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Contextualising Tagore (1861-1941)

Ideals of Good Governance as reflected in the Narrative Poems of '*Katha*'

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Contextualising Tagore (1861-1941): Ideals of Good Governance as reflected in the Narrative Poems of ‘Katha’*

Abstract

Writing in the past century, when India was still under foreign rule, Rabindranath Tagore tried to put forth ideals of good governance through Katha, collection of narrative poems, published in 1900. Though based on the ancient Indian ballads and anecdotes, Tagore had attempted to configure the concept of political morality in these poems that was typically indigenous in form and content. He did not have to borrow from the West or try to caricature some alien personality. Tagore’s Brahma upbringing urged him to go back to the ancient shastras in the original while his familiarity with the upanishads formulated much of his world view. Tagore could string the ideals inculcated in the upanishads down to the beginning of the eighteenth century in a single thread. Modern day India can still frame its political programme drawing upon those ideals retrieved by Tagore from the heart of the country.

Keywords: indigenous, governance, *Upanishads*, Brahma, Sivaji, Guru Gobind Singh

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Rabindranath Tagore had lived and written in the last century when the political context had been very different from what it is today. India had then been a subjected nation, with no proper record of a glorious past. The question therefore arises that how far his ideas are relevant for the present times. The purpose of this essay is to revisit some of the ideals of good governance put forth in his collection of narrative poems *Katha* (published in 1900). The materials for these poems were collected from sources varying from James Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, Harry Arbutnot Acworth's *Ballads of the Marathas*, Rajendralal Mitra's compilation of *The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal* which he gathered from the rare ancient Tibetan texts collected by Brian Houghton Hodgson, the British Resident at the court of Nepal, and published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and Tagore's own childhood visits to the Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar on his way to the Dalhousie hills in the Himalayas in the company of his father. The leading role of his father Debendranath Tagore in the *Brahmo* movement, launched by Raja Rammohun Roy, had also familiarized him with the text of the *Upanishads* in their pristine purity. Rabindranath was able to develop indigenous ideas of justice and fair play from these texts and he tried to forge an ideal on the basis of these bits and pieces of history, which were inherently India's own. But that did not mean that he was totally impervious to the western ideas of rationalism and enlightenment. His object was to beware of a blind caricature of whatever western ideas that came our way. The answer to Indian problems, he believed, were to be sought in the ideas that emanated from the Indian soil. It was therefore necessary to go back to our roots and seek a remedy in indigenous traditions.

It was the end of the nineteenth century—a time when Tagore had been writing these poems on a houseboat on the Padma, while supervising his family *zamindari* in Shilaidaha in East Bengal,¹—when memories of the great revolution of 1857 described by colonial historians as *sepoy mutiny*² had still not faded from the minds of the British. The educated elite of the three Presidency capitals³ had started uniting in reform associations like the Indian Association of Bengal (1884), the *Prarthana Samaj* in Bombay (1867) and the *Poona Sarvajanic Sabha* (1870). They had also started airing their grievances and organizing public opinion in the columns of newspapers and periodicals such as the *Poona Sarvajanic Sabha Quarterly*, that prompted the Viceroy Lord Lytton (1876-1880) to promulgate the Vernacular Press Act in 1877. This had enabled the government to censor all publications and put a check on all writings with seditious content.⁴ The Indian National Congress had been founded in 1885 by a retired civil servant Allan Octavian Hume to bring the Presidency elites

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together. This organization would give them a platform to vent their demands and act as a channel between the literate elite and the British administration.⁵ But this organization could not proceed further than trying to move the government with prayers and petitions to admit them to a greater share of power.⁶

The other options before the youth of the country were also not much to the liking of Tagore. The 1860s were the years of the unification movements in Italy and Germany. Secret societies modeled on the Italian *Carbonari* were the craze of the hour. The impressionable youth of Bengal were often lured to it. Tagore himself had recounted in his *Jibonsmriti* (Reminiscences) of having participated in such a secret society, which had no substantial programme on its agenda.⁷ But the *Anushilon* or the *Yugantar Samitis* were more serious in their aims often giving rise to serious revolutionary actions such as the Muzaffarpur Bomb Case of 1908. Two young boys Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki attempted to murder the District Magistrate Kingsford by throwing bomb at his car. The boys were later caught and hanged.⁸

The philosophies for social changes emanating from the West, like Marxism, Bolshevism or Syndicalism also held no attraction for Tagore. He strongly disapproved of such shameless and unimaginative imitation of the West.⁹ It was his opinion that those new ideas imported from abroad would not be able to go deep into the consciousness of Indians. Indian ideas of social renovations should have their roots in Indian traditions and the country's own history.

Tagore had two very illustrious predecessors to act as pathfinders for him in this venture. One was Raja Rammohun Roy, who had tried to retrieve the true tenets of Hinduism from oblivion and obscurity and confront the contempt and ridicule with which the Christian missionaries tried to demolish the fabric of the *sanatan dharma* (the eternal religion of the country).¹⁰ At the same time he had opened the way to western learning and tried to reform and remodel Indian society, religion, politics and education in the light of the new knowledge acquired from the contact with the West. He never hesitated to refresh ancient knowledge with new ideas from the West. But at the same time he never lost contact with his roots in the East. He had thus effected a happy union between the East and the West.¹¹

Another person who deeply influenced Tagore was Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. Chattopadhyay revived the country's rich past through his writings to illustrate that the values embedded in ancient Indian texts were instances of chivalry, sacrifice and devotion newly

learnt from the west. The art of endowing historical incidents with creative imagination had been taken to new heights in his historical novels. Historical literature of such genre, Tagore had discovered, would transport a person closer to the ethos of those times than an ordinary text of history.¹²

Tagore, too, had been inspired to work out his alternative model of political ideals and good governance by looking back into the country's history. Ballads and anecdotes from Punjab, Rajasthan, Benares or Maharashtra, sung by *dhadis* or itinerant singers, provided him with the necessary materials, with which he could spin out the narrative poems of the collection *Katha*, first published in 1900. Sudipta Kaviraj has termed it 'a process of widening the collective self'.¹³ While invoking his concept of the nation Tagore transcended the narrow provincial boundaries and tried to conceive of the country in its vast cultural entirety. Tagore had known that in spite of being divided into small political microcosms, a common thread of moral values had always united the soul of the country. Guru Gobind Singh, Rana Ratan Rao, the Raja of Kashi or Sivaji might have belonged to different geographical environments and different political circumstances, far removed from each other but they subscribed to some universal values which they had inherited from their forefathers and were to bequeath to their successors. In this essay only a few of these poems have been chosen to illustrate the ideals that Tagore had wanted to hold out for posterity from his country's deep past.

Tagore's childhood familiarity with the tales of the Sikh Gurus and his visits to the Harimandir in Amritsar in the company of his father¹⁴ had inspired him to write on Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru formed the subject of several of his poems. The circumstances in which the Guru had inherited the mantle of his father Guru Teg Bahadur had fired the imagination of the boy Rabindranath. Guru Gobind was only six years of age when his father Guru Teg Bahadur was beheaded by Emperor Aurangzeb in Chandni Chowk, Delhi. The young boy had to leave his birthplace in Patna Sahib and lead the life of a fugitive in the Naina Devi hills in northern India. He spent his time acquiring knowledge in Sanskrit, Persian, Gurmukhi and all the martial arts in the quietness of the forest. He knew that he would not be able to lead his people to victory unless he had mastered all the liberal and martial arts. But his followers beseeched him to challenge the enemy and lead them quickly to victory. The Guru could feel how his followers all over the Punjab had united like the waters of the five rivers falling into the ocean calling him to action. But yet he wanted to spend more time in silent and lonely contemplation. He knew that he was to face a great encounter ahead which might even leave him dead. That was why he was thinking of lighting

