

Literature and Poetry

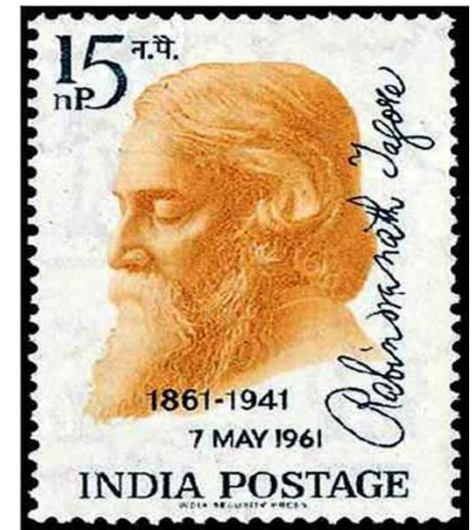
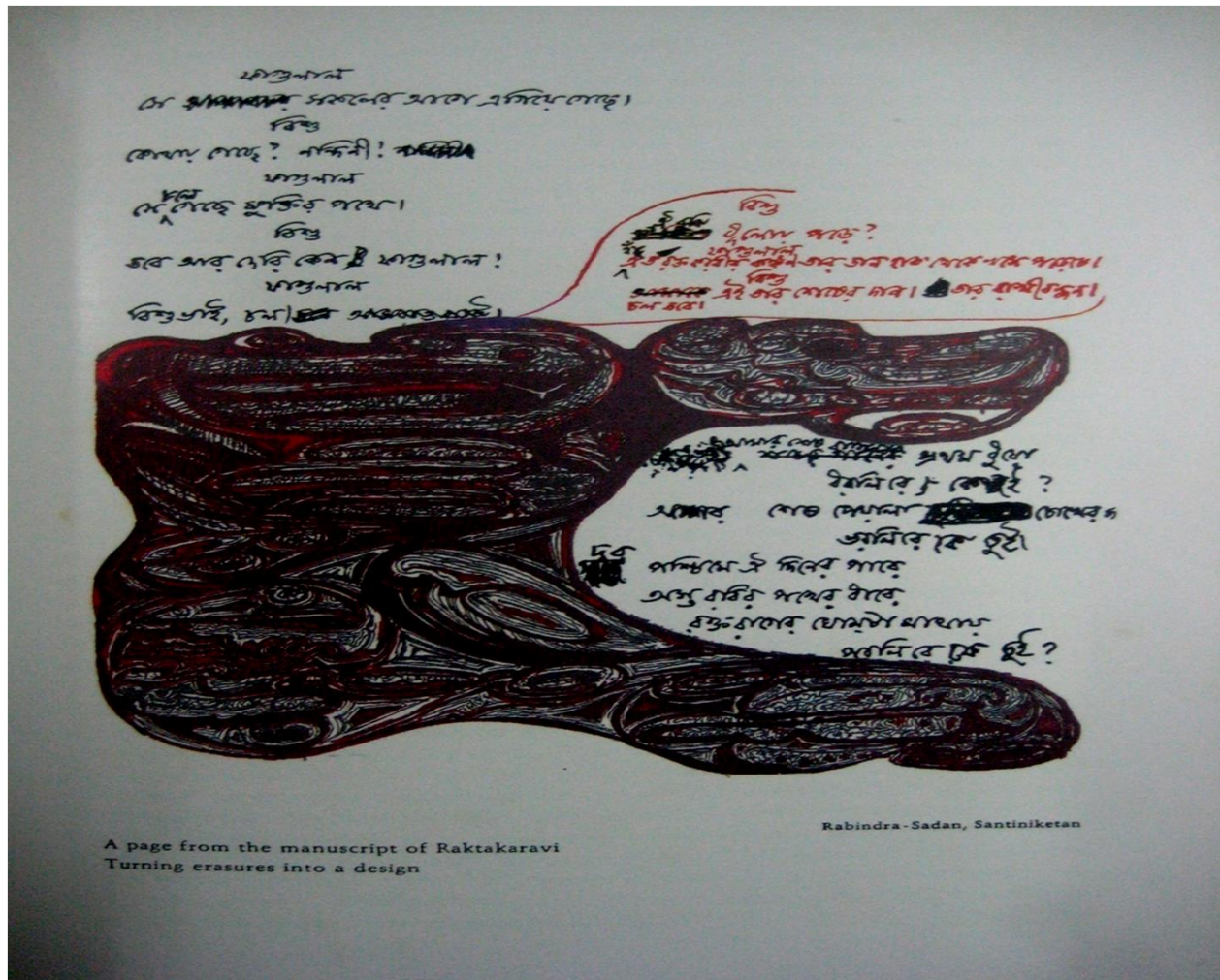


