



Discourse Analysis of *Rabindrasangeet* (Tagore Songs): Special reference to Nationalistic songs composed amidst the Indian Freedom Movement

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Abstract: A given cultural system is continuously restructured by the semantic potentialities and symbolic connections generated by the aesthetic operation of human cognition. Aesthetic behaviours are influenced by social institutions, belief systems, and cultural frameworks in this complex two-way relationship. Through the production of creative work, the manufacturing process, and societal context, artistic expression is a process of replicating experiences and modifying related values. In creating cultural products, aesthetic expression fills the gap between theoretically static social systems and dynamic human behaviour. Social techniques allow people of a society a variety of options, which leaves the potential for perception and manipulation. In the phenomenological process of cultural development known as aesthetic expression, emotional human relationships motivate existence. In a world of ever-changing tastes, ever-tumbling values, and ever-shifting forms, the intellectual truth and moral beauty of Rabindranath Tagore's creations remain bright and untarnished, the very quintessence of our Indian culture and civilization. With a literary career spanning over 68 years, the total number of published books by him sums to 235. Approximately 2233 songs of Tagore, in *Gitabitan* (Tagore, 1964), can be broadly classified into *Parjayes* (thematic taxonomy) or groups – viz. *Puja* (Devotion), *Prem* (Love), *Prakriti* (Nature), *Swadesh* (Nationalistic), *Bichitro* (Miscellaneous), and *Anushthanik* (Ceremonial), including the different musicals and dance-dramas composed by Tagore. Tagore made a significant contribution to the political movement in India through his songs. Even though he had no direct affiliation with any political movement, his heart broke for the bonds of slavery. The Indians were inspired by his writings and melodies to join the national cause. Under such a milieu, the present paper explores songs composed by Tagore (popularly known as Rabindrasangeet), composed amidst Indian National Movement under *Swadesh parjay* (Nationalistic theme), and tries to approach them through discourse analysis. The paper is to find the relationship between the School of Communication and the School of Aesthetics through *Rabindrasangeet*.

Key words: Discourse Analysis, Rabindranath Tagore, Tagore songs, Cultural Studies, Indian Freedom Movement

INTRODUCTION:

Rabindranath Tagore made a significant contribution to the political movement in India through his songs. Even though he had no direct affiliation with any political movement, his heart broke for the bonds of slavery. The Indians were inspired by his writings and melodies to join the national cause. Rabindranath often marched in protest against foreign rule alongside processions carrying the national flag. Thousands of countrymen joined the processions singing his songs and national flags in their hands. In this context, Prafulla Kumar Sarkar, an eminent scholar of Tagore Studies, notes in his book *Jatiyo Andolone Rabindranath* (1945) :

রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই স্বদেশী আন্দোলনের মধ্যে প্রদীপ্ত ভাস্কর মূর্তিতে দেখা দিয়াছিলেন। তাঁহার প্রতিভার পরিপূর্ণ প্রকাশ এইসময়েই হইয়াছিল। কশোর হইতে তিনি যে দেশে প্রমে ও সর্বের সাধনা করিয়াছিলেন, তাহার হয় এই সময়েই জাতিকে তিনি পূর্ণরূপে দান করবার সুযোগ পাইয়া ছিলেন। স্বদেশী আন্দোলনের প্রারম্ভ হইতেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাহার তরুণের মধ্যে ঝাঁপাইয়া পড়িলেন। ১৯০৫ সালের ২৫শে আগস্ট বঙ্গভঙ্গের সিদ্ধান্তের প্রতীকিত কলিকাতা টাউন হলে যে বরিট সভা হয় রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাহাতে তাঁহার বখিষ্যত প্রবন্ধ “অবস্থা ও ব্যবস্থা” পাঠ করেন।... ইহার পর প্রায় প্রতিদিনই নানা স্থানে জনসভা হইতে লাগিল এবং রবীন্দ্রনাথ বহু সভাতেই যোগদান করিয়া প্রবন্ধ পাঠ ও বক্তৃতা করিতে লাগিলেন। নতুন নতুন জাতীয় সংগীতও রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই সময়ে রচনা করিতে লাগিলেন ও প্রত্যেক সভাতেই ঐ সমস্ত সঙ্গীত গীত হইতে লাগিল। সমগ্র দেশে এইভাবে স্বদেশী আন্দোলনে মাতোয়ারা হইয়া উঠিল। (Sarkar, 1945)

In this independence struggle, Rabindranath rose to prominence. The love of the nation, the virtues of patriotism, and the selfless commitment to mankind he had grown up with now found a way to pay it forward. His inherent creativity found full expression

during this period. Rabindranath plunged into the waves of the independence struggle right away. On October 25, 1905, when a sizable crowd had gathered at the town hall to protest the announcement of Partition, he had read his well-known essay "*Abasthya O Byabasthya*" (The Situation and the Solution). Following this, several further protests of similar nature were held daily virtually everywhere, and Tagore took part in many of them by reading out from his articles or giving lectures. He also wrote several nationalistic songs that were performed at these events, and the nationalist movement swept the entire country.