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a lamp of knowledge for his followers, which no storm would be able put out ever. In his *Guru Gobinda* (composed in the Bengali Year 1295 or 1888 A.D.) Tagore narrated this fascinating background to the Guru's foundation of the *Khalsa Panth*. But this noble achievement of the Guru was not the work of a single day. It took him years of study, training and contemplation to devise a way for his people, which would make them invincible in every walk of life. What appealed most to Tagore's imagination was the Guru's selection of the *Panj Piyare* entitled to administer *amrit* to the *Khalsa* randomly from among his followers. This selection was purely based on their devotion to the Guru without any reference to their caste. He was not slow in realizing the immense promises of political and social progress held out for the country by this merging of caste differences.¹⁵ Tagore would also have liked his ideal leader to have a long training in the art of statecraft before he would join politics. Acting on momentary impulses without proper political education and training might result in personal failure for the politician and disaster for the country. These ideas were more clearly spelt out in his essay 'Ingraj O Bharotbasee' included in the collection *Raja Praja*. He did not have much faith in the mushrooming of newspapers to draw the ruler's attention to the anomalies in the administration and the long lectures laced with prayers. He found most people were interested in publicity and self-advertisement but when the time of real sacrifice appeared no one was found to be ready to rise to the occasion.¹⁶

Yet another attribute, which Tagore sought in the ideal leader was absolute selflessness. Once again a story from the life of Guru Gobind Singh provided him with a subject to illustrate his point. In this poem *Nishfal Upahar* (A Futile Gift) a rich devotee comes to the Guru with a gift of a pair of diamond studded gold bangles. The Guru was seated on the bank of the river Jamuna, deeply immersed in thoughts about the problems facing the Sikh Pantha. When the man placed the gifts in front of him the Guru failed to take notice of it and one of the pair slipped into the strong current of the river. The disciple was shocked at the fate of his precious gift and immediately dived into the river to fish it out. He continued searching and came out only when daylight had dimmed. Finding the Guru still in deep contemplation, he said he could still locate the costly item if only the Guru would help him. Waking up to his repeated entreaties the Guru finally took notice of the man. He picked up the other bangle and threw it in the river to show the man, where the first bangle might be lying.¹⁷ The Guru's appalling indifference to all worldly values and his deep involvement in his thoughts for the welfare of the people was the perfect example of absolute selflessness in a leader. Tagore must have penned this poem to illustrate the kind of deep involvement with

the future of the nation which he expected from his ideal national hero. He would never yield to temptations to forget his country's interests even for a moment.

Tagore had been no less fascinated with the tales of the Rajputs than those of the Sikhs. The short poem *Raj Bichar* (The Royal Verdict).¹⁸ upholds the administration of even handed justice as the greatest virtue of a good ruler. Briefly, it states how Rana Ratan Rao had ordered death for a trespasser, who had entered the female apartments in a Brahmin household at the dead of the night. But when later it was discovered that the intruder was none other than the royal prince now executed by royal order, the Rana's men brought the Brahmin in chains before the Rana. But much to everyone's surprise, the Rana simply asked his men to release the priest. The deep inner message about the responsibility of the ruler to treat all his subjects equally and not discriminate between the high and the low drives home through the brevity of the poem. The inner anguish of a father, even if he was the mighty king of the land, at the loss of his son, the open conflict between attachment for a son and august responsibility of a monarch for the dispensation of justice, all had been left by the poet to the imagination of the sensitive reader. Even if such myths contained an element of exaggeration, they were important indicators of how the people wanted their rulers to behave. 'Whether a myth is based on reality or ignores or distorts reality,' as Richard Cashman observes, 'it is a powerful constant because it represents the sum of what a group wants to believe about oneself.'¹⁹

The Buddhist text *Divyabandanmala* had also provided an interesting anecdote about the fabled justness of the Raja of Kashi (also known as Benares). Tagore immortalized the story in a poem *Samanya Kshati*, which can be translated as An Insignificant Loss. The Queen of the land had once gone to take a bath in the river. She and her lady companions found it too cold after the bath and they set fire to a nearby hut to warm themselves up. The fire soon spread into the village and burnt all the straw huts. The poor villagers went to the King and reported what had happened. The King called for an explanation from the Queen. The Rani brushed aside the complaints saying the loss was 'trivial' compared to the money spent by the rich for their amusement every hour of the day.²⁰ The Queen's reply incensed the Raja. He told her that she would never be able to feel the loss of the poor as long as she remained in the palace. She was ordered to go and collect the money for building the huts by begging from door to door and then report to the court how much loss has been suffered by destroying the huts. The story was a perfect illustration of Tagore's comprehension of the teachings of Buddhism. In Tagore's perception Lord Buddha's doctrine of *nirvana* as the ultimate goal of

human life did not merely mean an extinction of the self. Rather it meant the mingling of the self with the entire world for the benefit of others. Just as a lamp can give light only by burning the oil in it or the tree can attain its fulfillment by giving fruits, similarly human life can have its fulfillment by offering service to the world. *Nirvana* in Tagore's imagination was thus 'the culmination of love'. When the Raja of Kashi ordered his Queen to leave the luxury of the royal palace and live among the common people and help them build the huts which had been destroyed through her idiosyncrasies, he wanted her to realize this truth of life. She had to forget her own self and put behind her personal wellbeing for the welfare of the people.²¹

Drowning of the self in the welfare of the people was also the subject of yet another of the *Katha* poems. Briefly, the poem *Pratinidhi* (1897) narrated how Sivaji tried to satisfy his Guru Ramdas²² by making an offering of the kingdom that he had established through his prowess and valour so that his Guru would stop begging in the streets. But the Guru in his turn asked Sivaji to come down to the streets as a beggar, renounce wealth and power, hold his kingdom in trusteeship for his Guru and work for the good of his subjects.²³ The inspiration for this poem came from the ballads of the Marathas, collected and translated by the British civil servant, Harry Arbuthnot Acworth in 1894.²⁴ However, Tagore was already familiar with the cultural renaissance in the Maratha heartland. He spent some time with a Marathi family in Bombay on the eve of his first visit to Europe for picking up English etiquette from a girl who had recently returned from England. This was his first encounter with Marathi culture and where he also familiarised himself with Marathi history firsthand.²⁵ Subsequently, he must have come into contact with the *Prarthana Samaj* in Bombay and the *Poona Sarvajanic Sabha*. He was particularly influenced by the ideas of Mahadev Govinda Ranade (1842-1901), who was associated with both the associations. The *Prarthana Samaj* established in Bombay in 1867 had been working on the same lines as Rammohun's *Brahmo Samaj* (established 1828).²⁶ Ranade's article 'The Saints and Prophets of Maharashtra' published in the *Poona Sarvajanic Sabha Quarterly* (Vol. XVII, April 1895) must have drawn Tagore's attention.

Tagore had been so impressed by the stories of the rise of the Maratha movement that he requested Sarat Kumar Roy of *Patha Bhavana* in Visva-Bharati, the school that he had established in Bolpur in 1901, to write a book on the history of the Marathas. In Bengali Year 1315 (1897) Tagore himself wrote the foreword to this book. In this he spoke of a great moral and intellectual upheaval in the Maratha homeland preceding the rise of the great leader

Sivaji, who had laid the foundations of the Maratha state. This great political movement would not have been possible without the socio-religious ferment that presaged it. Tagore sincerely believed that the rise of a nation was possible only when the strength of individual leadership fused with the moral might of its religion. Maharashtra had been experiencing such a moral revolution since a long time. Several religious thinkers had been trying to break the artificial barriers between the Brahmins and the Sudras and declare that all should have an equal access to the worship of God. Both the high and the low were to be equal in front of God. Sivaji represented the climax of this novel fusion of the high and low in his own person.²⁷

