



## Sufism in Rabindra-Sangit

Koil Banerjee

Research Scholar, Dept. of RSDD, Sangit Bhavana, Visva Bharati, banerjeekoil@gmail.com

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### ABSTRACT

The word Sufi came in from the word '*Ashabe suffa*'. '*Suf*' means woollen robe. Sufism is a concept where '*the complete submission of the self as per the will of God*' is believed. Around 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Century the seed of Sufism were sown in India. Famous Sufi saint Al Hujwiri from Gaza, Iraq visited Lahore in India and synchronizing the philosophy of Sufism testament with Indian culture. '*Kashf-al-Muhjib*' is the book by Hujwiri where blending of Sufism and Indian culture is described beautifully. There was an arrival of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti in 13<sup>th</sup> in India. '*La Passion de Hosayn Ibn Mansur Hallaj*' (1975) in this book it says that Mansur Hallaj arrived in India around 896 CE, which is penned by a Sufi researcher Luis Massignon. Philosophy of Hallaj had touched Lalon Shah in a way that he was moved and folk song came out like pearls which carried the Sufism in Bengal and inspired Rabindranath to feel the sense. Not only Rabindranath but also his father was a great admirer of Hafiz and his poems. Works of Rabindranath and philosophy of Haffiz, Hallaj, Rumi or Kabir come with same aspiration to enlighten human lives with truth, spiritualism to way to liberation. This study will explore the reflection of Sufi philosophy by Rabindranath through his work, Rabindra-Sangit.

### Introduction

It is believed that the philosophy of Sufism was originated in Bagdad, Iraq. Those days, a particular section of Islam believers used to follow the practice of chanting Quran verses orally. Most of these



worshippers dispersed after the chanting, but a few of them chose to continue with their oral supplication chanting 'dikr' or verses of God. During the Awami period (7th Century) those believers – known as Mu'tazila - took the path of the Almighty in this unique way of chanting. They lived a worldly life of a common person but simultaneously they were deeply spiritual, fervently following all religious ceremonies. Amid these people, there were diverse lookouts of Sufi philosophy.

The word '*Sufism*' has numerous perception and explanations. '*Sufism*' originated from the word '*Suf*' meaning woollen robe, etymologically Sufi is from '*Ashabe Suffa*', it means that those ascetics who gave up all worldly pleasures to spend their life in the adoration of God. Another etymological says that it has roots in Hebrew word '*Eissof*' means searching for the immortality or the ultimate. The most accepted one is that a '*Sufi*' is one whose attire is wool and is the follower of purity, however there are other opinions on the origination of the word.

Without losing its essence it is difficult to give Sufism a good classification. A few identifications can be analysed which can give more light on the main features of this philosophy. The views of the ancient researchers of the Sufi faith can be considered; in the words of renowned Sufi scholar Ruvaim Ibnu Ahamad it is '*the complete submission of the self as per the will of God*'. There is no presence apart from the '*Most Merciful*'. Other perception relates it to value of tradition on human spirit. As preached by a prominent Sufi researcher Samuel Sufism is not own anything and is not controlled or owned by anything or anyone who is deeply logical.

History says that Sufism took place in India in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century AD as in 11th Century, well-known Sufi saint from Gaza, Iraq, Al Hujwiri, arrived in Lahore in India and Sufi philosophy blended with Indian culture. '*Kashf-al-Muhjub*', a Persian literary work by Hujwiri was written, without eliminating the rudiments of Sufi philosophy and as well as the Indian culture. The popularity of sufism began in India by translating his doings. Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti was the follower of Chishti Silsila who visited Ajmer in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, the most prominent one in the present-day India. By his lectures and speeches he helped Sufism reach more people stressing reflection and devotion. Another belief is there that a Sufi researcher Luis Massignon had written a book named '*La Passion de Hosayn Ibn Mansur Hallaj*' (1975), that Hallaj trekked to India via sea around 896 CE, a trip was aimed to visit the frontiers of then Islamic world, and there he met local yogis and mystics which became an influence behind his declaration of '*Ana'l-Haqq*'.

Sufism was attributive in Tagore's family. During visit to Iran Rabindranath himself acknowledged the impact of Sufism in them and averred that Hafiz's poetry were key to meditate to his father. He admired



Lalon Shah, Kabir for their philosophy. Rabindranath himself translated several poems of Kabir as a volume '*One Hundred Poems of Kabir*', in 1914 and two volumes of Lalon's songs were acquired from his devotees to archive in Rabindra Bhavan Library at Visva Bharati.

### Methodology

The methods used in doing this research was done by reading, understanding, examining, and taking ideas of few writers, journals and articles. A thought from Rabindranath and his family also helped to curate this paper. Rabindra-Sangit, inspired by Sufism and Sufi thinkers, strengthen this study. Interest in the philosophy of Rumi, Hallaj, Hafiz, Lalon and Rabindranath are taken up in this study.