In the single-volume compilation version of *Gitabitan* (Tagore, 1964), *Swadesh* (Nation) has 46 songs and *Jatiyo Sangeet* (Songs of Nation) has 18 songs in total, both shares a similar patriotism and inspire people to fight for their country's freedom. The majority of these songs were initially stand-alone poems that Tagore wrote between 1876 and 1905 and published in the *Sanjibani Patrika*, *Bhandar*, *Tattvabodhini Patrika*, *Bharati*, and *Prabashi*, among other periodicals to which he would routinely write. Tagore was most actively involved in the nationalist struggle, during the Banga-Bhanga Andolan or the partition of Bengal (1905), though he was associated with the nationalist movement since he was just 14 years old, roughly dating back to 1875. He also used to take part in the *Sanjibani Sabha*, a clandestine organization started by Raj Narain Bose and Jyotirindranath Tagore, which was a regular gathering of loved ones and friends driven by nationalist ideas. Tagore composed his first patriotic song $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$, $\square\square$, $\square\square\square\square\square\square$ এ দেহ (I offer myself for you, O mother) in 1877.

Sources from history and Tagore's biography reveal that the majority of songs on this theme were composed in 1905 during the Swadeshi movement or the Partition of Bengal. Thus songs composed in this theme can be classified into three distinct sections –

- Songs before the Partition of Bengal (1877 – 1904)

<i>Swadesh</i> – 09 songs	<i>Jatiyo Sangeet</i> – 12 songs
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- Songs during Partition of Bengal (1905)

<i>Swadesh</i> – 24 songs	<i>Jatiyo Sangeet</i> – 02 songs
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- Songs after Partition of Bengal (1906 – 1941)

<i>Swadesh</i> – 13 songs	<i>Jatiyo Sangeet</i> – 04 songs
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Songs Before the Partition of Bengal (1877 – 1904)

It's interesting to note that Tagore's views on this patriotism were somewhat confused and showed themselves in his lyrics in provocative ways. As we examine the early songs, we notice that Tagore was experiencing disappointment and anger, which is mostly reflected in the sardonic tone of the lyrics. Moreover, the songs composed in this era were primarily *Raga-based*, classical type and songs with a serious collection of words. It is also crucial to provide three songs as illustrations to support this assertion.

তরে, মা, সঁপিনু এ দেহ তোমারি তরে, মা, সঁপিনু প্রাণ ॥
 তোমারি শোকে এ আঁখি বরষিবে, এ বীণা তোমারি গাহিবে গান ॥
 যদিও এ বাহু অক্ষম দুর্বল তোমারি কার্য সাধিবে।
 যদিও এ অসি কলঙ্কে মলিন তোমারি পাশ নাশিবে

O Mother, I have dedicated my body to you. These eyes will well up with tears of anguish for you, Mother, and this veena will sing your song for you. Despite the hands' incapability and fragility, it would complete your mission. Though the sword is tainted in shame, it will cut your predicament.

The expression যদিও এ অসি কলঙ্কে মলিন তোমারি পাশ নাশিবে which means "Though the sword is tainted in shame, it will cut your predicament away," from the song composed in 1877, conveys the narrator's awareness of his frailty as well as his confidence and earnestness to win freedom. Another song from 1887 has to be compared to the first song from 1877 since they are surprisingly similar.

তবু পারি নে সঁপিতে প্রাণ। পলে পলে মরি সেও ভালো, সহি পদে পদে.... অপমান আবেদন আর নিবেদনের থালা বহে বহে নত শির

Still, I was unable to commit this life; I experience guilt at every turn and die a thousand deaths. The plate of plea and offering has made the head hang low

Both songs have a resonant tone that describes being the parasitic, powerless, ashamed, meek, and obedient "other" who must beg for charity. It can be considered a direct criticism of the docile behaviour of the moderate nationalists by Tagore. Another song in a similar spirit was composed in 1878, which reads

