

## **STRAY BIRDS- THE EPITOMES OF FREEDOM, LOVE AND DIVINITY: AN ATTEMPT OF TRANSLATION BY DR V R SUDHEESH**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*ONCE we dreamt that we were strangers*

*We wake up to find that we were dear to each other (9)*

*Reading Tagore, especially his collection of short philosophical poems Stray Birds, is like dipping our feet into a literal pool of love, affection, transcendence and emotion. What else could be expected from a mystic who extracted his poetic deliverance from the basins of river Ganges? The visionary poet who championed the eastern doctrines, 'Intellectual Polymath' as the great poet W. B Yeats had announced, the architect of Adobe of Peace, Rabindranath Tagore the Nobel laureate endorsed the sensibilities of Eastern Philosophy through his prose and poetry. As the begetter of Romanticism, Tagore with his expression of love and mysticism espoused sentimentalism in Bengal literature which glorified Indian literature. It is a debut attempt by Dr. V. R. Sudheesh, the veteran writer of Malayalam that is to translate the great Indian writer of all time in to Malayalam. Translation is a genre which hardly attains fidelity and transparency, but it might not be an exaggeration to say that both are consummated by Dr. V.R Sudheesh in his work Akashapparavakal. Without introduction, both the writers are luminous and familiar to the Malayalam readers.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Freedom, Love and Divinity*

### **INTRODUCTION**

*Stray Birds*, the collection of short poems by Tagore excel as the love lyrics on nature and beauty to sooth the human temperament and efficacy. The short, crisp and precise lines elaborate the splendour of the divine and human world and lead the appreciators to the horizon of love, intimacy, sentiments and what not. These short aphorisms exalt the readers into a realm of happiness, soothe and appease the pain of love.

When reading between the lines, the following themes appeal to the readers. Divinity, extreme love, exalted joy, remorse, vigorous desires and passionate lust thrill the poor soul of the receptors. An appreciator must be aware of his human deficiencies or the weakness of him that is urging for limitless eternal love which rather elevates him into the height of saintliness. Lyrical abundance and rhetoric in Tagore's poems transport us to the pleasing world of nature.

It is usual that the music form of poetry creeps into the heart of the reader when reading Tagore. The music in the poem appeals to the senses and Tagore opined that a pious man in love earns his freedom through the music of divinity. Tagore contributed Indian music with his famous 'Tagore song' called Rabindrasangeetham. His poetry is unique even it does not consist of repetition and refrain but a rhyme attuned to the heart always. While considering the translations of

Tagore, it is evident that many of the translators did not consider the song in the poems. But here the divine songs and the soothing music in the poems are concentrated by the translator. The unifying thread of the inner meanings, simplicity and plainness made the work noteworthy. The poem was based on rhythmic movement which suggests the never ending growth of nature and probably the emotion of man. The highly evocative first line, "Stray birds of summer come to my window to sing and fly away. And yellow leaves of autumn, which have no songs, flutter and fall there with a sigh" exemplifies fragility and the dark side of life.

The poetic devices of personification captivate the readers and render a whole new experience. The exquisite rhymes seem as hymns or incantation for a love stricken reader. V.R. Sudheesh is no exception from who pours opium of love through his lines. It is so interesting that the most addictive writer translates the greatest, ever inspirational national writer. The innumerable love lyrics are pure, share infinite delight and enchantment. When the poet sings with eternal love, "MY heart beats her waves at the shore of the world and writes upon it her signature in tears with the words, I love thee" (29) the translator figuratively translated it into Malayalam very beautifully.

Prapancha Theerath Thirayadikkukayanu Ente Athmavu, Athinmel Kannerode Kayyoppu Vechu Kurikkate "Nhan ninne Pranayikkunnu." ( 29)

Tagore invokes the nature, the part and parcel of life including the water, air and greenery. Tagorewrites,

THE waterfall sings, "I find my song, when I find my freedom."

GOD'S silence ripens man's thoughts into speech. (36)

Tagore believed that a poet can write only when he is blessed. While analysing an air of mysticism in him, the pure devotion oozes out through his lines. He is fond of the very small materialistic things including the 'pebbles' in his lines.

THE hurricane seeks the shortest road by the no – road

And suddenly ends its search in the Nowhere.(60)

In mentioning the term 'hurricanes,' he validate that even the hurricanes cannot escape from the shackles of suffering. Of course, the existential dilemma of the hurricane disturbs the poet and he believes that god is the one who blesses, punishes and soothes the disturbed hearts. The provocative poet insinuates his gloom regarding the unending struggle that human beings undergo. At the same time an inquisitive reader may discern that Tagore shades the love between men and women through his lines in *Stray Birds*. Another example of the straying of human beings is suggestive in these lines. Tagore writes,

MY heart has Spread its sails to the idle winds

For the shadowy island of Anywhere

V.R Sudheesh translated the agony as a visual imagery thatthe readers feel that we ourselves are floating like a yacht. The voyage of the poet to discover his self is also depicted through the lines. The line translated as follows,

Evideyo etho irunda dweepilek pokunna

Udaseenanaya kaatinoppam ente hridayamathinte kadalpaayakal nivarthi. (218)

Tagore seeks revelation and freedom from god and at the same time remarks the eternal love that pursued by the immortal world. In the poems, the ephemeral and transitory life owes for eternal happiness by introducing the language of the sea, wind, waves, stream, water fall etc. This made the journey to another world easy. There is splendid use of poetic devices of metaphors and similes by Tagore in *Stray Birds*. He writes,

THE mystery of creation is like the darkness of night— it is great.

Delusions of knowledge are like the fog of the morning. (14)

While reading the poem, we see that the poet grows by being motivated from various colours. He mentions, 'colour to my sunset sky,' 'the colours of the rainbow' etc by inspiring the readers to grow and transform. Beginning with the observation of the stray birds by the poet, the poems moves through ecstasy, grandeur and spirituality revealing that life is blissful and awesome all the time. He foresees a dream land which is full of joy and sacredness.

It is evident that Tagore has a great influence on Dr. V. R Sudheesh as some of the stories by the translator are influenced by the philosophy of *Adwaitha*. His hallmark themes are spiritual liberation, kindness and illusion (*maya*) which he imbibes from the Indian philosophy. *Maya* the outstanding work of V.R. Sudheesh is worthy to be noted here. Tagore himself is explicating the concept of illusion or *maya* in *StrayBirds*. As Tagore was influenced by *Rigveda*, he had written on the themes of cosmogony and mysticism which postulates that the most significant thing in this world is life itself. In the last section of *Stray Birds*, Tagore prioritises the concept of death. He writes,

I HAVE suffered and despaired known death and

I am glad that I in this great world. (323)

The essential truth of the inevitability of life and death is shared by Tagore in *Stray Birds*. For him the world of love and faith is the only reality, and love is not a mere sentiment. The last line suggests that the utmost thing that the poet values is the Love of God. The great philosopher ends his collection of poems which is also about eternal love and faith and the serenade of Malayalam literature, V. R Sudheesh translated it with its utmost beauty. Tagore finished the poem with the following lines and the translation as follows below.

LET this be my last word that I trust in thy love. (326)

Nhan ninte pranayathil Viswasikkunnu, ithente anthima vachanamakatte (326)

As Shakespeare said 'brevity is the soul of wit,' Tagore abridged his short poems as every word weighs a ton. It is very glad to observe that the very intensive translation is done by Dr. V. R. Sudheesh in its finest way and this book fulfils the reader's urge for aesthetic pleasure. The book accomplishes the heights of perfection as an asset to the literary arena which idealises the art of translation and hence a token of appreciation could be endowed to the writer.

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