The rise of the Marathas had been the culmination of a long and parallel process both at the political as well as the social level. Malik Ambar, the Abyssinian slave-turned-military leader of the Nizamshahi sultanate of Ahmadnagar had built up his army bit by bit from among the local recruits from Konkan, Desh and Ghat. The great demand for soldiers led military contractors to include *Dhangars, Kunbis, kolis, malis, gavlis* and other menial classes as military recruits and pass them off as *asal Maratha*. Military success often obliterated their obscure past and merged them into the ranks of the *asal Marathas*.²⁸ Ramchandra Chintaman Dhere's researches in the movements among the tribal communities of Maharashtra throw some novel light on the origins of the Bhonsles, the ancestors of Sivaji. In his book *Sikhar Singanapurca Sri Sambhu Mahadev* (Marathi) Dhere had shown, from an analysis of oral stories, songs, practices of worship, community profiles and minor literary texts, that the Bhonsles had originated from the cow-herding pastoralist Hoysalas and Yadavas (ruling races of this region till their overthrow by the Nizamshahi Sultanates). Sivaji's ancestor, a first cousin of the Yadava King Singhana I, had moved from Karnataka to Satara and had built a temple for Sambhu Mahadev on top (*Shikhar*) of a hill at modern Shingnapur. The Bhonsles continued to patronize this temple while the *samadhis* of Shahji, Sivaji and Sambhaji were placed in the vicinity of this temple. This points to the *Gavli* (cow-herding pastoralist) origins of Sivaji in spite of subsequent attempts to connect him with the Rajput Sisodia clan of Mewar by Gaga Bhatt.²⁹ The fusion of the pastoral communities with the Marathas introduced the egalitarian values of these pastoralists among them.³⁰

Sivaji had his mentor in Guru Ramdas, designated *Samarth* by the people because of his strong and powerful appearance. Ramdas had embarked on a tour of India from 1632 to 1644 and was pained to see the country under the subjection of the Muslims where the Hindus were slaves in their own land. He felt that if something was not done to save

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Hinduism it would soon decay and disappear. Lord Ram was his ideal for having rescued Sita from her abductor Ravana, which meant the retrieval of the honour of the land from its violators.³¹

Ramdas's invocation of the Katha of Ram for reviving the glories of the Hindu race struck a sympathetic chord in the heart of Tagore. Tagore too had written about the mythical figure of Ram with great fondness and admiration. He viewed Ram as a great synthesizer of the peoples of this land living in North and South. Tagore had acknowledged the architectural skill of these people of the south, who had built the fabled palace of Golden Lanka. Later these skilled architects (*Maydanab* from the *Mahabharata* spoken of by the author) were hired by the *Pandava* king Yudhishthir for building his palace at Hastinapur. Ram's journey thus paved the way to the assimilation of the cultures flourishing in Indian sub continent to give birth to the Hindu race.³² Tagore must also have been aware of the central place occupied by Ram in the long line of the Sun dynasty (*Suryavansam*) and the great influence Sun (*Surya*) exerted on the Hindu mind as the source of all energy in the world. His exposition of the hymn of the sun (*Gayatree*) in the essay *Dharmer Saral Adorsho* (The Simple Philosophy of Religion) reveals this link in a very lucid manner. The chanting of this simple hymn reminded a person that as a part of the vast creation, the individual too had a link with the creator. The individual perception of the world was a merely a part of the divine consciousness instilled in the human.³³

Sir Jadunath Sarkar was moved by the noble rendering by Tagore of the prevalent lore in Satara which said that Sivaji used to accept the command from his Guru from the hill top fort of Parli or Sajjangarh, which he had conferred on the Guru as an expression of his reverence for him. But the physical distance between Satara and the fortress residence of the Guru was 4 miles which makes it difficult to lend credence to the story. But Tagore had clearly spelt out in *Sahitye Aitihashikata*, written in the last few weeks of his life in May 1941, that when he used bits and pieces of history in his poems stray references from these were woven into a long narrative most of which was born of his own imagination.³⁴ Judged by that criterion, *Pratinidhi* reflected the emotions of the people. Even a casual reader of this poem could not fail to miss the yearning of the Marathas for *Haindvi Swarajya* (independent Hindu kingdom). As Sir Jadunath has beautifully expressed it 'Sivaji then made the red ochre-coloured robe of a Hindu Sanyasi his flag, *bhagwa jhanda*, in order to signify that he fought and ruled in the livery of his ascetic lord paramount and conducted himself as ever in his great Taskmaster's eyes.'³⁵

The inspiration for writing this poem came to Tagore from several important developments in the political firmament of his times. The Sivaji legend, which had somewhat dimmed in public memory, was revived by the renewed enthusiasm of Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901), a moderate nationalist of the times. The *Prarthana Samaj* in Bombay rekindled interest in the unifying influence of *Bhakti*, which had gained popularity in the writings of Gyandev, Eknath, Tukaram and numerous other saints from various echelons of life. Ranade tried to trace the efflorescence of this united national energy in the victorious figure of Sivaji, the creator of the Maratha *Swarajya*. The prevalent discourse that Sivaji's Guru Samarth Ramdas encouraged him to take up the *Maratha Dharma* instead of the pacific *Vaisnava Dharma* or the *Bhagwata Dharma* of the preceding era received wide publicity during this time. K.T. Telang, another member of the *Prarthana Samaj* and a close associate of Ranade mentioned an *ajnapatra* or rescript issued by Raja Sambhu Chhatrapati of Kolhapur dated 1716 A.D. which claimed that it was the duty of a king to discourage any tendency towards impiety and promote piety among his subjects. The discovery of this *ajnapatra* strengthened the belief that the Maratha kings had fought in the name of religion and their ultimate goal was to establish a *Haindvi Swaraja* all over India.³⁶

For Tagore 'Sivaji' was an idea, the idea which could bring the Brahmin and the non-Brahmin together for a collective sacrifice for their motherland. Tagore's familiarity with the *Upanishads* had taught him that the universe was an expression of the divine joy:

*Anandadhyeba khalvimani bhutani jayante.*⁴⁰

God has mingled himself with his own creation and this act of giving himself up was the fountain of his joy. When Guru Ramdas asked Sivaji to give up everything and engage himself in the service of the people without any attachment for all his princely possessions he came very close to this *Upanishadic* dictum:

Ishabasamidam sarvam yatkinchat jagatyam jagat

Ten tyakten bhunjithah ma gridh kasyasidhanam.

(Everything in this world is the creation of God. We should be happy with what He has given us and should not covet the wealth of others.)⁴¹

The Sivaji ideal was at its peak in the late nineteenth century when the poem *Pratinidhi* was authored by Tagore (1897). But in the following two decades his enthusiasm

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had ebbed away. By 1916 when he sat down to write the foreword to Sarat Kumar Roy's second book on the history of the Sikhs, he was already despairing about the political future of India. By this time various caste groups had started working at cross purposes and divisiveness had taken control of all aspects of national life. Although *Maratha Dharma* had held out great promises for the future of the country it passed away as a lightning shaft in the heart of darkness.

A temporary enthusiasm sweeps over the country and we imagine that it has been united; but the rents and holes in our body-social do their work secretly; we cannot retain any noble idea long.

Sivaji aimed at preserving the rents; he wished to save from Mughal attack a Hindu society to which ceremonial distinctions and isolation of castes are the very breath of life. He wanted to make this heterogeneous society triumphant all over India! He wove ropes of sand; he attempted the impossible. It is beyond the power of any man, it is opposed to the divine law of the universe, to establish the swaraj of such a caste ridden, isolated, internally torn sect over a vast continent like India. (Translation by Sir Jadunath Sarkar)⁴⁴

Tagore was aware of these limitations in the social fabric of India. He admitted that it was a grave mistake on the part of the guardians of our social norms to set up:

the boundary walls too rigidly between races, inperpetuating the results of inferiority in her classifications; often she has crippled her children's minds and narrowed their lives in order to fit them into her social forms.⁴⁵

And yet he would not approve of a blind imitation of the West. He believed that:

there are grave questions that the western civilization has presented before the world but not completely answered. The conflict between the individual and the state, labour and capital, the man and the woman; the conflict between the greed of material gain and the spiritual life of man.⁴⁶

However, he would not recommend a total boycott of all contact with the west. Rammohun had opened the windows to the West for its refreshing influences. Tagore too would recommend a free exchange of ideas:

The history of India does not belong to one particular race but is of a process of creation to which various races of the world contributed – the Dravidians and the Aryans, the ancient Greeks and the Persians, the Mohammedans of the West and those of central Asia. At last now has come the turn of the English to become true to this history and bring to it the tribute of their life, and we neither have the right nor the power to exclude this people from the building of the destiny of India.⁴⁷

The *Upanishads* had held out the ideal of uniting individual consciousness with the striving of humanity. This realizing Him in each and all (*bhuteshu bhuteshu vichintiya*) was the ultimate Indian ideal of Indian social and political life.⁴⁸ The more a ruler could get close to this ideal the more he could be said to have realized the soul consciousness of India.

