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## Rabindranath Tagore A Rereading

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No other writer of India has attracted the attention of such wide range of readers and critics as Rabindranath Tagore. Nobody has excelled in so many fields or dominated the culture to the extent that Tagore has. None could have better summed up his personality as Dr.Sreenivasa Iyengar, who said,

*“Tagore was a poet, dramatist, actor, producer; he was a musician and painter; he was an educationist, a practical idealist who turned his dreams into reality at Shantiniketan; he was a reformer, philosopher, prophet; he was a novelist and a short story writer and a critic of life and literature; he even made occasional incursions into nationalist politics, although, he was essentially an internationalist, he was thus many persons, he was a darling of versatility and still he was the same man; he was an integral whole, the Rishi, the Gurudev....”*



Rabindranath Tagore was born in on May 7<sup>th</sup> 1861 at Jorasanko mansion in Calcutta, India. He was the youngest of thirteen surviving offspring of Debendranath and Sharada.

His grandfather prince Dwarakanath Tagore (1794-1846) was one of the most cultured personalities in the British Empire to the extent of being a personal intimate friend of Queen Victoria. Tagore’s father Maharshi Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905) was the second head of the Bramha Samaj, gradually taking over leadership and revitalising the movement after the death of Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

Tagore grew up under the regime of servants or “ Servocracy”. Rabindranath was recorded the story of his boy hood in his memoirs *Jivansmrit* translated by Surendranath Tagore as *Reminiscences* (1917): in which Tagore humorously recollected how these servants were negligent and oppressive to avoid their responsibility .They would often put the boy at a spot in the servants’ quarter draw a chalk line around him, and warn him “with solemn face and uplifted a finger of the perils of transgressing the circle <sup>(1)</sup> such forceful containment created a defiant wish in the little boy to wipe the chalk line and find the horizon : a desire that fuelled the Poet’s imagination in subsequent years and made him yearn for the bound less world of nature, and reject all thorny edges of exclusion or labels and division that stood in the way of forming a global human community transcendent of boundaries or circumscribing “ Circles” <sup>(2)</sup>.

Rabindranath’s love of nature was to synonymous with his love of freedom. His fascination for nature was further intensified by a sight of the snow capped Himalayas which he visited at the age of twelve along with his father.

The dual influence of the Maharshi and the Himalayas with which he came into contact during this impressionable years schooled the boy the thoughts elemental and sublime, while the Gayatri mantra which he learnt at his Upanayanam proved a perennial source of strength and joy even after he had given up wearing the ‘sacred thread”. Rabindranath had no regular schooling nor did he go through the usual academic grind. He had however profound regard for some of the Jesuit fathers of St. Xaviers’ College, Calcutta.

Rabindranath’s fore runners in literature Madhusudan, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Bankim Chandra influenced him to start with Bengali poetry prose and fiction. More over music and piety were part of the Tagore house hold.

Tagore was educated at home at Seventeen, however he was sent to England to study law but returned after a year without finishing his studies. Though he stayed in England only for fourteen months, his intellectual and emotional exposure to the European culture at such a tender age contributed vitally to the shaping of his poetic genies in years to come.

While in England Rabindranath read English literature with Prof. Henry Morley, brother of Lord Morley. He was very much impressed by the lecturers of Prof. Morley on Antony and Cleopatra. Tagore was reported to have read Robert Browning, Swinburne, Shelly, Lord Byron and Keats also. He later on translated some of the poems of Shelly. However he did not make any systematic study of English literature. It appears that he loved European Music and dancing than literature: But he did not set his studies of European Literature go waste. On 1878-89 he contributed articles to *Bharati* on the Anglo Saxons literature, Dante and his poetry and Angelo Norman Literature.

When he was in England Tagore composed many Poems but ‘*Bhagna Hriday*’ (Broken heart) deserves mention. The Poem was begun in England and was finished on his return to home. It was written when Tagore was eighteen years old. Twelve years after its composition Tagore wrote about the poem.

“ The Curious part of it is that not only I was eighteen but everyone around me seemed to be eighteen likewise”<sup>(3)</sup>.

