

“ROLE OF NATURE AND FATE IN RUSTIC INDIAN LIFE” IN RABINDRANATH TAGORE’S ‘MY LORD THE BABY’

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ABSTRACT

The present paper analyses the story from different perspectives. The role of nature in human life is immense throughout the ages. Tagore beautifully blends the innocence of child and beautiful nature and its ways of teaching lessons to humans. Tagore conveys the message of nature with a simple appealing story set in the beginning of the twentieth century rural India. The effect of urbanization on innocent rural Indians, and the growing importance of education among the youth, and the effects of modernization is narrated in the story. The blending of innocence and simplicity of the characters appeals the readers. Time acts as a great healer and justifier to all the happenings in the story centered round human activities. With its beautiful description of nature, story evokes a sense of gratitude and great learning experience.

Keywords: Nature, Innocence, justice, modernization, urbanization.

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY:

The present study is an attempt to read the story to understand the importance of nature in modern man's life. Nature's ways of teachings can never be questioned as its always supreme and justifiable. The modern man needs to go back to nature as it is the best teacher to find solution to all the existing problems. Though modern man has succeed and excelled with his new inventions and discoveries, yet the learning from nature always remains incomplete. Nature unravels its beautiful ways of conveying message to man. The vastness and immensity of nature is unconquerable.

In the modern world, man has become superficial and remained aloof from nature. Man's relations too remain unrelated and unconnected without true feelings for family. Human values remains questioned in the world full of material pleasures. Material wealth has encompassed gloomy human minds with sense of pride and greed. In such scenario, there is a need for man to know nature's supreme powers and utilize abundant wealth properly. It is also the time for man to understand nature teacher, who has unique ways to impart vast knowledge. There is also a need

for man to introspect himself in realizing the importance of nature and his vain efforts in declaring his superiority over everything.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to understand nature as God. Nature is omnipotent, omnipresence and omniscient. Main objective of the study is to appreciate the beauty that lies in nature and try to understand the mortality of human being. Human acts against nature will bring him destruction and irrecoverable loss. Man need not be too proud of his achievements; instead, by being humble, and try to lead a harmonious life with other species and make the whole planet livable. The present study also aims to highlight the deteriorating relationships in the family in the present world. The objective of the study is to realize that nature is our best teacher and man needs to learn to improve to lead a happy life by enjoying the beautiful nature around him.

RESEARCH ON THE TOPIC:

Many researchers have attempted to understand the story from various points of view. Highlighting the importance of nature in the 21st century modern world is the need of the hour. The present paper is unique that observes the widened gap between man and nature due to sense of pride and accumulation of wealth. The paper addresses an important issue of bridging the strained relations that lack connections and true feelings. The present paper is unique to highlight the effect of modernization, urbanization and education on rustic Indian life and aims to bring harmony among the present generation.

UNIQUENESS OF THE STORY

The story “My Lord, The Baby” written by Rabindranath Tagore is a unique representation of human values and role of destiny in human life. The characters in the story are sketched with strong sentiments and sense of guilt makes characters weak and strong. Nature and time become important healers in bringing drastic changes in the life of all the characters. Tagore’s simple way of describing nature and the minute details in the story appeal the readers but naturally.

ANALYSES OF THE STORY

Rabindranth Tagore, the great nobel laureate wrote the story “My Lord, The Baby” with a catchy title “My Lord”. The term is used by judicials to address the judge of highest honor. Indians were influenced by the western judicial system and ‘the baby’ who is addressed in the story is also the son of an advocate.

The story is set in an Indian village in the beginning of the 20th century. It was during this time that Indian society was very conventional and religious. The society was less influenced by the westerner ideas, caste system prevailed and people led a simple life. It was a trend during those days that the rich estate owners used to have servants in their homes. In the light of this, Tagore says that Raicharan belonged to the same caste as his masters’, comes to the house of his

master at the age of twelve. Raicharan was assigned the joyful and playful work of taking care of the baby and nursing. Tagore beautifully describes the way both of them helped each other to grow together happily.

Time and nature play an important role in the story. The small baby now turned out to be an educated young man and joined judicial service. The boy got married and a son was born to his master Anukul. Raicharan was given the same responsibility that was given to him when he was twelve years old. Writer tries to bring in the same older memories with the arrival of new master. Tagore intelligently weaves the story and tries to connect past and present with delightful blend of happiness and sweet reminiscences of the past. He reveals the master's name as 'Anukul' only after the fresh arrival of new master in the story.

The arrival of the new master brings new joy in the house. Tagore beautifully depicts the way Raicharan played with his new master. Tagore's simple way of narration is visible at every step of the story; be it the tossing the child, or speaking absurd baby language. The narration of growing of the child, screaming of the child with mischievous laughter, makes the reader enjoy playing kid play. Raicharan was many a time surprised by the skill and intelligence of the child and would tell his mistress that the child would be a judge one day. The title 'My Lord' is so apt to the story that the reader understands that Tagore was quiet right in choosing the title to the story.

The story progresses with the child's calling his parents as 'Baba' and 'Mama' are a clear indication of an Indian child addressing parents with these words. Child's calling as 'Channa' made Raicharan and to go his way to tell everyone the way the child addressed him. Tagore's description of the true love between the child and Channa are narrated so naturally that readers heart is filled with ecstasy and enjoyment.