The poems in *Katha*—each containing a story based on a historical background and ending with a poignant message pointing to an eternal truth—were a unique creation of his poetic self. In this essay only a few of these poems, which Sir Jadunath calls ‘ballads’ to explain their popular content,⁴⁹ have been used to illustrate Tagore’s ideas of just governance. Tagore had been the poet of a country that was under foreign rule yet he ‘refused to wear the “Oriental” straitjacket the British had fashioned for him’⁵⁰ and continued in his search for political norms and ideas, which the country could claim as her own. He had imbibed the ideas of the *Upanishads* very early in his life from his father. His close association with the Brahmo movement reinforced these ideas in his later life. The entire corpus of his writings was inspired by underlying messages from the *Upanishads*, which might not be easily discernible to the lay reader. Even when taking stock of the significance of his *Katha* poems he referred to the ‘yearning of the soul to create and how this finds expression in the father’s love for his progeny’ (*na ba are putranang kamayah putrah priya bhabatyanastu kamaya putra priya bhabanti*) mentioned in the *Upanishads*.⁵¹ In the context of writing the pieces in *Katha*, Tagore used the analogy of the joy of giving birth to a son to the joy of creating a poem. The ancient texts merely provided him with a faint sketch, to which he breathed full life with his own philosophical thinking derived from the ideals of the *Upanishads*; history played only a limited role in these acts of ‘creation.’ The poet spawned ideas in his own joy like a father bringing a son to the earth. But this joy of creation, in the case of Tagore, was tied to the ancient ideals of the East. While admitting the value of western rationalism like his mentor Rammohun, he tried to enshrine whatever noble and just that he could trace—in the disconnected strands of old chronicles and local fables. History here just provided him the entrypoint while the rest was structured from his own imagination.

Endnotes:-

1. Promothonath Bisi, *Silaidahy Rabindranath* (Kolkata, Mitra & Ghosh Publishers, Bengali Year 1426, 13th Impression), p. 57

2. J.W.Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War in India, 1857-1858* (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1896) Kaye could finish only three volumes of it. The rest were written by J.B.Malleson with an altered title; *Surendranath Sen* (Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, 1957); V.D.Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence*, First Published 1909; Rept.New Delhi, 1970)Biswamoy Pati (ed.), *The 1857 Rebellion: Debates in Indian History and Society*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2007); Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, *Rethinking 1857*, New Delhi, 2007.

3. The three Presidencies Bengal, Bombay and Madras, from where the English spread into India.

4. কেবলমাত্র খাবরের কাগজের পাল উড়িয়ে এই

দুস্তরসংসারসমুদ্রেযাত্রাআরম্ভকরতেআমারসাহসহয়না। যখনমুদুদুঅনুকুলবাতাসদেয়তখনএইকাগজেরপালগর্বেক্ষীতহ
য়েওঠেবটে, কিন্তুকখনসমুদ্রথেকেঝড়আসবেএবংদুর্বলদম্ভশতধাছিন্নবিচ্ছিন্নহয়েযাবে।

(Translation: I am not very confident about being able to cross the ocean of this world on a paper boat. It gets inflated when the wind is favourable, but a storm from the ocean may break it to pieces in a moment.) ‘Swadesh’ in Rabindra Rachanavali (Low priced Edition published on the occasion of 125th Anniversary, Visva-Bharati Granthan Bibhaga)Vol.VI, p.500

5. Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge: 1968)

6.প্রবলতাচিরদিনইদুর্বলতারপ্রতিনির্মম, আমরাসেইআদিমশশুপ্রকৃতিকেকিকরেজয়করব? সভাকরে? দরখাস্তকরে?
আজএকটুভিক্ষাপেয়ে? কালএকটাতাড়াখেয়ে?

Translation: Harshness is always ruthless towards weakness; how are we to conquer that primitive animal instinct? By organizing meetings? By writing petitions? By collecting some more alms? And then finally getting a rebuke to cap it all?op. cit. ‘Swadesh’ in R.R. Vol.6, p.501

7

জ্যোতিদাদারউদ্যোগেআমাদেরএকটিসভাহইয়াছিল। বৃদ্ধরাজনারায়ণবাবুছিলেনতাহারসভাপতি। ইহাস্বাদেশিকেরসভা।
কলিকাতারএকগলিরমধ্যেএকপোড়োবাড়িতেসেইসভাবসিত। সেইসভারসমস্তঅনুষ্ঠানরহস্যেআবৃতছিল। বস্তুততাহারম
ধ্যেএইগোপনীয়তাটাইএকমাত্রভয়ঙ্করছিল।

Translation: Jyotidada had taken the initiative to establish a society for us. Old Rajnarainbabu was to preside over it. It used to meet in a dilapidated house in a by lane in Kolkata. The programme of the society was shrouded in mystery. The only fearful aspect about the sabha was its secrecy. Rabindranath Tagore, *Jibansmriti* (First Published in *Probasi*, BY 1318-1319; published from Visva-Bharati Granthalaya in 1912; rept. 1959)pp. 78-79

8. Hitendra Patel, *Khudiram Bose: Revolutionary Extraordinaire* (Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India (2008)

9.

ক্ষুধাহলেইমানুষঅল্পেরস্বপ্নদেখে। আজকালআমাদেরদেশেপোলিটিকালআস্বপ্নপরিচয়েরক্ষুধাটাইনানাকারণসবচেয়েপ্রবলহয়ে

উঠেছে।---

কিন্তু এইপোলিটিকালআত্মপরিচয়েরধারারখুঁজতেগিয়েবিদেশীইতিহাসেগিয়েপৌছতেহয়। সেইব্যগ্রতারতাড়নায়আপনাকেস্বপ্নেগড়াম্যাটসিনি, স্বপ্নেগড়াগারিবালাডি, কাল্পনিকওয়াশিংটনবলেভাবনাকরতেহয়। অর্থতস্বৈত্তাই; এখানেআমাদেরকারোকারোকল্পনাবলশেভিজমকারোসিন্ডিকালিজমকারোবাসোসালিজম-এরগোলকধাঁধায়ঘুরেবেড়াচ্ছে। এসমস্তইমরীচিকারমতো, ভারতবর্ষেরচিরকালীনজমিরউপরেনেই – আমাদেরদুর্ভাগ্যতাপদন্ধহালআমলেরতৃষার্তদৃষ্টিরউপরেস্বপ্নরচনাকরছে। এইস্বপ্ন-সিনেমারকোণেকোণেমাঝেমাঝেMade in Europe এরমার্কাঝলকমেরেএরকারখানাঘরেরবৃত্তান্তটিজানিয়েদিয়েযাচ্ছে।

Translation: A person dreams of food when he is hungry. For various reasons in our country the hunger for political identity has become the most forceful of all now a days. ---But the roots of this political identity are embedded in the history of foreign lands. Driven by that urge one has to imagine oneself as a dream Mazzini, a dream Garibaldi or an imaginary Washington. In economics also it is the same; here our imagination is groping in the labyrinth of Bolshevism, Syndicalism and Socialism. All these are like a chimera, not grounded on the soil of India. It is our misfortune that they are creating an illusion in front of our thirsty eyes. This dream film keeps on flickering the tag 'Made in Europe' from time to time to assert the source where these ideas have been manufactured. *Brihattar Bharat* in 'Kalantar' in *Rabindra Rachanavali*, Vol. XII, p.617

10.

