they are not fulfilled. Therefore, man should take a moral lesson of stillness from trees. Ruskin composes it in the following lines :- "When the earth gave birth to this tree.

There come no sound.  
A green roots thrust  
In silence from the ground."  
In his nature poem 'Parts of Old

Dehra' Ruskin impart a moral lesson to the human beings saying that the persons who do good to others out to have no despair in their hearts. Their goodness would be recognized by all and then there will be no despair in their life. Nature also makes up for the loss that has been during the survival. But it may take some time in compensating what remains to be amended for us is revealed by Ruskin in the following lines :

"Do-gooders don't despair!  
Nature will repair  
Her own, long after  
We are dust."

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  11. Ruskin Bond : 'Dare to Dream', a poem, Ibid, p. 35.
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