অগ্নি বিষাদিনী বীণা, আয় সখী, গা লো সেই-সব পুরানো গান—
 বহুদিনকার লুকানো স্বপনে ভরিয়া দে-না লো আঁধার প্রাণ
 হা রে হতবিধি, মনে পড়ে তোর সেই একদিন ছিল
 আমি আর্থলক্ষ্মী এই হিমালয়ে এই বিনোদিনী বীণা করে লয়ে
 যে গান গেয়েছি সে গান শুনিয়া জগত চমকি উঠিয়াছিল
 আমি অর্জুনেরে— আমি যুদ্ধিষ্ঠিরে করিয়াছি স্তনদান।
 এই কোলে বসি বাল্মীকি করেছে পুণ্য রামায়ণ গান।
 আজ অভাগিনী— আজ অনাথিনী
 ভয়ে ভয়ে ভয়ে লুকায় লুকায় নীরবে নীরবে কাঁদি,
 পাছে জননীর রোদন শুনিয়া একটি সন্তান উঠে রে জাগিয়া !

O the mournful strings of my Veena, sing those lovely tunes Oh darling, let those forgotten dreams fill my distressed spirit. Ah fate, do you remember, there was a day when I, the Aryalakshmi, would sing with this Veena in the Himalayas, astounding the whole world? With my nectar, I have raised Arjun and Yudhisthir. Valmiki wrote his sacred Ramayana while sitting on my lap.

This intriguing song is either for the *Sanjibani Sabha* or the 11th session of the Hindu Mela. Its narrative voice might be read as that of the country itself, which is upset with her current state. She mourns not just the loss of her splendor but also her freedom. Once *আর্যলক্ষ্মী (aryalakshmi)*, the mother who has nourished and cradled warriors like Arjun and Yudhisthira (symbolizing strength and spirituality respectively) is now *অভাগিনী (obhagini)* and *অনাথিনী (anathini)* ["hapless and ill-fated"].

Songs during Partition of Bengal (1905)

Tagore composed 26 songs in a short period of one year. These songs were full of spirit based on Bengali folk tune specially *baul* with simple words which were accepted universally. These songs expressed Bengal's natural beauty and its geographical position and also the protest against British colonization.

Lord Curzon, the epitome of "intellectual imperialism," who served as India's viceroy and governor-general from 1899 to 1905, felt the need to dismiss the Indian intellectuals and nationalists who claimed to speak for the majority because he believed that the Indians themselves had no meaningful place other than as beneficiaries of British generosity. He turned against Indian nationalism, and Bengali nationalism faced fierce opposition under him. In a memorandum dated March 28, 1903, Sir Andrew Fraser, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal (a sizable province made up of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa), suggested the division of Bengal. The initial partition proposal by Lord Curzon was published in the Gazette of India on December 12, 1903. Bengal united is power; Bengal divided will pull several different ways, observed H. H. Risley (1905) Thus, by making Bengalis a minority in two newly created provinces with a Muslim majority in East Bengal and Oriya and Hindi speakers in the Western half, the split aimed to reduce and diminish Bengali dominance. The Bengali Muslims and Bengali Hindus were divided in this way. Another purpose of the split was to encourage the religious separation that is the root of the Hindu-Muslim conflict. Curzon secretly desired to complete the entire undertaking. The Bengalis expressed their objection, unhappiness, and agitation before its revelation in 1905, foreseeing the effects of this partition, thus it did not stay a secret. The outcry against the division peaked on the day of Partition, October 16, 1905. The day was observed as a day of national sorrow, and a nationwide strike was called.

Rabindranath's contribution to the Swadeshi movement is outstanding in many ways. The enthusiasm and excitement he instilled in the hearts of the countrymen through speeches in meetings, articles in periodicals, poems, songs, stories, etc., will be remembered forever in our national life. Prafulla Kumar Sarkar in his book *Jatiyo Andolone Rabindranath* (1945) writes-

এত অধিকসংখ্যক এবং এত বিচিত্র ভাবপূর্ণ গান পৃথিবীর অন্য কোন দেশের কোন : কবি রচনা করেন নাই রবীন্দ্রনাথের এই সংগীতাবলির মধ্যে আবার জাতীয় সংগীত বা স্বদেশপ্রেমের সংগীতের সংখ্যা প্রচুর। স্বদেশী যুগে কয়েক সহস্র জাতীয় ভাবপূর্ণ সংগীত বাংলা দেশের কবিগণ রচনা করিয়াছিলেন, তন্মধ্যে একা রবীন্দ্রনাথেরই দানই সর্বাধিক। (Sarkar, 1945)

No poet of any other country in the world has written so many and so many different songs. Among these songs of Rabindranath there are national anthems or many patriotic songs. During the Swadeshi era, several thousand nationally inspired songs were composed by the poets of Bengal, among which Rabindranath alone contributed the most.

A vivid description of the contribution of Tagore can also be found in the book *Rabijiboni* (1990) by Prasanta Kumar Pal.

