

Anandamoyi: An Epitome of Bharatvarsha in Rabindranath Tagore's Gora

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Abstract: The establishment of true *Bharatvarsha* is the continuous struggle for Gora in the novel. The researcher shows Gora's endeavours to uplift *Hinduism* in the Bengali community where the *Brahmo Samaj* has started underestimating *Hinduism*. Orthodoxy, inner conflict, search for religion and self realization are the major themes which are represented through different characters in the novel. The researcher's central discussion is about the calmness and motherly understanding of Anandmoyi. She is not only a mother for Gora but also a solace in all his sad moments. All the other characters are symbolically portrayed by Tagore who represent both flexibility and orthodoxy of the 20th century Indian society.

Key Words: Establishment, *Hinduism*, Realization, Symbolically, Flexibility, Orthodoxy

Born in 1861 and the Nobel Laureate of 1913, Rabindranath Tagore was one of the significant poets, novelists, playwrights and philosophers of India. He was also one of the key persons of the Bengali Renaissance during the 19th century. This was the crucial time when India was being shaped as a modern country. Tagore's fame mainly boasts on the creation of the *Gitanjali*, his collection of beautiful poems which helped him retrieve the Nobel Prize.

During this period particularly, the Bengali Society was split in to two wings respectively known as the Liberals and the conservatives. The members from both the wings everyday debated every aspect of Bengali Society and culture. The liberal wing was dominated by the Brahmos and the conservative wing was dominated by Bankimchandra Chatterjee, and Swami Vivekananda. Brahmo people continuously opposed the rigid practices of *Hindusim* and considered the Hindu society lower than that of their path. This is the main struggle for Gora who wishes to uplift *Hinduism* amidst the vision of Brahmos who are nothing but a separated branch of *Hinduism*.

Tagore, through the characters of Gora, Binoy, Anandamoyi, Sucharita, Brahmoharan, Baroda Shundari and Harimohini tries to show how they struggle to make their religion superior to the other. The struggle in this novel is not of Indo-British relationship but is of Hindu-Brahmo relationship. Gora, Barodashundari, Brahmoharan, and Harimohini show orthodoxy of a particular religion where as Anandamoyi, Poreshe Babu, Binoy and Sucharita represent the flexibility of the religion through their liberal thinking.

Nationalism is also one of the main themes of the novel. The protagonist of the novel continuously fights for his nationality through his orthodox Hindu thoughts. His avoidance to Binoy for going to Poreshe Babu's house and to Anandmoyi's room is also quite symbolic to show the orthodoxy towards a particular religion. From the very beginning to the end of the story, Gora fights for establishing true *Bharatvarsha* which towards the end of the novel reveals through Gora's real identity.

It is only Anandamoyi who accepts Gora as her foster child but she is not able to find her real place between the two rigid paths of the society. She is the incarnation of serenity and tolerance. She is quite different from the tolerant liberalism of Poresh Babu and Barodahundari's shallow show off of *Brahmosamaj*. She breaks all the shallow traditions of Indian orthodox society when she accepts Gora as her loving son.

In the third chapter when Gora denies Binoy to go to his own mother's room, Anandamoyi takes this very lightly by saying that she has abandoned all such superstitions in life. The orthodox Gora, on the other hand informs Anandamoyi to obey some customs at least for his sake and Anandamoyi declares that...

"O, why reason with me at such length! I alone know what goes on in my mind. If I hindered my husband and my son at every step, where in would my happiness lie? But do you know that I threw orthodoxy to the winds when you were still a babe in arms? The moment you clasp an infant to your heart, you realize that nobody is born into caste. Ever since I realized that I knew for sure that if I despised someone for being a Christian or a low caste person, *Ishwar* would snatch you away from me as well. May you continue to occupy my lap, light up my home, and I'll accept drinking water from every caste in the world!"¹

Above words of Anandamoyi are so secularly spoken by her that they show there is no other joy in the world than the joy of Gora for her. Anandamoyi has left being stubborn regarding a particular religion the moment Gora comes in her life. She has thought in depth that there is no other religion so superior as humanity. She finds that having a child is even greater than labializing and confining oneself in the boundaries of a particular religion.

During this conversation when Gora strictly stops Binoy to let go to Anandamoyi's room, Gora asks his mother not to be angry and Anandamoyi takes this with a motherly heart. She tells Gora that she could never get angry with him. Such big is the heart of Anandamoyi that she also tells Binoy not to think that she is angry. She even at this moment keeps addressing Gora and Binoy as her *baccha* (dear sons). She touches that emotional height of a mother at this utterance but does not let her sorrow hover over her face. She also says to Gora,

"Never mind if you don't let me feed you in my room, but at least I get to see you in the evenings, and for me that's enough."²

There is no other happiness for a mother than to have a glimpse of her dear children. Nothing can be par with the glimpse of her children for a mother. Anandamoyi's real joy lay not in religion, custom or tradition but her real joy lay around Gora's happiness despite his stubborn *Hindu* mentality.

But when the truth regarding Gora's real birth is revealed before Gora, it seems as if the land below his feet were gliding. Today he understands that it was only the deepest motherly heart of Anandamoyi that accepted him despite his being born to an Irish woman. Throughout Gora's quest for *Bharatvarsha*, never once there came a moment where Anandamoyi had made him feel orphan. In the last chapter, Gora confesses to Poreshbabu that he belongs to every religion today. He has got his true *Bharatvarsha* today which he had long been craving for. He also admits that no boundaries can bond him from mingling to the different castes of India as he has attained the place of a true Indian. His enlightenment at this moment is symbolic for the readers to understand that every caste, religion and customs is equal in whatever form they exist but the way an individual accepts each religion makes him different.

At last, Gora realizes the worth of Anandamoyi who brought him up despite being born to an Irish woman. He has got the height of repentance that he goes to Anandamoyi and empties his heart which had been heavy because of orthodoxy since long. Gora shows his enlightenment by saying that,

“Ma, you are my real mother! The mother I sought everywhere was waiting in my own home. You have no caste, no discrimination, no contempt for anyone. You are the very image of goodness! It is you who is my Bharatvarsha!”³

Anandamoyi also with a big heart blesses Gora at this moment of his self realization.

CONCLUSION:

However less role Anandamoyi has in the novel, she possesses the vaster place in the novel. She is omnipresent in the whole story in Gora’s search for Bharatvarsha and he realizes this fact deeply in the end. Anandamoyi without any doubt has the most sensitive and broadest heart of a mother who takes even the vague arguments of Gora for granted. Throughout the novel, her happiness and bliss lay nowhere but at the happiness of Gora. She till the end craves to have a glimpse of Gora’s face that is her real world.

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2. Ibid
3. Ibid