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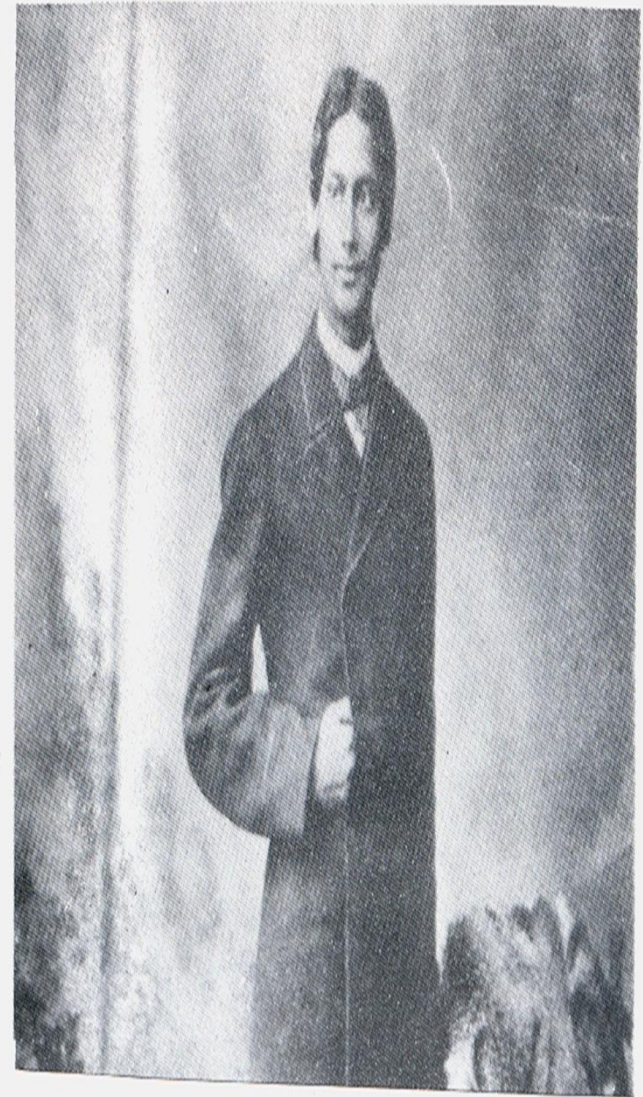
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Rabindranath Tagore :

the role of Poet- seer-philosopher

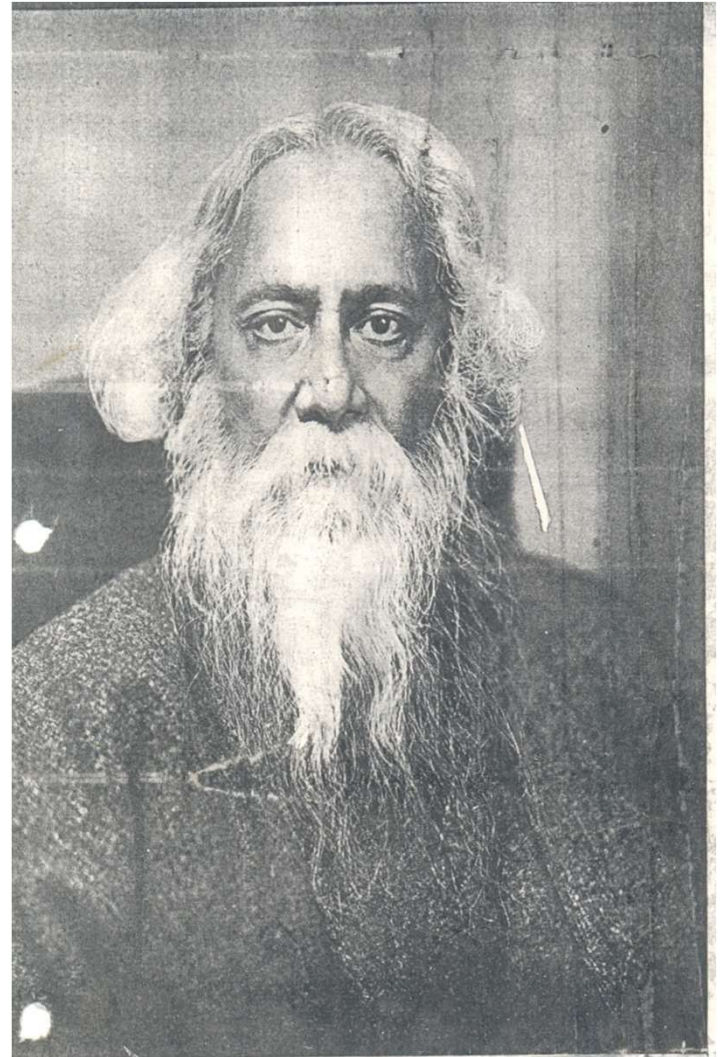


In 1877, Tagore went to London, and studied literature for a while under Prof. Henry Morley. The effect of his visit was to give him the necessary perspective to live in the spiritual worlds both of East and West without a sense of inferiority towards either.