At this time a remarkable event that occurred in the poet’s life that he himself described his *Reminiscences*. Rabindranath described his experience as follows:

“ *One morning I happened to be standing on the Varandah looking that way. The sun was just rising through the leaf tops sea by tops of those trees. As I continued to gaze all of a sudden a covering seemed to fall away from my eyes and I found the world bathed in a wonderful radiance with waves of beauty and joy swelling on every side. This radiance pierced in a movement through the folds sadness and despondency which had accumulated over my heart, and flooded it with this Universal light.* ”<sup>(4)</sup>

Tagore’s poem “The Fountain Awakened” was written during this mystical experience.” The poem may be said to mark the beginning of his adult career as a poet. Around this time he wrote *Prabhat Sangeeth*(Morning songs)(1881), *Sandhya Sangit* (evening songs)(1881) , *Prakritir Pratishodh* (Nature Revenge) (1884) *Kari O Kamal* (1886) *Mayar Khela* (The Play of illusions) (1888) and *Manasi* (The Ideal one )(1890) and *Malini*(1896) *Sonartari* (The Golden Boat)(1894) etc.

His short story genre starts with “*Bhikharini*”(The Beggar Woman ).This was also the time of first full-fledged novel “ *The Young Queen Market*” in the prevailing mode of historical Romances. The Next Novel ‘*Rajarshi*’ ( The Royal Sage)later adopted as verse Play *Visarjan* ( Sacrifice) 1917 was a moving indictment of the Hindu ritual of offering human sacrifice.

November 1883 Rabindranath Tagore married Mrinalinidevi, the daughter of one of the Junior Officers of the family estate. Within six months of the marriage his pet sister- in law, Kadambari Devi, wife of Jyotirindranath Tagore committed suicide. Over the years that followed Kadambari’s death, Tagore would embed his memories of her in Poems and songs<sup>(5)</sup> and in fiction his Novella *Nastanirh* ( the Broken Nest 1901) which become Satyajit Roy ‘s film *Charulatha* (1964) was influenced by the relationship.

For some time he worked as the secretary of the Bramha Samaj taking up cudgels against the proponents of new Hinduism and would not spare even Bankim Chandra who had lately taken to propagating the glories of traditional Hinduism. However the duel did not persists as a feud. As a severe critic of Hinduism, he started writing articles challenging Hinduism and supporting Brahma-Dharma.

In September 1890 he left for England for the second time with his brother Satyendranath for a month. When he returned in October he had to take charge of some of his father’s estate at his direction. The Poems, plays and novels he had written till this time were classically created out of his own mind and were these almost entirely products of his imagination . When Tagore was managing their family estates he had an opportunity to come close to the life of an ordinary people. Now the poet descended from the world of

the imagination to the real world. As a result a collection of short fiction titled “ *Galpaguchchha*”(1900) which means *Bunch of stories* in which depicted a wide range of Bengali life style particularly village life.

Mother tongue the main thrust of his prose pieces to emphasize knowledge of one’s country Society and culture: to rectify one through principles derived from a humanistic outlook and to be self reliant. In one of his essay ‘*Siksar Herpher*’(1892)he plead for the education system of all round development of an individual for harmonious adjustment to reality. He also advocated the value and need of mother tongue in providing all necessary educational nourishment of the child. Tagore’s biographer Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay has noted that it was the first really comprehensive and competent criticism of the educational system of the country at that time. Tagore was not satisfied with the education system of his time. The experiences he had gone through during his school days provided him necessity for the importance of freedom in education. Educational philosophy of Tagore was based on three principles : Freedom, creative self expression and communion with nature. Tagore considered nature as a powerful vehicle for the moral and spiritual development of a child. He strongly believed that through constant communion with nature man can develop expansion of soul and spiritual upliftment.

Tagore wrote over one thousand poems, books and essays on philosophy, religion, education, and social topics and dozens of plays and play lets. Of two hundred short stories as Naravane rightly asserted about twenty are “pearls of the purest variety”. Of the thirteen novels long and short, nine novels namely *Binodini*(1902) *The Wreck*(1910) *The Home and The World*(1916) *Chaturanga*(1916) *Farewell My Friend* (1928) *Two Sisters* (1933) *The Garden* (1934) and *Four Chapters* (1934) were translated into English.