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ১১ আশ্বিন [বুধ ২৭ সেপ] সাবিত্রী লাইব্রেরির সভায় রাথীবন্ধনের যে প্রস্তাব করেছিলেন, জনসাধারণ উৎসাহের সঙ্গে তা গ্রহণ করে। ১১ Oct [বুধ ২৫ আশ্বিন] বেঙ্গলী পত্রিকায় বঙ্গাক্ষরে 'রাথী সংক্রান্তির ব্যবস্থা' ঘোষিত হয় :

দিন। এই বৎসর ৩০শে আশ্বিন ১৬ই অক্টোবর আগামী বৎসর হইতে আশ্বিনের সংক্রান্তি।

ক্ষণ। সূর্যোদয় হইতে রাত্রি প্রথম প্রহর পর্যন্ত।

নিয়ম। উক্ত সময় সংঘম পালন।

উপকরণ। হরিদ্রাবর্ণের তিন সূতার রাথী

মন্ত্র। ভাই ভাই এক ঠাই, ভেদ নাই ভেদ নাই।

অনুষ্ঠান। উচ্চ নীচ হিন্দু মুসলমান, খৃষ্টান বিচার না করিয়া ইচ্ছামত বাঙ্গালী মাত্রেই ডান হাতে রাথী বাঁধা। অনুপস্থিত ব্যক্তিকে সঙ্গে মন্ত্রটি লিখিয়া ডাকে বা লোকের হাতে রাথী পাঠাইলেও চলিবে। (Pal, 1990)

Rabindranath 11 Ashwin [Wed 27 Sep] proposed Rakhi Bandhan at the Savitri Library meeting, which was enthusiastically accepted by the public. 11 Oct [Wed 25 Ashwin] 'Rakhi Sankranti Rules' is announced in Bengali Patrika: Date: This year 30th Ashwin 16th October Ashwin Sankranti from next year. Time: From sunrise to the first hour of the night. Rules: Fasting. Materials: Rakhi is made of three yellow strings. Mantra: there is no difference between brothers Program Schedule: Ignoring the class difference or religious difference, one can tie rakhi on the right arm of any Bengali. If anyone is absent physically, then rakhis with the mantra can be sent to the respective person either by post or through any massager.

The same newspaper later published on 13th October 1905:

13 Oct [] : We are requested to announce that Babu Rabindra Nath Tagore has composed a beautiful song in connection with the "Rakhi Bandhan Ceremony" which is to be held on the 16th October. This and the special hymn composed for the occasion, printed on nice country-made cards, and also the "Rakhi Threads" are now being sold at the Bhandar office No. 7, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta. (Pal, 1990)

The song referred here and popularly known as Rakhi Sangeet was composed in 1905 specially for the occasion of Rakhi Bandhan ceremony.

বাংলার মাটি, বাংলার জল, বাংলার বায়ু, বাংলার ফল--
পুণ্য হউক, পুণ্য হউক, পুণ্য হউক হে ভগবান ॥
বাংলার ঘর, বাংলার হাট, বাংলার বন, বাংলার মাঠ--
পূর্ণ হউক, পূর্ণ হউক, পূর্ণ হউক হে ভগবান ॥
বাঙালির পণ, বাঙালির আশা, বাঙালির কাজ, বাঙালির ভাষা--
সত্য হউক, সত্য হউক, সত্য হউক হে ভগবান ॥
বাঙালির প্রাণ, বাঙালির মন, বাঙালির ঘরে যত ভাই বোন--
এক হউক, এক হউক, এক হউক হে ভগবান ॥

The soil of Bengal, the water of Bengal, the air of Bengal, the produce of Bengal. May be blessed, may be blessed, may be blessed, O' my Lord. The homes of Bengal, the trade of Bengal, the forests of Bengal, the fields of Bengal. Maybe satiated, may be satiated, may be satiated, O' my Lord. The oaths of Bengalis, the desires of Bengalis, the work of Bengalis, and the language of Bengalis. May be eternal, may be eternal, may be eternal, O' my Lord. The soul of Bengalis, the thoughts of Bengalis, all brothers and sisters in homes of Bengalis May unite, may unite, may unite, O' my Lord

This song primarily describes the Bengali culture and the beauty of Bengal and tries to portray the Bengali sentiment. Abanindranath Tagore writes in his memoir *Gharoa* (1941) –

