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## **Some Philosophical Elements in the Poems of Kabir and Rabindra Nath Tagore**

**Reenu Kumar, M.A., Ph.D. Candidate**

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### **Abstract**

Some philosophical elements in the poems of Kabir and Rabindra Nath Tagore are discussed in this paper. Their strong belief is that the Supreme Power and Truth lie in Beauty and Beauty lies in the Divine Truth. The paper tries to bring the message and beauty of Kabir and Rabindra Nath Tagore and similarity in their poetry. The literary images and philosophy on Divine Union are presented.

### **Introduction**

Kabir and Rabindra Nath Tagore were born and brought up in different centuries. Thus there is contrast in their lives, their periods of existence, their social context, and their styles of living. But we find that their poems reveal a similar philosophical paradigm in their work. The poems of these two poets have deeply influenced the people of various social and economic strata.

### **Philosophy of Kabir's Verses and Ideas**

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The words and preaching of Kabir dealt various social, emotional and psychological questions that confronted humans. In Kabir's opinion *God Realization* is the apex goal of life. All the problems mental, emotional and psychological and all the conflicts - social, religious or communal and even the physiological - can be overcome and won through *God Realization*. According to him all the paths of outward pursuit are directed inside and union with the Supreme Being should be made the sole priority which will automatically diminish the materialistic problems and enlighten the path of spiritualism.

### **Tagore and His Spiritualism**

A similar tinge of philosophical element is found in the works of Tagore. The major influence of his life and the essence of his poetry is his strong belief in the Ultimate Soul, the Super Natural Supreme Power that moves humans. His works show a continual progress, a continual moving forward for the search of Unity, for a stability of belief and moral principle to give meaning and order to everything he did whether it was for personal, social and national upliftment. He focused on the strong presence of the Infinite Power that He felt in his life and was the same He was seeking to perceive through all experiences of life. He admitted this and acknowledges His Presence and offer immense gratitude in his writings.

The work of both the poets employed many examples, images, references, situations and experience that compel readers to do introspection and positive reinforcement of the life and spirit. Their poetry and poetic form strengthen their living world and virtually affect the reader's mind and touch their soul. Every work of Kabir and every creation of Tagore is Soul to Soul talk.

### **Kabir and Tagore – A Simple Comparison**

Since Kabir was illiterate, his poetry was all oral communication. He used common instances, daily executive examples to bring home to the masses the truth of universality of nature. His preaching seems to be the result of the direct perception of the Supreme and divine experience. His knowledge was not the result of mind experience, tainted by memory, contemplation and reproduction. It was spontaneous overflow of divinity from within. He used simple and easily understood words in simpler poetic couplets. Sometimes he used four lines. He had a natural talent to use rhymes and rhythm. His condemnation of uselessness of customs, rites, rituals and caste distinctions addressed the social problems around him and us even as he focused on *God Realization*.

Tagore was born in the age when Universalism was attracting many intellectuals and members of the educated classes around the world. Tagore did not stop with his active creative works of poetry, fiction and plays. He was a highly educated modern man with modern ideals and thus seized opportunities to focus on social, political, religious and spiritual changes. He

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focused on the need for union with the Eternal Being, the Supreme Power. Tagore used his poetry as an instrument to draw out his expression smoothly and vividly. The subjects for his poetry were often personal and sometimes social, political, national and cultural.

### **Pursuit of Truth in the Works of Kabir and Tagore**

Truth and its pursuit is an important philosophical element in the poetry of Kabir and Tagore. Pursuing Truth means confrontation with Duality and realization of Non-Dualism. Dualism recognizes the differences between Jiva (Subordinate soul) and Ishvara (Supreme God) and perceives the Truth to be different and distant from oneself. Non-Dualism philosophy looks at everything as Brahman (The Supreme God, considered the only truth - The singular reality) which has three fundamental attributes sat-cit-ānanda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss). It means realizing that the Truth dwells within and lives in every creation of Nature. Non-Dualism insists that the experiential personal realization of unity of everything must be achieved until a person achieves such realization. This Truth may also be known as Universal Spirit.

Kabir paves way to perceive and Tagore walks on that path. It is interesting to note that realization of the same truth does not really require any high education, and yet high education is no barrier to such realization. This basically is an important lesson that we learn from the lives of Kabir and Tagore.

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