In 1901 Tagore left Shelidah and settled in Santiniketan. In 1901 he founded a school Santiniketan at Bolpur, with five pupils among them his eldest son Rathindranath and with as many teachers. During foundation of Santiniketan Tagore said “Education divorced from nature has bought untold harm to young children. The sense of isolation that is generated through such separation has caused great evil to mankind. This misfortune has beset the world since a long time ago. That is why this institution came to be founded”. In his experimental school Santiniketan, the main objective was to provide a freedom of mind and to cultivate love for nature by imparting knowledge in natural ambience. Viswa-Bharati has grown out of the Santiniketan has become a world university, a centre of Indian culture. It represents Sanskrit motto “Where this world makes its home in a single nest”

From 1902 successively for five years Rabindranth saw the death of one or the other near and dear. In 1902 his wife, in 1903 his daughter Renuka, in 1904 his favourite pupil Satish Roy, in 1907 his Youngest Son Somindranath death induced a mood of renunciation in him . It was in this mood that he wrote the songs of ‘*Gitanjali*’ *Naivedya*’ and *Kheya*’ to commemorate the memory of his wife he composed a poem ‘*Smaran*’ (Remembrance). *Gitanjali* was preceded by a famous play “*Prayachita*” (Expiation) and followed by another play ‘*The Post Office*’ in 1911.

Tagore’s reputation as a creative genius established after the publication of *Gitanjali* which bought worldwide reputation for Tagore. “Where the mind is Without Fear” the poem 35 in his Nobel Prize

winning anthology reflects socio political and educational scenario of that time and Tagore's hymns of it have been a source of inspiration to thousands of people even today.

Starting with historical tales in the tradition of Bankim Chandra Tagore soon initiated the move towards a stronger sense of realism by liberation of Bengali novel from its bondage of historical romance.

In all his novels Tagore portrays various themes such as the woeful condition of Hindu widows as in *Binodini*, the problems of arranged marriages as in *The Wreck*, the conflict between love and orthodoxy as in *Gora* the nationalism versus universalism as in *The Home and the world*, spiritual values versus human values as in *Chaturanga* problems of love versus possession as in *Two Sisters* and the emptiness of terrorism as in the *Four Chapters*.

*Gora* is historically placed at a time when the Hindu society was passing through an identity crisis with a choice between Isolationism and syncretism, between Sanskritization and modernization. *Gora* is not only a protest against the discriminatory caste-system of Hinduism, but also against the Brahmo sectarianism and against colonial domination, while embracing the undeniable diversity of India. Krishna Kripalani points out *Gora's* significance as the novel on a grand scale depicting India's crucial transitions cross currents, and intersections:

*"Gora is...the epic of India in transition at the most crucially intellectual period of its modern history.... It is to Indian fiction what Tolstoy's War and Peace is to the Russian."*

It was at this time Tagore composed his famous poem "*Bharat Thirtha*"(The Indian Pilgrimage) that has the following lines : O heart of mine awake in this holy place of pilgrimage, in this land of India on this shore of humanity" .

Though Tagore was never actively involved in politics, his involvement with Indian nationalism began early in his life. During Swadeshi days he composed number of songs that fired the imaginations of millions of people. The songs emphasized the cultural heritage of India, Unity in diversity, and installed unique confidence in the hearts of his countrymen. These years also saw the publications of his memoirs *Jivansmriti ( My Reminiscences)*(1911).

Many youth joined Swadeshi movement with Tagore's songs on their lips. Tagore's *Ekla Chalo Re (Walk Alone)*, one of the most popular songs of 'Tagore (the most favourite Rabindra Sangeet of Gandhiji) was composed during the Swadeshi movement. Most of the Tagore's national songs were published in Bhandar magazine and Bangadarshan. His Jana Gana Mana was first sung at the 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Indian National Congress on December 27<sup>th</sup> 1911 which is today national anthem of India. He also composed a famous song celebrating the unity of Bengal.

" Let Bengal Soil, Water, Air, and Fruits be one and blessed O Lord"

Tagore's vision of human unity and equality, and his critique of modern civilization with its twin principles of materialism and nationalism, is recurrent in all his works. His vision emerges most explicitly and

powerfully, however in several of his lectures and Addresses, including ‘*My Life*’, ‘*My School*’, ‘*My Religion*’, ‘*Civilization and Progress*’, ‘*Nationalism in India*’, ‘*Nationalism in Japan*’, ‘*Nationalism in the West*’, as well as in his novels ‘*Gora*’, ‘*The Home and The World*’ and *Four Chapters*. In each of these works, Tagore most engagingly and energetically investigates what has gone wrong with the world and where the remedy lies.

