

RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S PLAY MALINI: A TODAY'S PERSPECTIVE

Abstract

Rabindranath Tagore, a prolific Bengali author, is known for the presentation of human psyche in his works. There has been a religious conflict since ancient time. Religion gives birth to many wars. Tagore's Malini deals with a conflict of adaptation of Buddhism though she is a Hindu princess of Kashi. The king and the Queen try to convince her to revise her decision otherwise she would be banished from the kingdom. Malini sticks to her decision that gives birth to complications in the play. We find the religious conflict in today's scenario because religion is divided in the different sects that create havoc in this world.

Keywords: Tagore, Religious, conflict, adaptation, Buddhism, World.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Rabindranath Tagore, a prolific Indian Bengali author, earned name and fame all over the world with the publication of his works based on the different themes. Tagore was awarded the noble prize for his work Gitanjali in 1913. Gitanjali is the landmark in the history of Indian English literature. Being an eyewitness of freedom struggle, Tagore tried to awake the soul of people through his works. Tagore is known as Kabiguru for his contribution to literature. It is believed that Tagore had a deeper understanding of human nature that reflected the different facets of human nature through the characters of his works. For instance, Bimla is a remarkable character who displays feminine sensibility in *The Home and the World*. His play *Sanyasi* is a bitter satire on a greedy nature of so called babas and sanyasis. His short story *The Cabuliwallah* is a picture of human emotions.

II. TAGORE'S MALINI: AN EPITOME OF BOLDNESS

Tagore wrote more than forty plays. Tagore's *Malini* was originally written in Bengali but it was translated into English in 1917. *Malini* is a poetic play which is written in blank verse with intensity of human emotions. *Malini* begins with a conflict between father and daughter regarding their religious dogmas. *Malini* wants to live a simple life like the Buddhist monk. *Malini* is a princess of Kashi who wants to adopt Buddhism so that Brahmins go against her decision and demand her banishment from the kingdom. The king tries to convince *Malini* to revise her decision to avoid her banishment. Religious conflict is clearly seen in a conversation between the king and *Malini*.

- **King:** My foolish child, if you must bring your new creed into this land of the old, Let it not come like a sudden flood threatening those who dwell on the bank. Keep your faith to your own self. Rake not up public hatred and mockery against it.
- **Malini:** Father, grant to your people their request. The great moment has come. Banish me. (tagoreweb.in).

It seems that *Malini* is firm in her decision of being a follower of Buddhism. The king, being a father very well aware of the fact that the Brahmins of his state do not allow any other religion in the city of the Hindus Kashi. The king seems powerless the demands of the Brahmins of his state. If the king favours *Malini*, there will be a revolt against them. It is very difficult for the king to convince the Brahmins about Buddhism. The king has no arguments to favour *Malini* and advises her to have faith in herself rather than any creed otherwise she will be perished. On the other hand, *Malini* believes in religious freedom and she is ready to accept her banishment in the name of religion. *Malini* follows the theory of renunciation of Buddhism that is clearly seen in the conversation between the Queen and *Malini*.

- **Malini :** Mother, there are some who are born poor, even in a king's house. Wealth does not cling to those whose destiny is to find riches in poverty.
- **Queen:** Child, is there no place for you here, where you were born? Is the burden of the world waiting for your little shoulders? (tagoreweb.in)

Like Buddha, *Malini* wants to renounce worldly things and leads a simple life under the influence of Buddhism. *Malini* tells the Queen that wealth does not cling to those who

seek riches in poverty. The Queen seems to convince Malini by saying that her little shoulders do not bear worldly burden.

III. HINDUISM VS. BUDDHISM IN THE PLAY

Hinduism is an Indian religion or dharma, a religious and universal order or way of life by which followers abide. Hinduism asserts the eternal duties such as honesty, refraining from injuring. The followers of Hinduism have to follow the preaching of gurus and pass through the four ashrams. The followers get the knowledge regarding life by studying the Vedas, Upanishads, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Hinduism is known as sanatan dharma of Aryans and the way of representing our culture as depicted in our religious scriptures.

Gautam Buddha was a precursor of Buddhism that began around 2500 years ago. Buddha suggested the eight fold path to attain salvation and release from pain. Buddha has given the theory of liberation through the preaching of sangha. Buddhism spreads mainly in Shrilanka, Nepal and China. Buddhism rejects the fundamental doctrines of Hinduism.

We find religious conflict in a conversation between the Brahmin and Supriya, a close friend of Malini. Supriya is against of the banishment of Malini in the name of religion. She raises certain questions for the Brahmins.

- **Supriya:** Religion? I am stupid. I do not understand you.
I do not understand you. Tell me sir
Is it your religion that claims the banishment of an innocent girl?
The first Brahmin condemns Supriya for her mockery of religion.
- **First Brahmin :** You are a marplot,
Supriya, you are ever hindrance to all our enterprises
(tagoreweb.in)

It seems that the first Brahmin does not like interference of Supriya for Malini and considers her marplot even the hindrance in their decisions. The Brahmins do not want to allow anybody in the matter of religion. The Brahmin believes in Sanatan dharma i.e. Hinduism. There is no place for other religion in Kashi.

Kemankar, a firm determined youth, is a leader of agitators. He has his own belief for religion.

- **Kemankar:** Religion is one in its essence but different in its forms.
The water is one yet by its different banks it is bounded
and preserved different people. ((tagoreweb.in)

Kemankar believes that man should be free to follow any religion according to his beliefs. However, the essence of all the religion is the same. People pray different Gods but Brahm is the only one. He is also against of the banishment of Malini.

IV. RELIGIOUS CONFLICT: A TODAY'S SCENARIO

We find religious conflict in today's world. There are many sects in Hindu religion. For instance, Swaminarayan religion is divided into two sects Purna Purshotama and Akshar Purshotama. In Purnapurshotama, people and saints worship only God's idol. On the other hand, those who believe in Akshar Purshotama worship the idol of Guru with God. Hence, people is divided in the name of religion. Jainism is divided into two sects Shwetambara and Digambara. They established the different temples of Mahavira and follow their own norms of religion. The Digambaras worship the naked idols and believe in the preaching of their gurus.

Muslim religion is also divided into two sects Siya and Sunni that gives birth to conflict among the Muslims. They do not hesitate to sacrifice their lives in the name of religion. There is a conflict between Ketholic and Protestant in Christianity.

Sometimes communal riots occur in the name of religion as the concept of religion is different from person to person. Many saints and sages have interpreted the religion in their own ways. Many saints like Ashram Bapu and Nityananda have been scolded for mis guiding people and also charged for molestation. However, they have still many followers. People also remain in dilemma who to trust and whom to believe. Now a days, man is ready to change his religion for monetary purpose or in the name of his idol. For instance, many people adopted Buddhism on the birthday of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar. Even the Government seems helpless against religious conversion. India is a democratic country so people can keep any region and worship any God.

V. CONCLUSION

Hence, the different sects and religious saints and sages are responsible for religious havoc in this world. The preaching of Gayatri Pariwar, Dada Bhagwan, Brahma kumari is different that gives many religious creeds and conflicts in today's world. In this way, Tagore's Malini is true to today's time. Tagore asserts Manav dharma that is the need of today's time. One should be free to follow any religion and any creed. All the religions demand peace of mind but their way of preaching is different. All religions should be treated with equal respect without any dogmas.

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