Rabindranath in Brighton

As Tagore matured he achieved a broadly humanistic outlook, with an inner sense of which the sanctions lay in a deeply hidden creative force called by him 'The God of Life'. (He was here talking of spirit of history itself)





Pearl Buck wrote Tagore and Gandhi were alike in their spiritual leadership. Tagore's poetry his poetic prose reached deep and far, because he spoke to us of mind and soul, leading the human spirit towards God.

Tagore has written about a thousand poems, it is in his poetry that we find all that is best in the Indian tradition summed up the spiritual quest of the Upanishads. Over and over again Tagore hints at a harmony between man and man, man and nature, man and the universal spirit. I quote Tagore's final passage in **Gitanjali (UNESCO celebrated its Centenary 1910-2010)**

In one salutation to thee, my God, let all my senses spread out and touch this world at thy feet

Like a rain-cloud of July hung low with its burden of unshed showers let all my mind bend down at thy door in one salutation to thee.

Let all my songs gather together their diverse strains into a single current and flow to a sea of silence in one salutation to thee.

Like a flock of homesick cranes flying night and day back to their mountain nests let all my life take its voyage to its eternal home in one salutation to thee.

Tagore was a proponent of Internationalism.

Rabindranath Tagore

The Gardner

I hold her hands and press her to my breast.

I try to fill my arms with her loveliness, to plunder her
sweet

smile with kisses, to drink her dark glances with my eyes.

Ah, but, where is it? Who can strain the blue from the
sky?

I try to grasp the beauty, it eludes me, leaving only the
body in

my hands.

Baffled and weary I come back.

How can the body touch the flower which only the spirit
may touch?

The Crescent Moon by Rabindranath Tagore

THE BEGINNING

"WHERE have I come from, where did you pick me up?" the baby asked its mother.

She answered half crying, half laughing, and clasping the baby to her breast,-- "You were hidden in my heart as its desire, my darling.

You were in the dolls of my childhood's games; and when with clay I made the image of my god every morning, I made and unmade you then.

You were enshrined with our household deity, in his worship I worshipped you.

In all my hopes and my loves, in my life, in the life of my mother you have lived.

In the lap of the deathless **Spirit** who rules our home you have been nursed for ages.



Foundation Ceremony of Visva-Bharti

The motto he selected for his university Vishva-Bharati justifies the above *Yatra Visvam Bhavati Ekanidam*- where the Universe has become a single nest.

Subramania Bharati

Subramania Bharati(1882-1921) regarded father of the Tamil Literary renaissance was an admirer of Shelley. His fame was not so much as a poet as of a patriot and a writer of patriotic songs. His poems were sung at political meetings, during processions and demonstrations.



A Prayer to Sakti

Does anyone make a lovely harp
And fling it in the dust?
With burning Senses you endowed me-
Answer me, be just.
Won't you give me strength so that
I can serve this World?
Or am I to be a burden on it
Callously by you hurled?
I asked you for a frame that my mind
Can operate like a ball;
A heart uncraving, a quivering flame
Of a life which nothing can pall;
Though my flesh should be burnt by you, I asked
For a soul that will sing your praise-
A stead fast spirit, tell me are these
Too much for you to raise?

Three gods in the Hindu Pantheon appealed to Bharati, Sakti the Mother Goddess, Murugan the second son of Siva and Kannan or Krishna



Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911–1984)

Famous Urdu poet and Editor of *Pakistan Times* Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911–1984) did not go to Europe to study, but managed to imbibe the ideas of the 1930's at home from books and smuggled pamphlets; travelers tales, and that impalpable yet potent jinn known as the Spirit of the Age. In his poem **Freedom's Dawn** (Aug 1947) he wrote

This leprous Daylight, dawn night's fangs have mangled
This is not that long-looked for break of day
Not that clear dawn in quest of which our comrades
Set out, believing that in heaven's wider reach
Somewhere must be the stars last halting place
Somewhere the shore of nights slow washing tide,
Somewhere the anchorage of the ship of pain.....

Where did the sweet breeze blow from then- where has it
Gone, and the roadside lamp not flickered once?
Night's heaviness is unlesened yet, the hour,
Of mind and spirit's ransom has not struck.
Let us go, on, our goal is not yet reached.

Faiz came to attend Gandhi's funeral at the height of Indo-Pakistan hatred. V.G. Kiernan, *Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Selected and Translated*, People's Publishing House New Delhi 1958 p2