...Rabi-kaka once asked us to celebrate Raakhi-Bandhan, to fasten Raakhi (friendship band) on people's hands. ... We shall have a dip in the Ganges followed by the tying ritual – it was decided. ... We won't use vehicles, Rabi-kaka said, but travel on foot instead. I was a little disturbed as I did not prefer walking. But it was Rabi-kaka – he would not listen to anybody. We all started at last for the Ganges. On either side of the street, people thronged in thousands jamming the footpath and crowding over the rooftop of the buildings. Women sprinkled 'Khoi'(popped rice) with the persistent echoing of conch giving the event the colour of a grand festival. Dinu, who was among us, marched along singing songs –
Baanglar Maati Baanglar Jol / Baanglar Baayu Baanglar Phol

The song was composed around this time. The crowd awaited on the bank of the Ganges to have a glimpse of Rabi-kaka. The songs ended – we started tying Raakhi bands on each other's wrists. ... While traversing through Pathuriaghata – a few horsemen were seen engaged in massaging the stallions in Biru Mullick's stable. Rabi-kaka swiftly swerved towards them and fastened the bands upon their wrists. What a mess! I had thought. They are all Muslim people. A certain riot was the first to strike my mind. Wonder! It was followed by 'Kola-kuli' (hugging in Bengali style). The horsemen stood dumbfounded with utter disbelief. ... (Tagore, 1941)

Majority of songs that were composed in the period of Swadeshi movement are basically composed by the tune of Baul such as আমার সোনার বাংলা, আমি তোমায় ভালোবাসি (My golden bangla, I love you), যদি তোর ডাক শুনে কেউ না আসে তবে একলা চলো রে (If no one hears your call, go alone), আজি বাংলাদেশের হৃদয় হতে কখন আপনি (When did you come out of the heart of Bangladesh), এবার তোর মরা গাঙে বান এসেছে, 'জয় মা' বলে ভাসা তরী (Now the dead stream returns high tide), নিশিদিন ভরসা রাখিস, ওরে মন, হবেই হবে (Have faith everyday, oh mind, it will happen), যে তোমায় ছাড়ে ছাড়ুক, আমি তোমায় ছাড়ব না মা (Whoever leaves you, I will not leave you mother), যে তোরে পাগল বলে তারে তুই বলিস নে কিছু (You don't say anything to someone who calls you crazy).

Tagore published a booklet titled *Baul*(1904) in which he included some of his swadesi, or national-oriented, songs. The majority of these songs, notably আমার সোনার বাংলা, আমি তোমায় ভালোবাসি (My golden bangla, I love you).

আমার সোনার বাংলা, আমি তোমায় ভালোবাসি।

চিরদিন তোমার আকাশ, তোমার বাতাস, আমার প্রাণে বাজায় বাঁশি ॥

ও মা, ফাগুনে তোর আমের বনে ঘ্রাণে পাগল করে,
মরি হয়, হয় রে—

ও মা, অম্বানে তোর ভরা ক্ষেতে আমি কী দেখেছি মধুর হাসি ॥

কী শোভা, কী ছায়া গো, কী ম্লেহ, কী মায়া গো—

কী আঁচল বিছায়েছ বটের মূলে, নদীর কূলে কূলে।

মা, তোর মুখের বাণী আমার কানে লাগে সুধার মতো,

মরি হয়, হয় রে-- মা, তোর বদনখানি মলিন হলে, ও মা, আমি নয়নজলে ভাসি ॥

My glittering golden Bengal I love you.

The ambiance of your air and sky seems like playing the flute in my heart.

The aroma of the mango orchard in the springtime drives me crazy, O mother dear.

Autumn time sees smiles all through mature fields of paddy.

What a humble show, shady affection, and attachment -

You spread out cloaks like under a big banyan and the riverside.

Your loving words appear to flow from heaven,

I am in tears whenever your face has a trace of gloom.

Amar Sonar Bangla evoked the idea of a mother whose very flesh was now in peril to mobilize Bengalis to resist the split of Bengal. The song is full of pictures of a pastoral Bengal, including her mango, banyan trees, paddy fields, riverbanks, and groves. The

apostrophic object of the song and the main worker in an emotive and bucolic labour economy, the golden Bengal to whom the song is dedicated, is addressed as "Ma" (mother). She evokes strong emotions not just via the splendour of her surroundings but also through her sorrow. In the end, it is a song of lamentation, an ode to the ideal pastoral setting of the "true" Bengal that was divided into East Bengal in 1905. When he composed the song, Tagore anticipated that the division of Bengal and the ensuing sectarian bloodshed would only be t

We all rule as kings in the kingdom of our King.
 Why else would we join hands with him?
 We do as we please, our pleasure blends with His.
 We are not enslaved to any trepidity
 Why else would we join hands with his?
 The King honors us -- receives it back at once.
 Never are we tantalized by any fantasies.
 Why else would we join hands with his?
 We travel free and wide, yet fall back on His stride.
 We will not be teased by futilities.
 Why else would we join hands with his?