It was in his lecturer in Calcutta “*Swadeshi Samaj*” in which he spoke for the cultural integrity of Bengal and advocated a comprehensive Programme for the re organisation of rural Bengal on the basis of self help. He believes that our country men are mainly villagers and melas are a natural growth in our country. He says:

*If the leaders of the country will abjure empty politics and make it their business to give new life and objective to these melas, putting their own heart into the work and bringing together the hearts of Hindu and Muslims and then confer about the real wants of the People – Schools, roads, water reservoirs, grazing commons and the like then the country will soon a awaken <sup>(6)</sup>*

On 27<sup>th</sup> may 1912 the poet sailed for London with the English translation of the *Gitanjali* accompanied by his son Rathindranath and daughter in law Prathima. The Poet had already met sir William Rothenstein Calcutta in 1910. Tagore handed over the manuscript of *Gitanjali* to him. There he met such eminent men of letters as George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, John Galsworthy, Andrew Bradley, J.L. Hammond, Ernest Rhys, John Masefield, Ezra pound, W.B. Yeats, Roberts Bridge and others. He also developed intimacy with C.F. Andrews, who later on came over to India and joined the teaching faculty of the Santiniketan.

The English Translation of the ‘*Gitanjali*’ struck W.B. Yeats and he wrote its introduction when it was published in November 1912 by India Society in London. Subsequently Rabindranath’s *Chitrangada* (1913) *Malini* and *DakGhar* (1914) were translated into English.

From England Tagore went to America where he delivered Lecturer at different Places. These lectures based on the Tagore’s philosophy of life published as *Sadhana* (1913). From America the Poet went back to England where he gave some more lecturers. Mean while ‘*Gitanjali*’ was gaining ground. There came favourable responses from many critics.

When Rothenstein showed them to the eminent Shakespearean critic, Andrew Bradley, the latter felt “after exploring Shakespeare all his life he seems to have ‘discovered’ another great poet in Rabindranath “it looks as though we have at last a great poet among us again” <sup>(7)</sup>

Others were soon drawn into the charmed circle the greatest among them being W.B. Yeats who was a little later to introduce ‘*Gitanjali*’ to the English – Speaking world. <sup>(8)</sup>

*'These prose translations from' Rabindranath Tagore, (wrote Yeats) have stirred my blood as nothing has for years., I have carried the manuscript of these translations about with me for days, reading it in railway trains, or on the top of the omnibuses and in restaurants, and I have often had to close it lest some stranger would see how much it moved me. These lyrics which are in the original, my Indians tell me, full of subtlety of rhythm, of untranslatable delicacies of colour, of metrical invention display in their thought a world I have dreamed of all my life long. The work of supreme culture, they yet appear as much the growth of the common soil as the grass and the rushes. (9)*

After Tagore returned to India, the news of the award of the Noble Prize for literature came to Rabindranath on November 13, 1913.

Tagore only comment on it was: "*Henceforth I shall have no Peace*".<sup>(10)</sup>

Through continuous study, correspondence and world tours, Rabindranath always kept himself informed about the intellectual developments, scientist innovations, and political changes taking place everywhere.

In May 1916 when the first world war was on Tagore went to Japan to deliver his famous lectures on "*Nationalism*" where with more courage he warned people intoxicated with nationalism and the dangers of chauvinism. In his initial visiting he had been impressed by Japan's Culture but now his out spoken criticism did not please Japanese audience and as E.P. Thompson wrote, "the welcome given to him on his first arrival soon cooled"

On May 29, 1919, Tagore renounced knight hood that he received by the British Government in 1914, in protest against the massacre of Indians at Jallianwala Bagh.

Tagore was uniquely complex in his attitude towards nationalism. He inaugurated the meeting of the congress party that was held in Calcutta in 1896 by singing "*Bandemataram*" to his own tune. He composed his celebrated piece "*Shivaji's Utsav*" at that time and was inspired by the Shivaji festival introduced by Maharashtra's Balgangadhar's Tilak.

Rabindranath himself was deeply scarred by the outcome of Swadeshi which he had earlier embraced. *The Home and The World*, produced out of the ravages of time, relives some of the poet's own anguish. In a series of essays written shortly after this novel, Tagore would aggressively decry the goals and outcome of nationalist politics. Nationalism in the west, he claimed, had produced a mindless hungering, after material wealth and political power, its ultimate terrifying form being imperialist domination of other people of the world.