The story takes a turn with the transfer of Anukul to a district on the banks of river Padma. The description of child's ornaments, and the ceremonial ride in the go-cart for a walk onto the banks of river Padma, and Raicharan's joy in the company of the child are true indications of the author's love for nature. Tagore beautifully senses the change in the seasons and describes various seasons. In the rainy season rains poured down heavily and water covered everything including the terraces, cornfields, and villages. Description of moving water and crumbling of riverbanks and unceasing roar of the rain current and swift movement of the rainwater makes the nature dear to readers.

The day rain took break was cloudy, cool and bright day. The child's reluctance to stay at home, and forcing Channa to take him to the go-cart to go near the rice fields, and setting of the sun in its glowing splendor, and the child's demand for a flower is beautifully narrated by Tagore. Standing of huge Kadamba tree in full flower and child's looking at it with greedy eyes and longed to have flower to play with it remain painted before the eyes of the reader. The

description of tree, flower, rain, water, sun, river, fields, birds, and seasons play an important role in Tagore's stories.

Raicharan's resistance to go into knee-deep waters to get flower and finally swayed away by the mindset of the child, makes Raichanna to get flower from the tree. Raichanna forbids the child to go near water. Despite his warning, the child gets attracted by wavelets and rushes towards gurgling water. Child disobeys him and gets down from the cart stealthily, leant over the bank stream, and pretends to fish. Mysterious fairies of the water invites the child with their mysterious voices to their playhouse and the child were not to be seen thereafter. Thus, Tagore tries to bring in the act of nature with the human folly of negligence with the ways of nature.

Returning to the bank with flowers, Raicharan was shocked to find only the go-cart. Terrible blow struck Raicharan made his blood freeze and "the whole universe swam like a dark mist". The pain, agony, cries with the broken heart in search of his master made him mad with despair. Tagore tries to bring in parallel between the vastness of sorrow that Raicharan feels, with the vastness of nature. For nature or for river, these are naturally repetitive and trivial things. But for the a common man like Raicharan, it was a great blow. The whole story of missing the child reaches the mistress of the house. After interrogations, they realize that the child was missing. At the same time, there were also rumors of band of gypsies outside the village and some suspicion rested on them. However, motherly love for the lost child made her order Raicharan to leave the house at once. Thus, the first part of the story ends with the feeling of loss, guilt and pain.

The time passes and the readers know more about the details of Raicharan and his family in the second part of the story. Life takes a different turn in Raicharan's life with his return to village. Mysterious are the ways of god, which is proved in the case of Raicharan. Surprisingly, his wife who was childless, gave birth to a son by the end of the year and died. The child was looked after and taken care by his widow sister. Despite all these happenings in his life, the heart of Raicharan still suffered from the sense of guilt.

The feeling he had for the child was not of the father, but as a usurper in place of his little master. As child was born after the death of his master, he always felt that the same 'little master' took birth in his house. His wife gave birth to the child in her middle age and moreover the child too called 'Baba' and 'Mama' like the little master (Phailana) and showed all the signs of a future judge. Thus, all these incidents strengthened the sense of guilt for negligence in Raicharan. He was a simple man with less exposure to the modern world. Psychologically and physically, he spared no means to keep the child happy by being his master but, not as his father.

Tagore was an educationist and his characters (educated and uneducated) in the story are sensible to take important decisions about life and things. Phailana the grown up matured educated boy, never attempts to know the realities of his own life. The young boy is a symbol of new hope and positivity for Raicharan and he always remains his master throughout his life. As

the years pass by Raicharan became weak physically and economically. Young, happier and fun filled jovial past life of Raicharan had changed to helpless and hopeless life. Time had made him weak on one side; and on the contrary, passing of time had made Anukul strong with better position as a magistrate at Baraset but without any children thereafter.

Understanding the hard realities of life, his own weaknesses, sense of guilt, and the circumstances force Raicharan meet Anukul and his wife to handover the child. Raicharan confesses that, it was not the river Padma but he himself had stolen the child. Raicharan also tell them that he would hand over their child Phailana, on Sunday. The confession of his guilt in front of judge Anukul satisfies the soul of Raicharan. A simple rustic thinks it as his quilt though it was untrue in reality. Raicharan claims that God himself was the proof for his guilt. After listening to the words of Raicharan, Anukul gives the verdict that Raicharan's act was an unforgivable act of treachery. Phailana asks Anukul to forgive Raicharan and lets him have a small monthly pension, for which Anukul agrees. However, judge gives a verdict but the decision was on humanity basis. Thus, when they send Raicharan away and sent a monthly pension to the village in his name, it returned saying that there was no man with that name. Thus, the readers know that the unburdened soul of Raicharan, after confession might have breathed last.

TO SUM UP:

The present story is the true representation of life. The change in seasons in nature is the life itself; sometimes happier and sometimes harder. Nature teaches human beings through its ways. Simple rustic man feels himself guilty for his simple act of negligence and tries to confess through his acts. Simple are the ways of rustic Indians. Simplicity marks at every step of their life. Let that be serving the master, taking care of the child, sacrificing everything for the sake of child, or punishing oneself for the simple act of negligence. For a rustic Indian simple things are important and he lives by his words and acts, which makes him so great.

Writer handles the delicate and sensitive issues like caste system prevalent in the society very sensibly. The growing importance of education and the growing respect for the educated people of the time is visible with the characters engaged in judicial system. The magistrates were addressed with respect, as 'My Lord' is apt title for the story and grabs the attention of the readers. It also shows the influence of westerners on Indians. Description of nature and the human psychology makes the story unique. The changing times in human life and seasonal changes in nature create a beautiful environment with livable and lovable characters, and makes reading a joyful journey.

REFERENCES:

My Lord, the Baby-a short story by Rabindranath Tagore