The song gives a hint of sovereignty. Here ownership is almost a condition. If everyone does not have the right to be a king, there is no right to associate with the king. Hence the application of the word 'otherwise'. It is as if Rabindranath mixed a little bit of Thomas Hobbes or John Locke's Contract Theory with the Theory of Rights. King-subject relations do not usually rest on contracts or conditions. The king is a guardian, almost like a father. In Rabindranath's vision of a country where 'we all can be kings', two conditions need to be fulfilled simultaneously for everyone to be king together and not bring anarchy to the state, 1) there will be one 'king', 2) but he will be king only on the condition that 'We' will all be kings. The king himself cannot violate this rule. But who is this king? Is this the state or our own rule of law? Is this king but Rousseau described 'General Will'? Rabindranath mentions some characteristics of a king. He is such a King, in whose reign we know for sure 'We are not bound nor in bondage to the terror of a king of servants.' In Western thought, the ideas of 'slavery' and 'freedom' are linked by two opposites. Western political thought has progressed by placing them at two poles. It is the same in this song. By saying that we are not the slaves of the king, and his rule is not based on fear, Rabindranath gave a glimpse of a well-known theory of freedom. There is no conflict between our freedom and the king's rule. As if our freedom is the fulfilment of His will and the fulfilment of His rules. But the song also conveys that even though we meet, we and the king are not one. A king is not any ordinary being. The king here is not even a collection of people. Because in the song, those who are 'we', they and Raja, work from different positions. 'We' who, in their own right and the sense discussed above, have conditions. 'All are kings', they can meet the king only by accepting this identity. The king also has some duties, the master of which is the king himself. "King gives value to everyone" does not mean value "you get back". It is also his responsibility not to harm anyone with any untruth. We meet him only as a result of our freedom. But He is someone greater than us, even though we meet Him on the condition of being 'king of all'. This union means the absorption of 'us' into the king, as the devotee in devotion wants to be a part of the adorable divinity. The king of our freedom is what the Germans call 'Grund' or the source of reason. It is here that Rabindranath's political or democratic thought departs from the thought of Western political philosophers and goes his own way. This topic deserves a detailed discussion because the concept of *Raja* (King) preoccupied Rabindranath throughout his life. From *Raja of Dakghar* (1912), *Raja of Raja* (1909), or *Aruparatan* (1920), there is much more to think about the presence of the character 'Raja' in Rabindranath's imagination.

Tagore's Swadesh songs are not typical patriotic songs in the truest sense of the term. It communicates the pluralistic spirit, or more often known as the idea of "Unity in Diversity," which is at the heart of India's cultural history. One such song composed in 1911 is জনগণমন-অধিনায়ক জয় হে ভারতভাগ্যবিধাতা (Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people). On Day 2 of the Indian National Congress's annual conference in Calcutta, India, on December 27, 1911, the song "Bharat Bhagya Bidhata" was first performed. The niece of Tagore, Sarala Devi Chowdhurani, and a group of schoolchildren performed in front of Bishan Narayan Dhar, the president of the Indian National Congress, and Ambika Charan Majumdar. The song was published in 1912 as *Bharat Bidhata* in the *Tatwabodhini Patrika*, the Brahmo Samaj's official journal, of which Tagore was the Editor. (Pal, 1990)

জনগণমন-অধিনায়ক জয় হে ভারতভাগ্যবিধাতা!
 পঞ্জাব সিন্ধু গুজরাট মরাঠা দ্রাবিড় উৎকল বঙ্গ
 বিক্ষ্য হিমাচল যমুনা গঙ্গা উচ্ছলজলধিতরঙ্গ
 তব শুভ নামে জাগে, তব শুভ আশিস মাগে,
 গাহে তব জয়গাথা।
 জনগণমঙ্গলদায়ক জয় হে ভারতভাগ্যবিধাতা!
 জয় হে, জয় হে, জয় হে, জয় জয় জয়, জয় হে ॥

Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people, Dispenser of India's destiny,
 Thy name rouses the hearts of Punjab, Sindh, Gujarat & Maratha, of the Dravida and Orissa and Bengal,
 It echoes in the hills of the Vindhya and Himalayas, mingles in the music of Jamuna and Ganges,
 And is chanted by the waves of the Indian Sea. They pray for thy blessings and sing thy praise,
 The saving of all people waits in thy hands,
 Thou dispenser of India's destiny,
 Victory, Victory, Victory to thee.