### Literature review

The philosophy of Sufism is noted down in the book '*Sufi Moter Utso Sondhane*' by Shree Parbati Charan Bhattacharaya. According to him adoring God as a lovable one is essence of Sufism. In Consciousness of Sufism is mysticism-oriented impressions. Mysticism cannot be properly explained or analysed; it can only be understood deeply from the depth of the heart. This book contains two lines written by a Sufi mystic that makes it clear that the exposed truth of the soul is the ultimate truth.

*"Life the shadow of night*

*And life the shadow of death"*

This Sufi thought also has a disparity, Jalaluddin Rumi is a Sufi saint who wrote "*Fa Laili Min Baki Ha Mushriqu*" which means the night becomes light in the beauty of its beloved, its day becomes black in the darkness of her grave. A foremost chapter of the book "*Prakash*" which has spoken about Sufi mysticism, and introduction of Sufism in Bengal. This book provides the fine comparisons and similarities about Sufi philosophy and Indian Upanishadic philosophy.

'*Rabindranath Tagore A Sectarian or A Cosmopolitan Writer?*' a book by Md. A. Quayum has described the relation between Rabindranath and Sufism and a journal, '*Ami Satya Lalon And Hallaj*' by Keith. E. Cantu has explored two different periods, Lalon Fakir and Hallaj illustrating how Lalon Shah was inspired by Hallaj and Rabindranath was overwhelmed by the thinking of Lalon.

'*Bharater Sufi*', a book written by Mobarak Karim Jawhar describes the clothing, attire and lifestyle of Sufis with a clear idea. And '*Rabindranather Monodorshon*' by Amiyoratan Mukhopadhyay helps to get



the idea of philosophy of Rabindranath where poet went beyond religion and chose complete surrender to Religion of Men and the ultimate truth as the path of life.

### Discussion

Rabindranath was a poet, writer, philosopher and good speaker too. He was influenced by many personalities, by their thoughts, philosophy and their religious aspects. Once in a speech he mentioned that his home culture was influenced by three religions; Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. He was Brahmo. If we search the origin of Brahmo then we found the philosophy of Ram Mohan Roy, who established the '*Brahmo Samaj*' in the concept of faith to all religion, where all religions speak the same truth.

That was the time when Bengali intellectuals were interested in 'Farsi' language. Rabindranath was highly impressed by his father. Though there is no direct translation in his songs but concepts or truths of Sufism is deeply inside his songs as inspiration. "*Amar Matha Noto Kore Dao He*"; "*Probhu, Amar Sokol Prochesta Ami Tomar Chorone Bisarjon Dilam*"; "*Ami Jokhon Sopinu Tomai Amar E Deho Mon*", these songs depict the concepts of Sufism, a complete surrender to God.

When Hallaj says that creator and creations are not different then we find "*Tai Tomar Anonda Amar Por*"; "*Alo Je Aj Gaan Kore*"; "*Jani Jani Kon Adi Kal Hote*" songs in Rabindra-Sangit.

Hafiz's "*Khushtarin-Nagam-E-Hasta*", where love is the sweetest music of this universe, Rabindranath writes his songs, "*Jogot Jure Udar Sure Anondo Gaan Baje*"; "*Dariye Acho Tumi Amar Gaaner Opare*".

Rumi says '*Mad in love*', where logic does not work, only you have to be mad in love leaving your ego. Rabindranath says, "*Oke Bandhile To Dhora Debee Na*"; "*Diner Pore Din Bosi Potho Pashe*".

Sufism speaks that we have to find our God inside us. Rabindranath says, "*Ami Tarei Khuje Berai Je Roi Mone*"; "*Ami Tarei Jani, Tarei jani*".

Rabindranath's voice is kind and thoughtful. His Gitanjali whispers, as in "*Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers but to be fearless in facing them*". Despite differences, Rumi and Rabindranath shared a universalistic vision. Rumi declared, "*I belong to no religion. My religion is love,*". Their works ask for humanity leaving communal errors.

### Conclusion



Rabindranath was committed towards enlightenment of human race and their spiritual resources and accountable to respect philosophies of others irrespective of their different creed. Rabindranath and Sufi pioneers share similar philosophies, as there is no difference between creator and his creation. Sufism deals with consciousness of inner heart, nature, formless God or united with the One in our own. In Rabindra-Sangit also we can find the same spirituality. This study is a small endeavour to explore the same philosophy of both Sufism and Rabindranath, the human liberation.

A line from Haffiz, “*Hāfezā chon tāleb-e vaslash shodi, dam bar maz, / Dar rah-e u hamcho khāk az pāy neshastan khosh-tar ast*”, it means that if you want see the coalescence avian then you have to spread yourself as negligible dust on the way.

From Rabindra-Sangit, “*Ei Molin Bostro Charte Hobe, / Hobe Go Eibar- / Amar Ei Molin Ahonkar*”.

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