যখননবশিক্ষাভিমানেস্বভাবতইপুরাতনশাস্ত্রেরপ্রতিঅবজ্ঞাজন্মিবারসম্ভাবনাতখনরামমোহনরায়সাধারণেরঅনধিগম্যবিষ্মতপ্রায়বেদপুরাণতন্ত্রহইতেসারোদ্ধারকরিয়াপ্রাচীনশাস্ত্রেরগৌরবউজ্জ্বলরাখিয়াছিলেন।

Translation : At a time when it was only natural that pride in the new learning would induce a contempt for old traditions, in that very hour Rammohun Roy had pandered to the glory of old traditions by retrieving the substance of the Vedas and the Puranas, inaccessible to and nearly forgotten by the common people. Rabindranath Tagore in 'Bankimchandra' in *Adhunik Sahitya* (Visva-Bharati Granthalaya, Kolkata, 1907)

11. 'Purba O Pashchim' in Samaj in *Rabindra Rachanavali*, Vol.6, p.556

12. Rabindranath Tagore, 'Aitihashik Upanyas' in *Sahitya* in *Rabindra Rachanavali*, Vol. 4, p.685

13. Sudipta Kaviraj, 'The Imaginary Institution of India' in Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey (eds.), *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, Vol. VII (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1992), pp.1-39

14. Op.cit. Rabindranath Tagore, *Jibonsmriti*, p.51

15. এখনকেবলনীরবভাবনা

কর্মবিহীনবিজনসাধনা

দিবানিশিশুধুবসেবসেশোনাআপনমর্মবাণী।

.....

একাফিরিতাইযমুনারতীরে

দূরগমগিরিমাঝে।

মানুষহতেছিপাশাণেরকোলে,

মিশাতেছিগাননদীকলরোলে,

গড়িতেছিমনআপনারমনে

যোগ্যহতেছিকাজে।

Contextualising Tagore

.....

আসিতেছেঝড়মরণেরলয়ে
তাইবসেবসেহৃদয়আলয়ে
স্বালাতেছিআলো, নিবিবেনাঝড়ে
দিবেঅনন্তজ্যোতি।

Translation:

Now it is only silent contemplation
Planning in seclusion without any action
Just listening day and night to the commands of one's heart.

.....

That is why I am roaming around on the banks of the Jamuna
In the midst of invincible mountains
I am trying to attain manhood in the midst of stony heights
I am mixing my song in the sound of the river
I am building my strength of will in isolation
And trying to become competent for the intended task.

.....

The storm is threatening with impending death
That is why I am trying to light a lamp in my heart
Which the storm will find it impossible to burn out
And which will shed an endless glow.

'Guru Gobinda' in *Katha* (1900) in *Rabindra Rachanavali*, Vol. IV, pp.58-62. The most crucial lines in this poem were

ভুলেযায়সবেজাতি-অভিমান,
অবহেলেদেয়আপনারপ্রাণ,
একহয়েযায়মানঅপমান
ব্রাহ্মণআরজাট।

Translation:

All have forgotten the pride of race
They all give up their lives for a song
High or low they merge together
The Brahmin and the Jat

16. নির্মাণহইবারঅবস্থায়গোপনেরআবশ্যক। বীজমৃত্তিকারনিম্নেনিহিতথাকে, ভ্রুগর্ভেরমধ্যেপ্রচ্ছন্নভাবেরক্ষিতহয়। শিক্ষাবস্থায়বালককেসংসারেঅধিকপরিমাণেমিশিতেদিলেসেপ্রবীণ-সমাজেরমধ্যেগণ্যহইবারদুরাশয়প্রবীণদিগেরঅযথাঅনুকরণকরিয়াকালপক্কহইয়াযায়। --- শিখদিগেরশেষগুরুগুরুগোবিন্দযেমনবহুকালজনহীনদুর্গমস্থানেবাসকরিয়া, নানাভাতিরনানাশাস্ত্রাধ্যয়নকরিয়া, সুদীর্ঘঅবসরলইয়াআশ্লোত্তিসাধনপূর্বকতাহারপরনির্জনহইতেবাহিরহইয়াআসিয়া, আপনারগুরুপদগ্রহণকরিয়াছিলেন, তেমনিআমাদেরযিনিগুরুহইবেনতাহাকেওখ্যতিহীননিভৃতআশ্রমেঅপ্তগতবাসযাপনকরিতেহইবে;

পরমধৈর্যের সহিত গভীর চিন্তায় নানা দেশের গুণ বিজ্ঞানে আপনাকে গড়িয়ে তুলিতে হইবে;
সমস্ত দেশ অনিবার্য বেগে অন্ধভাবে যে আকর্ষণে ধাবিত হইয়া চলিয়াছে সেই আকর্ষণ হইতে বহু যত্নে আপনাকে দূরে রাখা করিয়া পরি
ষ্কার সুস্পষ্ট রূপে হিতাহিত গুণকে অর্জন ও মার্জন করিতে হইবে।

আমাদের সেই গুরুদেব --- মানচাহিতেছেন না, পদচাহিতেছেন না, ইংরাজি কাগজের রিপোর্ট চাহিতেছেন না; --
কোন একটি বিশেষ আইন সংশোধন করিয়া বা বিশেষ সম্ভাষণ স্থান পাইয়া আমাদের কোন শখা দুর্গতি দূর হইবে আশা করিতেছেন
না। তিনি নিভূত শিক্ষা করিতেছেন এবং একান্তে চিন্তা করিতেছেন; ---
যেন এখনকার দিনের মিথ্যা তর্ক ও বাঁধিক খায়াত হাঁকে কখনো লক্ষ্যে পৌঁছানোর এবং দেশের লোকের বিশ্বাসহীন নিষ্ঠুরিতা উ
দ্দেশ্য সাধন অসাধ্য বলিয়া তাঁহাকে নিরুৎসাহ করিয়া না দেয়া। অসাধ্য বটে,
কিন্তু এ দেশের যিনি উল্লসিত করিবেন অসাধ্য সাধনই তাঁহার ব্রত।

Translation: During the construction phase an object needs to be kept away from the public gaze. Seeds are hidden in the soil and the foetus remains hidden in the womb. If the child is exposed too much to ways of the world before his education is complete, he becomes precocious by imitating older men in the false hope of appearing mature. Just as the last Sikh Guru Guru Gobind had emerged from his seclusion to assume his position of Guru after having spent a long time in a distant land, and having mastered various kinds of learning from various sources and had improved his skills over a long time, similarly the person who would be our leader should also spend a long time in a secluded place without a thought of any fame; he must build up his skills in the arts and sciences of various countries with great patience and thoughtfulness; he must resist the pull of the inexorable forces blindly pushing the country towards the abyss and must develop a clear-headed and balanced discerning power.

That Gurudev of ours is neither looking for prestige or position nor is he looking for a coverage by the English press; ---he is not hoping for our sufferings to end by the rectification of a particular piece of legislation or by the inclusion in a particular political body. He is learning in seclusion and thinking on his own....Let us hope that he does not get distracted by the false arguments and empty speeches of the day or let not the incredulous insincerity of the people not dampen his spirit and make his goal appear to be impossible. True, the task is difficult. But the person who is to do good to this country is to achieve the unattainable.

Ingraj O Bharotbashee in Raja Praja in Rabindrarachanabali, Vol. V, pp. 623-638.

17. 'Nishfal Upahar' in Kahini in Rabindra Rachanavali, Vol. IV, pp. 93-95.

18. 'Rajvichar' in Katha in Rabindra Rachanavali, Vol IV, p.58.

19. Richard I. Cashman, *The Myth of the Lokamanya: Tilak and Mass Politics in Maharashtra* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1975) p. 1.

20. কতটুকু ক্ষতি হয়েছে প্রাণীর?

কত ধন যায় রাজমহিষীর এক প্রহরের প্রমোদে!

Translation:

How much has been lost?

A Queen's luxury costs so much money every hour of the day!

In *Samanya Kshati* in *Katha* in *Rabindra Rachanavali*, Vol. IV, pp. 41-44.

Contextualising Tagore

21. 'The Problem of Self' in *Sadhana* in Sisir Kumar Das (ed.), *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Vol. II (Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 2008) p. 307.

22. His original name was Narayan. But he had escaped from his home at Jamb to Panchabati at Nasik to remain a celibate. He began to be known as Ramdas for having taken shelter in the temple of Ram.