As early as 1908 he put his position succinctly in a letter replying to the criticism of Abala Bose, the wife of a great Indian scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose:

*"I will not buy a glass for the price of diamonds, and I will never allow patriotism to triumph over humanity as long as I live"*

In 1908 Tagore withdrew from politics claiming that what India needed was constructive work coming from within. Not only in Santiniketan but also in his family estates he tried to launch schemes of rural reconstruction on lines that he had thought out and learnt from the experience of agriculture and other field in different countries. Tagore's plan of action was taken up by Gandhiji years after wards.

In 1920 the poet travelled to England. This time the British were cold towards him, for his condemnation of war, his out spoken comments on the British rule, in India, and above all his renunciation of the knight hood. Then he went over to Paris, where he met Bergson, Sylvain Levy one of the world greatest orientalist who had been invited as the visiting professor of Visva-Bharati. Crowded lecture tours of the Netherlands followed. But when he reached America there was a studied indifference everywhere. Later, there were some programmes in Texas. There he gained a friend Leonard Knight Elmhirst, British philanthropist and agronomist, who became a source of strength in his rural experiment in Sriniketan. " Things improved when, on the way back , he visited Switzerland. He had a splendid welcome in Germany. His Sixteenth Birthday was celebrated with fanfare. In Copenhagen, he was greeted with a torch light procession. In Uppsala he was requested to speak from the church altar, an un heard honour. In Darmstadt in Germany Tagore spent about a week in Count Keyserling's wisdom school. It was known as the Tagore" Week" <sup>(11)</sup>

The poet returned to India in July 1921 when things in India were not happy. He was disillusioned with the nationwide movement of Non-Cooperation and burning of foreign cloths, only a few months earlier he had written to Andrews from New York,

*The Complete man must never be sacrificed to the patriotic man or even to the merely moral man. To me humanity is rich and large and many sided!!* <sup>(12)</sup>

In October 1921, Tagore Published his major essay on Gandhi and non – cooperation "The call of Truth". Without directly referring to the Mahatma, Tagore gave eloquent expression to his faith in the necessity of intellectual and moral cooperation between India and the west in a public lecture in Calcutta entitled Shikkhar milon. It is worth noting that Tagore's world university Visva-Bharati was inaugurated in the very year of non – Cooperation, with Elmhirst as the overall director.

From the time he had begun travelling all over the world. In between his travels he composed *Palataka* (1918) and *Purabi* (1925), two books of verse, and *Muktadhara* (1922) a play *Creative unity* (1922).

In 1924 the poet travelled to the far East and visited China and Japan. It was during this period that he composed his famous play *Raktakarabi* (1924) which was originally published in *Prabasi*. He had been unable to travel to Peru later that year to attend the Centenary celebrations of the country's independence having had to stop his journey in Argentina because of poor health. Here he met the erudite Spanish Poet Victoria Ocampo. Ocampo offered to host the poet's stay in Buenos Aires and look after his welfare. *Purabi* is thus dedicated to her. From Argentina the poet returned to India via Italy. In 1926 and 1927 he set out for Europe, Having toured many countries of the continent, he eventually returned to India via Java. In Java he saw the remnants of ancient Indian civilization and wrote about them in his Java Yatrir Patra. During this

time Tagore wrote a prose – drama *Natirpuja* (worship of the Dancing Girl) based on old Buddhist legend. With the staging of this play in Calcutta in January 1927, Tagore was a pace – setter in bringing out girls from educated families on the public stage.

Tagore went to Canada on the invitation by the National Council of Education there he spoke on “The *Philosophy of Leisure*”, From Canada he went to Japan for the third time. Between 1926 and 1930 he published a number of famous works. Among them are Volumes of verse such as *Mahuya*, the novels *Yogayog and Shesher Kavita*, the plays *Tapati* and *Shes Raksa*, and the musical drama *Rturanga* in addition, he wrote numerous essays and speeches that he was invited to read in all sorts of assemblies and events. At the president of Indian Philosophical Congress he gave a lecture on the humanist creed of the Bauls of Bangladesh, titling it the philosophy of our peoples in 1930. He was invited to Oxford to deliver the Hibbert lectures, a lecture series where leading thinkers of the world were invited to be speakers. The little of the Hibbert lecture he presented at Oxford Manchester college on 19<sup>th</sup> May is “*The Religion of Man*”. The lecture earned him a place among the leading thinkers of his age. Having exhibition of his paintings in Paris, England, Germany, Denmark, showing the world new and unsuspected facts of his artistic genius he left for Moscow at the invitation of the Soviet Government. He was much impressed by its development efforts and by what he saw as a real commitment to eliminate poverty and economic inequality. But what impressed him most was the expansion of basic education across the old Russian Empire. His experience of the trip is recorded in a series of letters he wrote home which were later published as *Rashiar Chithi* (Letters from Russia). He then toured America and eventually returned to India via London where he had a long talk with George Bernard Shaw in 1931.