Jana Gana Mana was formally adopted as India's national anthem in 1950. There was a controversy regarding the song. It was alleged to have been composed for a durbar in Delhi where George V was proclaimed Emperor of India. The true story is known from a letter written by Rabindranath to Pulinbihari Sen, on November 20, 1937: (Pal, 1990)

...সে বৎসর ভারতসম্রাটের আগমনের আয়োজন চলছিল। রাজসরকারে প্রতিষ্ঠাবান আমার কোনও বন্ধু সম্রাটের জয়গান রচনার জন্যে আমাকে বিশেষ করে অনুরোধ জানিয়েছিলেন। শুনে বিস্মিত হয়েছিলুম, সেই বিস্ময়ের সঙ্গে মনে উত্তাপেরও সংঘর্ষ হয়েছিল। তারই প্রবল প্রতিক্রিয়ার ধাক্কায় আমি জনগণমন-অধিনায়ক গানে সেই ভারতভাগ্যবিধাতার জয় ঘোষণা করেছি, পতন-অভ্যুদয়-বন্ধুর পন্থায় যুগ যুগ ধাবিত যাত্রীদের যিনি চিরসারথি, যিনি জনগণের অন্তর্য়ামী পথপরিচায়ক, সেই যুগযুগান্তরের মানবভাগ্যরথচালক যে পঞ্চম বা ষষ্ঠ কোনো জর্জই কোনক্রমেই হতে পারেন না সে কথা রাজভক্ত বন্ধুও অনুভব করেছিলেন

.....that year preparations were underway for the arrival of the Emperor of India. A friend of mine, had specially requested me to compose a song in praise of the Emperor. I was surprised to hear that, along with that surprise, heat was also transmitted in my heart. Under the shock of his strong response, I announced the victory of India's fortune-teller in the song *Jana-gana-mana*, who is the guide of the people, who is the charioteer of the human destiny of the ages, whom no George the Fifth or Sixth can ever be, even my royal friend realised it....

By 1910-11, his ideals underwent a drastic metamorphosis and his thoughts flowed in a completely reverse direction. Tagore was alarmed enough to lash out at this nationalism in piercing terms and we find a reflection of his thoughts in his writings across genres. Long before his collection of lectures in America came out as *Nationalism* (1917) and another essay *hey Nation* (1922) which is included in his collection of English essays *Creative Unity*, echoed his strong views, we are aware of his novels *Gora* (1910), *Ghare-Baire* (1916), *Chaturanga* (1916) and *Char-Adhyay* (1934) other than his essays and articles, namely *Swadeshi*, *Samaj*, *Manusher Dharma*, *Kalantar*, *Imperialism*, *Nation Ki*, *Ingrej O Bharatbashi*, *Abasthya O Byabasthya* to name a few, in all of which Tagore was not completely supportive of the militancy that induced violence within the approach of the young revolutionaries of the time. Not just the militancy, the separatist practice of communalism, disharmony, and ultra-patriotism made him anxious.

He explained his viewpoint of the 'a nation' in *Nationalism in India*(1917):

I am not against one nation in particular, but against the general idea of all nations. What is the Nation? It is the aspect of a whole people as an organized power. This organization incessantly keeps up the insistence of the population on becoming strong and efficient. But this strenuous effort after strength and efficiency drains man's energy from his higher nature...to the maintenance of this organization, which is mechanical. (Tagore, 1917).

Tagore believed with all his heart that a nation is a metonymy that encapsulates no single ideal, no opinion, but a collective conscience that strengthens the spiritual upliftment of every individual. As he said further, in "*Nation Ki*":

ভৌগোলিক অর্থাৎ প্রাকৃতিক সীমাবিভাগ নেশনের ভিন্নতাসাধনের একটা প্রধান হেতু সে কথা স্বীকার করিতেই হইবে। নদীস্রোতে জাতিকে বহন করিয়া লইয়া গেছে, পর্বতে তাহাকে বাধা দিয়াছে কিন্তু তাই বলিয়া কি কেহ ম্যাপে আঁকিয়া দেখাইয়া দিতে পারে, ঠিক কোন পর্যন্ত কোন নেশনের অধিকার নির্দিষ্ট হওয়া উচিত। মানবের ইতিহাসে প্রাকৃতিক সীমাই চূড়ান্ত নহে ভূখণ্ডে, জাতিতে, ভাষায় নেশন গঠন করে না। ভূখণ্ডের উপর যুদ্ধক্ষেত্র ও কর্মক্ষেত্রের পত্তন হইতে পারে, কিন্তু নেশনের অন্তঃকরণটুকু ভূখণ্ডে পড়ে না। জনসম্প্রদায় বলিতে যে পবিত্র পদার্থকে বুঝি, মনুষ্যই তাহার শ্রেষ্ঠ উপকরণ। সুগভীর ঐতিহাসিক মস্তনজাত নেশন একটি মানসিক পদার্থ, তাহা একটি মানসিক পরিবার, তাহা ভূখণ্ডের আকৃতির দ্বারা আবদ্ধ নহে (Tagore, 1917)