Ramdas had embarked on a tour of India from 1632 to 1644 and was pained to see the country under the subjection of the Muslims and the Hindus as slaves in their own houses. He felt that if something was not done to save Hinduism it would soon decay and disappear from the land. He preached this philosophy of *Karmayoga* in his renowned work *Dasabodha*, which ranks among 'the four Vedas' of the Marathas along with the *Gyaneshwari*, *Eknath Bhagwat* and *Tukaram Gatha*. Ramdas established some 1,100 monasteries, where his disciples would be trained in wrestling as well as the art of playing the stick, spear and the sword. These monasteries were dispersed all over the country in Karnataka, Konkan, Gujerat, Nagpur, Gomantaka, Tailagu, Malayal, Odyia, Gokarna, Rameshwaram, Somnath, Dwaraka, Puri, Ujjain, Ayodhya, Kashi, Mathura and Badrikedar. Those entering such monasteries were to take the oath of celibacy as Ramdas believed in total dedication for the cause of religion. Widowed women could also have their separate monasteries as the lives of widows were usually pledged to sacrifice. All monasteries had a Ram temple attached to them with an idol of Hanumana. The *Dasbodha* of Ramdas dwelt on the *Yuddha Kanda*, a *Dharam Yuddh* waged by Ram for a right and just cause. This absolved him from the sin of human slaughter involved in any kind of war. The fiercely warlike Goddess Kalika Bhawani and Maruti were the objects of worship for Ramdas. N.K. Behere, *The Background of the Maratha Renaissance*, P.158-162; S.S.Apte, *Shree Samartha Ramdas* (Vora & Co. Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Bombay, 1965), p.2.

23. তোমারেকরিলবিধিভিক্ষুরপ্রতিনিধি,
রাজ্যেশ্বরদীনউদাসীন।
পালিবেযে রাজধর্মজেনোতাহামোরকর্ম,
রাজ্যেশ্বরেরবরাজ্যহীন।
বৎস, তবেএইলহোমোরআশীর্বাদসহ
আমারগেরুয়াগাত্রবাস
বৈরাগীরউত্তরীয়পতাকা করিয়ানিয়ো
কহিলেনগুরুরামদাস।

Translation :

The Lord God has made you the representative of a beggar
A King and yet without any riches and without any care for wealth
You will discharge your duties towards the office of the King on my behalf
You will remain a King without a kingdom.
Then please accept this saffron robe of mine my boy
Along with my blessings
Make the saffron shawl of the mendicant your flag
Said the Guru Ramdas.

'Pratinidhi' in *Katha* in *Rabindra Rachanavali*, Vol. IV, pp. 21-23.

24. Harry Arbuthnot Acworth, *The Ballads of the Marathas* (Longmans, Green and Co., London, New York, 1894).

25. The girl was Annapurna Pandurang, the daughter of Atmaram Pandurang, a leader of the *Prarthana Samaj*. For details see Rabindranath Tagore, *Chhelebel* (B.Y.1347(1940) in *Rabindra Rachanabali*, Vol. 13, p.376.

26. Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, *ibid.* (The formation of provincial associations, which preceded the foundation of the Indian National Congress)

27.

মারঠারইতিহাসেআমরাশিবাজীকেইবড়করিয়াদেখিতেপাই। কিন্তুশিবাজীবড়হইয়াউঠিতেপারিতেননাযদিমস্তমারঠা
জাতিতঁহাকেবড়করিয়ানাতুলিত। বহুদিনহইতেবহুধর্মবীরদেশেরউচ্চ-নীচের, ব্রাহ্মন-
শূদ্রেরকৃত্রিমব্যবধানভেদকরিয়াপরস্পরেরমধ্যেযোগ-
সাধনকরিতেছিলে। ভক্তিররাজপথকেতঁহারাইতরওবিশিষ্টসকলেরইজন্যউন্মুক্তকরিয়াদিয়াছিলে। একভগবানেরঅধি
কারেতঁহারাদেশেরসকলকেসমানগৌরবেরঅধিকারীকরিয়াদিয়াছিলে। মারঠায়ধর্মালোনেদেশেরসমস্তলোকএকগ্রমথিতহই
তেছিল। শিবাজীরপ্রতিভাসেইমস্তনথেকেউদ্ধৃতহইয়াছে।—
বস্তুততঁহারসাধনাসমস্তদেশেরইধর্মসাধনারএকটিবিশেষপ্রকাশ।

(Translation: Maratha history is mainly dominated by Sivaji. But Sivaji could not become great if the entire Maratha nation did not contribute to it. Since long many religious men had been trying to unite the Maratha people by obliterating the artificial boundaries between the high and the low, the Brahmins and the Sudras of the country. They had opened up the way to devotion to all – the lowly and the distinguished. The people of the country could share the pride of worshipping the same God on an equal plane. The entire people were being swayed by the Maratha religious movement. Sivaji's talent was a product of that upheaval. ---To tell the truth, his work was an expression of the religious renaissance of the land. Rabindranath Tagore in *Sivaji O Maratha Jati* in *Itihas* (a collection of all Tagore's writings in Bengali related to history by Prabodh Chandra Sen and Pulin Behari Sen by Visva-Bharati Granthan Bibhaga., Kolkata, 1395(1988), pp. 60-64.

28. Richard Eaton, *The New Cambridge Modern History of India, 1.8, A Social History of the Deccan, 1300-1761 Eight Indian Lives* (Cambridge University Press, First Published 2005; *First South Asian Edition*, New Delhi, 2008) pp. 115-124.

29. Ramchandra Chintaman Dhere, *Sikhar Singanapurca Sri Sambhu Mahadev* (Pune: Sri Vidya Prakashan: 2001) cited in Ananya Vajpeyi, 'Excavating Identity through Tradition : Who was Sivaji' in Satish Saberwal and Supriya Varma (eds.), *Traditions in Motion : Religion and Society in History* (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 240-271.

30. This was reflected in the emergence of a long line of liberal saints since the thirteenth century, beginning with Gnaneshwar (1275 A.D.-?) and carried over by Eknath and Tukaram. Though a Brahmin, Gnaneshwar came from an unconventional background. His father Vitthalpant did not arrange for his *upanayana* or sacred thread ceremony which was considered to be an indispensable rite leading to the initiation of a boy to brahminhood. See N.K. Behere, *The Background of the Maratha Renaissance in the Seventeenth Century* (Bangalore, 1946), pp.110. The story goes that stung by the criticism of the Brahmin Rameshwar Bhatt, Tukaram had thrown away the entire corpus of his writings about God in the Indrayani river. But three days later, the papers floated up dry and unspoiled. The drowning and the subsequent reappearance of the manuscripts probably symbolized the irreversible trend of the dawn of a new consciousness among the common people. Op. cit. Richard Eaton, *The New Cambridge Modern History of India, 1.8, A Social History of the Deccan, 1300-1761*

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Eight Indian Lives (Cambridge University Press, First Published 2005; First South Asian Edition, New Delhi, 2008) pp. 129-154.