Owing to his notable wanderlust between 1878 and 1932, Tagore visited more than thirty countries on five continents. His last travels abroad, including visits to Persia and Iran in 1932 and Ceylon in 1933 only sharpened his opinions regarding human division and nationalism. On April 26, 1932 Tagore had a memorable meeting with Gandhiji when he was on a fast unto death in Yerwada jail in Pune, later, when the fast was broken, Tagore was at Gandhiji's at whose request he sang from *Gitanjali* ‘when the heart is hard and parched up came up on me with a shower of mercy’ .....

The University of Calcutta honoured Tagore in a number of ways throughout his life. In 1921 he was the first recipient of the ‘Jagattarini Padak’ medal awarded by university. In 1932 he delivered the Kamala lecture on the Religion of Man. He also accepted the appointment of a professor in the University. In 1938 he made history by delivering the convocation address of the University in Bengali.

In January 1934, Jawaharlal Nehru and his wife paid a short visit to Santiniketan to send their daughter Indira to study here for higher education. Years later when she took over as India's third prime minister in 1966, she observed:

“*Tagore is a part of our culture a part of our rich heritage’ not only of our own heritage but of the heritage of the world. He is one of those Indians who established links with the rest of the world. He stood for the widening of the human vision and the cross fertilisation of culture and ideas .All his pleas and attempts were to lifting the human being to a higher level .”*<sup>(13)</sup>.

During the five years from 1932 to 1936 despite the many tours he undertook within the country and one outside India to Iran. Tagore published seven volumes of poetry, two novels, a drama and composed music for and directed the production on stage of five dance dramas:

*'Sampochn'* (Redemption) *'Chandalika'* and *'Tasherdes'* in 1933 and Chitrangada (1936) *Syama* 1939, *Shravangatha* (1934). The novels that he wrote about this period are *Duiban* (1933) *Malancha* (1934) and *Char Adhyay* (1934).

Tagore composed his first poem at age eight and by the end of his life he had written over twenty five volumes of poetry, fifteen plays, ninety short stories, eleven novels thirteen volumes of essays and initiated and edited various journals.

Prepared Bengali text books, kept up a correspondence involving thousands of letters, composed over two thousand songs and after the age of seventy- created more than two thousand pictures and sketches. He was not only a creative genius; he was a great man and friend to many. His extensive travels allowed Tagore to interact with many notable contemporaries including Albert Einstein, Robert Frost, Thomas Mann, George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells and Romain Rolland who was also a good friend from childhood to the Great Indian Physicist, Bose., his boundless curiosity and his intimacy with J.C. Bose carried him into the realm of Physical Sciences. He wrote a delightful account of the joys of scientific knowledge and discoveries in a book meant for general readers and children in particular: a book he called *Visva Prichay* (The Nature of The Universe)

On February 17<sup>th</sup> 1940 Gandhi and Kasturba came to Santiniketan. Tagore handed over to Gandhiji a brief letter pleading for the preservation of *Visva-Bharath*, "the vessel carrying the Cargo of his life best treasure" on August 7<sup>th</sup> 1940 the Oxford University conferred on him at Santiniketan itself, D. Litt. The body was ailing but the mind was still alert. He wrote two short stories *Laboratory* and *'Badnam'*.

On March 12<sup>th</sup> 1941 his last birthday address *Crisis in Civilization* was read out from wheel chair. "I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in man"

A few days later "a representative of the court of Tripura conferred upon him the title of *Bharath Bhaskar* 'Sun of India' <sup>(14)</sup>. In 1940 the poet had become seriously ill. Lastly he had to undergo a surgery and on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1940 he was taken to Calcutta. Even then he dictated two terrible Poems. "*Sorrows* *Dark night*".

On 7<sup>th</sup> August 1941 at ten Minutes Past midday he breathed his last in the same old Jorasanko house where he had first opened his eyes eighty years and three months earlier. He had earlier written a song which he had desired should be sung at his death.

In front lies the ocean of peace,  
Launch the boat, Helmsman,  
You will be the Comrade ever., <sup>(15)</sup>

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