It is an accepted view that geographical or natural borders can be a major reason for national disparities. The river has sustained a nation, while the mountains posed an obstruction. However, that does not mean anyone can draw on a map exactly how far the public's access should be marked. In human history, natural frontiers can never be the finality. A nation is not only made of its landmass, people, or their language. A battleground or a workspace can be set up on a landmass, but the heart of the nation cannot be fixed in it. What we understand as the pure entity called humanity, people are its best constituents. A nation manifesting from a deep turmoil of history, is an intrinsic element, an inherent fellowship that cannot be limited to a landform.

OBSERVATION:

In the predominant discourse, the agenda of creating nationalistic values among young men and boys would precipitate two separate sets of "obedient subjects" – one, the male youth force, and two, the women at home, the mother. This not only engenders domesticity but also by the magnification of the mother as nation and nation as a mother, additional emotional baggage can be pressed down on both subjects. This valorization of the boys would also mean structuring mother-nation as essentially an educative concept to reinstate the patriarchal gaze on the domestic woman.

A frequent use of the word '*chele*' or 'son' in association with '*amra*' or 'we' is observed in the patriotic songs of Tagore (or any other poet for that matter) which tends to seal the narrator's sexuality expectedly, as male. In a way, this always suggests a masculinization of the performance of these songs, more so, because the historical contexts of composition very categorically rule out women's participation outside the home. Therefore, the songs, which have an overt objective to be cohesive, inspiring youth to unite for a common national cause, might be read as covertly excluding women. However, the reading of the songs may be somewhat more ambiguous. In Bengali language, '*chele*' would signify not a sex type, but 'children' in general, and that widens the performance possibilities. If we perceive the songs as bringing out the plight of the domestic woman from the '*ondor*' (home) to the '*bahir*' (world) through the narrative of suffering they depict, when women sing these songs, however, the plea of freedom may imply freedom from the British colonizers as well as colonizers at home, that is, the patriarchs under whom a woman's agency is always bound by a social intent of guardianship.

This whole discourse of resistance that Tagore had created with these songs seems to enshroud Tagore's personal sense of 'the Motherland' with a visible duality in his representations. On the one hand he portrays this figure as not akin to any conventional Indian goddess, yet as a combination of power, prosperity and divinity, but at the same time, she is also a victim. The imagery he uses to portray the mother as innately powerful is almost religious in its usage: ডান হাতে তোর খড়্গ জ্বলে, বাঁ হাত করে শঙ্কাহরণ, দুই নয়নে স্নেহের হাসি, ললাটনেত্র আশুবরণ (The scimitar blazes in your right hand, your left/hand assails fear/ Affectionate smile lights up your eyes, the third/ eye on your forehead is fiery). Tagore's lines, ও আমার দেশের মাটি, তোমার 'পরে ঠেকাই মাথা তোমাতে বিশ্বময়ীর, তোমাতে বিশ্বমায়ের আঁচল পাতা (O the soil of my motherland, I touch thee with my bowed head, / The Universal earth mother's anchal is spread over you. Your green and gentle image is etched in my mind) also portrays this supreme caregiver, the guardian benefactor, as the one who waits at home. This traditional Bengali woman/wife of Tagore has a dual pressure on herself: the pressure of the colonizer and that of her husband and her sons. The wife has to be socially responsible – in the sense, she has to be docile and dominated by her husband and caring and giving for her sons –in one word- an epitome of womanly, domestic sacrifice. Tagore's nation is also a victim in the hands of the British colonizers as well as her husband, while responsible as the caregiver for her sons. These sons are devoted to their mother, yet they cannot come out of their patriarchal mindset. Thus, they extricate their devotion for the motherland, exactly in the way they would be chivalric, caring, responsible yet domineering over their mother, wife and daughter. Tagore here perhaps using the trope of the suffering mother not only to arouse the country against their colonizer's occupation but also against the country's own gender-discriminatory system that inflicts a coercive pressure on Bengali womankind within the four walls of domesticity. From the rather patriarchal treatment of the mother/woman-figure, it could be observed that perhaps Tagore seems to subscribe to the typical patriarchal sentiment of the Mother being of the highest pedestal offered to a woman. Under this scheme, the country is the same as that powerless, domestic woman who is dependent on the male to be "rescued" and freed.

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