Gnaneshwar felt the need for bringing religious texts within the reach of the common people and wrote his *Gnaneshwari* or commentary on the *Bhagwat Geeta* in Marathi. Another Brahmin, Eknath (1533-1599) edited and expanded this book. He wrote a Marathi version of the *Ramayana*. Eknath also translated the eleventh book of the *Bhagawat Purana* in Marathi which included a commentary on Vedantic philosophy. The monopoly of the Brahmins over religious texts was thus broken and religious knowledge was freed from the exclusive Sanskrit texts and made accessible to ordinary vernacular speakers. Eknath also composed 300 *Bharuds* or drama poems posing as *mangs* or *mahars* using symbols of dogs, fakirs, unhappy wife, prostitute or bird, exhibiting a familiarity with the commonplace in Paithan. (Eleanor Zelliot, *From Untouchable to Dalit: Essays on the Ambedkar Movement* (Manohar, New Delhi, 2010), pp.13-15). Gnaneshwar and Eknath were merely responding to the spirit of the age in the Maratha homeland, where a spiritual revolution had already been going on for some time. Since the thirteenth century Namdev, the *simpi* (tailor), started writing *abhangs* (poems) in the Marathi dialect in praise of Vithoba and launched a practice of leading processions by *Varkaris* or devotees from all castes from all directions, from Nagpur in the east, the Tapti River on the north and the Krishna River in the south, on the *ekadashis* of *Asadh* and *Kartik* to the temple of Vithoba in Pandharpur (G.A.Deleury, *The Cult of Vithoba* (Poona, 1860) cited by Richard Eaton, op. cit. *The New Cambridge Modern History of India*, 1.8, p. 152). This period also saw the emergence of non-Brahmin saints writing praises of Vithoba in the vernacular. Scores of such saints from pedestrian backgrounds like kunbis, potters, goldsmiths, repentant prostitutes, slave girls, Mahars and even Mohammedan converts to Hinduism became very popular for their *abhangs*. Tukaram (1608-1649), the *kunbi* saint writing in Marathi of the irrelevance of caste in spiritual quests was the most influential among them. The *Varkaris* did not attack the façade of Brahmanic Hinduism and religious service in Pandharpur was carried on by Brahmins as usual. Eknath and Tuka had taken to writing verses in Urdu to attract Mahomedans and could count many Mahomedans among their followers. It is remarkable that the biennial marches by devotees of Vitthal to Pandharpur were joined by many Mahomedans as well. (N.K.Behere, *The Background of the Maratha Renaissance in the Seventeenth Century* (Bangalore, 1946) p.162). Thus the rise of Sivaji was the climax of a long socio-political process extending over several centuries.

31. N.K.Behere, *The Background of the Maratha Renaissance in the Seventeenth Century* (Bangalore, 1946), p.162.

32. আমাদের দেশে যে সকল বীরপুরুষ অবতাররূপে গণ্য হইয়াছেন তাঁহারা নিশ্চয়ই জগতের হিতের জন্য কোন না কোন অসামান্য কাজ করিয়াছিলেন। ---আর্যদের ভারত অধিকারের পূর্বে যে দ্রাবিড়জাতীয়েরা আদিম নিবাসীদিগকে জয় করিয়া এই দেশ দখল করিয়া বসিয়াছিল তাহারা নিতান্ত অসভ্য ছিল না। তাহারাআর্যদেরকাছেসহজেহারমানেনাই।ইহারাআর্যদেরযজ্ঞেবিল্লঘটাইত ,চাষেরব্যঘাতকরিত, কুলপতিরঅরণ্যকাটিয়াযেএকএকটিআশ্রমস্থাপনকরিতেনসেইআশ্রমেতাহারাকেবলইউৎপাতকরিত।---
রামচন্দ্রবানরগণকেঅর্থাৎভারতবর্ষেরআদিমঅধিবাসীগণকেদলেইয়াবহুদিনেরচেষ্টায়ওকৌশলেএইদ্রাবিড়দেরপ্রতাপনষ্ট করিয়াদেন; এইকারণেইতাঁহারগৌরবগানআর্যদেরমধ্যেপ্রচলিতহইয়াছিল।--রামচন্দ্রক্রুদিগকেবশকরিয়াছিলেন, তাহাদেররাজ্যহরণকরেননাই।বিভীষণতাঁহারবন্ধুহইয়ালক্ষ্মায়রাজস্বকরিতেলাগিল।কিষ্কিন্দ্যাররাজ্যভারবানরদেরহাতেদি যাইচিরদিনেরমতোতিনি তাহাদিগকেবশকরিয়ালইলেন।এইরূপে রামচন্দ্রইআর্যদেরসহিতঅন্যআর্যদেরমিলনঘটাইয়াপরস্পরে রমধ্যেআদানপ্রদানেরসম্বন্ধস্থাপনকরেন।তাহারইফলেদ্রাবিড়গণক্রমেআর্যদেরসঙ্গেএকসমাজভুক্তহইয়াহিন্দুজাতিরচনা করিল।এইহিন্দুজাতিরমধ্যেউভয়জাতিরপূজাপদ্ধতিমিশিয়াগিয়াভারতবর্ষেশান্তিস্থাপিতহয়।

Translation: Rabindranath Tagore, 'Sahityasrishti' in Sahitya in Rabindra Rachanavali, Vol. 4, pp.661-668. Also see 'Bharotborshe Itihashe Dhara' in Itihas, pp. 16- 44 for a reiteration of the same statements.. Sir Jadunath Sarkar translated it to English as 'My Interpretation of Indian History' in Modern Review, August and September, 1913; Here I quote a para from Sir Jadunath's translation : "He who succeeded in the endeavour to unite the Aryans and the non-Aryans is even today worshipped all over the country as an incarnation of God.....The fusion of the Aryans and the non-Aryans was one aspect of the grand national enterprise of that age. The Ramayana mentions three Kshatriyas, -Janak, Vishwamitra and Ramchandra – as the leaders of that enterprise. These three were connected not only by personal history but also by unity of aim. We can well understand that Vishwamitra ordained Ramchandra for his life's mission, and that the high aim he placed before Ram he had derived from King Janak." The Modern Review, Vol. XIV, No. 2, August 1913, pp. 113-118

Tagore repeated the same discussion in 'A Vision of India' s History' which was first published in Visva-Bharati Quarterly in April, 1923. it was later published in a book form in 1951 by Visva-Bharati Granthon Bibhaga.

33. ব্রহ্মেরসহিতআমাদেরযেনিত্যসম্বন্ধআছে,
সেইসম্বন্ধেরমধ্যনিজেরচিত্তকেউদবোধিতকরিয়াতোলাইব্রহ্মপ্রাপ্তিরসাধনা। ভারতবর্ষেএইউদ্বোধনেরযেমনপ্রাচীণতাআছেতাহাও
অত্যন্তসরল। তাহাএকনিশ্বাসেইউচ্চারিতহয়, তাহাগায়ত্রীমন্ত্র। ওঁভূর্ভুবস্বঃ-
গায়ত্রীএইঅংশটুকুরনামব্যাহতি। ব্যাহতিশব্দেরঅর্থচারিদিকহইতেআহরণকরিয়ানা। প্রথমতঃভূলোক-ভুবলোক-
স্বর্লোকঅর্থাৎসমস্তবিশ্বজগতকেমনেরমধ্যেআহরণকরিয়ানিতেহয়। ... তৎসবিতুর্বরণংভগোদেবস্যধীমহি/
ধিয়োনোমপ্রচোদয়াৎ - বিশ্বজগতেরসবিতাআমাদেরমধ্যেঅহরণকরিতেছেন -
যেশক্তিক্রমাক্রমেইআমি নিজেওবাহিরেরসমস্তপ্রত্যক্ষব্যাপারকেউপলক্ষিকরিতেছি- সেইধীশক্তিহাঁহারইশক্তি-
এবংসেইধীশক্তিহাঁহারইশক্তিপ্রত্যক্ষভাবেঅন্তরেরমধ্যেঅন্তরতমরূপেঅনুভবকরিতেপারি।

Translation: The quest for Brahma can be achieved by rousing our mind to the relationship that we have with Brahma in our daily lives. The hymn which exists in India for rousing this consciousness is also very simple. One can utter it in one breath, it is the *Gayatree*. *Om bhurbubhosva* – this part of the *Gayatree* is called *byahriti*. This word means gathering something from everywhere. First of all one has to gather together the earth, the universe and the heaven within one's mind. *Tatsobiturbarenyam Bhargodebashya dhimahi / dhiyo jo na prochodayat* – the Sun of the universe, who is conferring energy in us every moment- the energy, which enables me to feel myself as well as whatever is happening outside me – that energy belongs to him – and it is the same energy, which enables me to feel his power within my heart as something which is peculiarly my own. *Dharmer Saral Adarsha in Dharma in Rabindra Rachanavali, Vol.7, pp.463-464.*

34. আমরাযেইতিহাসেরদ্বারাইএকান্তচালিত,
একথাবারবারশুনছিএবংবারবারভিতরেভিতরেখুবজোরেমাথানেড়েছি। এতর্কেরমীমাংসামারনিজেরঅন্তরেইআছে
যেখানেআমিআর-কিছুনই, কেবলমাত্রকবি। সেখানেআমিসৃষ্টিকর্তা, সেখানেআমিএকক,
আমিমুক্ত। বাহিরেরবহুতরঘটনাপুঞ্জেরদ্বারাজালবদ্ধনই। ঐতিহাসিকপণ্ডিতআমারসেইকাব্যসৃষ্টিরকেন্দ্রথেকেটেনেএনেফে
লেখখন, আমারসেটাসহহয়।--- আপনসৃষ্টিক্ষেত্রেরবীন্দ্রনাথএকা, কোনইতিহাসতাকেসাধারণেরসঙ্গেবাঁধেনি।

Translation: I have often heard that we are propelled inexorably by history and vehemently denied it in my own mind. I have resolved this debate in my own heart, where I am nothing else but a poet. In my innermost heart I am the creator, I am unique and I enjoy absolute freedom. I am not bound by the various happenings outside. It becomes intolerable when the erudite historian tries to wrench me from

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my fountain of creation. *Sahitye Aitihasikata in Sahityer Swarup in Rabindra Rachanabali*, Vol. 14, pp.198-200.

35. Sir Jadunath Sarkar, *Sivaji and His Times* (First Published, 1919; Orient Longman Ltd., 1973), p.369.

36. K.T.Telang, *Gleanings from Maratha Chronicles* (Bombay, 1961), p.139.

37. Op. Cit. Sir Jadunath Sarkar, *Sivaji and His Times*, pp.388-389.

38. Ibid. pp. 374-375.

39. The foolish Brahmins of Poona have been educated by ourselves to a ridiculous conception of their own capabilities and importance and believe that they can repeat in the nineteenth century the events of two hundred years ago. *The Bombay Gazette* Editorial, June 13, 1877 cited by Richard Cashman, *The Myth of the Lokamanya*, p.31.

40. Tyag in *Santiniketan in Rabindra Rachanavali*, Vol. VII, pp.530-533.

41. *Prem* in *ibid.*, p.534; *Dharnaprachar* in *Rabindra Rachanavali*, Vol.VII, p. 478.

42. Sir Jadunath Sarkar, *Sivaji and His Times*, p. 374-375.

43. Ibid. See Rabindranath Tagore's original in *Sivaji O Guru Gobinda Singha in Itihas*, pp. 76-78

ফুটা পাত্রেজলভরিয়াউঠিতেপারে

কিন্তুতাহাতেজলথাকেনা। ঋণকালেরভাবোচ্ছ্বাসেরপ্রাবল্যেমনেহয়সমস্তবুঝিছাপাইয়াএকহইয়াগেলে,

কিন্তুছিদ্রেরকাজভিতরেভিতরেচলিতেথাকে। ভারতবর্ষেরসমাজছিদ্রেপূর্ণ, কোনভাবকেতাহাধরিয়ারাখিতেপারেনা,

এইজন্যসমাজেপ্রাণময়ভাবেরপরিবর্তেশুষ্কনির্জীবআচারেরএমননিদারূণপ্রাদুর্ভাব। --- শিবাজীযেহিন্দু-

সমাজকেমোগলআক্রমণেরবিরুদ্ধেজয়যুক্তকরিবারচেষ্টাকরিয়াছিলেন,

আচারবিচারগতবিভাগ-

বিচ্ছেদসেইসমাজেরইএকবারেমূলেরজিনিস। সেইবিভাগমূলকধর্মসমাজকেইতিনিসমস্তভারতবর্ষেজয়ীকরারচেষ্টাকরিয়া

ছিলেন।—ধর্মযেখানেভিতরহইতেইপীড়িতহইতেছে,

যেখানেতাহারভিতরইএমন-

সকলবাধাআছেযাহাতেমানুষকেকেবলইবিচ্ছিন্নওঅপমানিতকরিতেছে--

সেইশতদীর্ঘধর্মসমাজেরস্বারাজ্যএইসুবহুং ভারতবর্ষেস্থাপনকরাকোনমানুষেরইসাধ্যঅনহুং

কারণতাহাবিধাতারবিধাঙ্গতহইতেপারেনা। কেবলআঘাতপাইয়া, ক্রুদ্ধহইয়া, অভিমানকরিয়া, কোনজাতিবড়হইতে,

জয়ীহইতেপারেনা—

যতঋণতাহারধর্মবুদ্ধিরমধ্যেইঅখণ্ডতারতত্বকাজকরিবারস্থাননাপায়,

যতঋণমিলনেরশক্তিকোনমহৎ ভাবেরঅমৃতরসেচিরসঞ্জীবিতহইয়াসকলদিকদিয়াইঅন্তরেবাহিরেতাহাকেএককরিবারঅ

ভিমুখেদেখাইয়ায়, ততঋণপর্যন্তবাহিরেরকোনআঘাতেওপ্রতিভাশালীব্যক্তিবিশেষেরকোনবীরস্বৈইতাহাকেদুর্ঘনির্ভ,

তাহাকেসজীবসচেতনকরিয়াতুলিতেপারেনা।

44. Translation of Tagore's *Sivaji O Guru Gobinda* by Sir Jadunath Sarkar, 'Rise and Fall of the Sikh Power' in *The Modern Review* cited in *Ibid*.

45. 'Nationalism in Japan' in *Nationalism* in Sisir Kumar Das, *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Vol. II, p.438.

46. 'Nationalism in the West' in *Nationalism* *ibid.* pp. 419-420.

47. *Ibid.* pp.423-424.

48. 'The Relation of the Individual to the Universe' in *Sadhana* ibid. pp.288-289.

49. Sir Jadunath Sarkar, 'Tagore's Ballads' in *Modern Review*, Vol. XLIX, No. 4, April 1931.

50. Ana Jelnicar, 'W.B.Yeats's (Mis) Reading of Tagore : Interpreting an Alien Culture' in Kathleen M. O'Connell and Joseph T. O'Connell (eds.), *Rabindranath Tagore : Reclaiming a Cultural Icon* (Visva-Bharati Granthan Bibhaga, Kolkata, 2009), pp. 318-344.

51. এই 'কথাওকাহিনী' ররূপওরসএকমাত্ররবীন্দ্রনাথেরমনেআনন্দেরআন্দোলনতুলেছিল, ইতিহাসতারকারণনয়। রবীন্দ্রনাথেরআন্তরায়াইতারকারণ – তাইতোবলেছে, আত্মাইকর্তা। -- আরদ্বিতীয়কোনব্যক্তিতারপূর্বেএবংতারপরেএ-সকলচিত্রিতিকএমনকরেদেখতেপায়নি। বস্তুততারাআনন্দপেয়েছে, এইকারণে, কবিরএইসৃষ্টিকর্তৃত্বেরবৈশিষ্ট্যথেকে।-- হালধরেআছেআমারসৃষ্টিরতরীতেসেইআত্মায়ারনিজেরপ্রকাশেরজন্যপুত্রেরস্নেহপ্রয়োজন, জগতেরনানাদৃশ্যানাসুখদুঃখকেযেআত্মসাৎকরেবিচিত্ররচনারমধ্যেআনন্দপায়ওআনন্দবিতরণকরে।

(The beauty and poignance of this 'Katha O Kahini' had created an upheaval of joy in the heart of Rabindranath alone, history is not the reason for it. Its only reason is the innermost self of Rabindranath --- that is why they (the *Upanishads*) say that the *atman* or soul is the Lord. No one else could perceive these pictures in the same manner. They derived their joy exactly from this, from the poet's mastery over this creation. – The boat of my creation is being propelled by the same *atman* or self, who needs the father's love of his child to express himself and who appropriates the various scenes of sorrow and joy in this world to express them in myriad creations to experience joy and to share it with the world.) *Sahitye Aitihasikata* in *Sahityer Swarup* in *Rabindra Rachanabali*, Vol. 14, pp.198-200.