

Reading Rabindranath Tagore's *Stray Birds* in Punjabi *Mauji Parindey* Trans. Rajesh Sharma

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Translation is a very difficult task. It demands a lot of patience and seriousness but translating poetry is more difficult as one needs more patience, more responsibility and deep observation. Rajesh Sharma is an expert in this field. His translations from English to Punjabi and Punjabi to English are remarkable. His translations of Harbhajan Singh Hundal's Punjabi poetry into English *Blood Flowers* and translation of five world famous poets' English poetry into Punjabi *Kavita da Saman* (Time of Poetry) are his significant contributions. He does not have only poetic consciousness and the understanding of these two languages but also scholarly observations on poetry. Many of his students are working in the field of literature, poetry, and translation under his guidance. It was not an easy task to fly with the stray birds of Tagore but through his understanding, love and skills, Dr. Sharma makes them to land in the courtyard of Punjabi literature.

As Tagore's *Stray Birds* is a natural construction of free consciousness and imagination, *Mauji Parindey* is its translation in the same vein. Tagore's stray birds have been called "Mauji" in Punjabi which widens the meaning of the term stray as well as life. It is full of knowledge, wisdom, humour, eternal lessons of life and natural blessings. The stray birds in the thoughts of the poet are present in the book with a number of philosophical themes, such as humanity, struggle, love, life, sacrifice, hope, nature, God, existence, word, death, mother, home, privacy, history, world, eternity, smile, thought, smoothness, faith, aesthetics, art, fly, mingling of nature and man, self-enjoyment, etc. The book throws light on man's limitations as well as endless capabilities and possibilities; one gets enlightened.

It has knowledge, contemplation, natural flow and music. At the same time, it has spontaneous overflow as well as simplicity, patience, and aesthetics of English romantic poet William Wordsworth. Stray birds are thoughts of a free human mind. It is a free flight from pre-consciousness to consciousness. The 'bird' has been used as a symbol but actually the poet addresses to the man to understand the living birds of his mind, their freedom, their joys, their willingness and lives. He learns how to live from the symbolic birds and also inspires the reader to learn it from them. He invites the birds to imprint their footprints on his words.

According to Tagore, there is only way of love to understand the world and achieve the unfathomable. It is his poetic statement that the universe reveals every mystery before a lover. Not universe but love is unfathomable for the poet as it easily retains the whole universe in its lap. If you seek help from someone you have to knock the door but in love every door is already open for you. Human life is incomplete, sad and meaningless, without love. The whole universe is full of love and active with its energy. Night says to the sun that he (the sun) sends the love letters to her through the moon and in response to them she places her tearful letters on

the grass and returns. Talking about the love of an artist and nature, Tagore writes that an artist is the love of nature. that's why he becomes the slave of nature as well as he is the master of it. Actually, truth is that when we love, only then we live.

Tagore asserts that life is beautiful. Under the spell of unwanted desires and dazzles a human being remains devoid from the beauty of the moon and the stars. The poet makes a man conscious by stating that he should try to find the beauty inside himself not outside in worldly fake mirror. The fruit asks to the flower that how far is you from me? It answers: I am hidden into your heart.

The small poems in the book bring out the philosophy of life hidden under the feathers of small birds in the form of words. This philosophy blesses the human being with strength to never give up. A setting sun in a poem asks to the masses that who will perform his duty after him? Then a small clay-lamp answers: I will, by putting my whole strength. Writing about a life full of struggles, the poet states that the sand on the ways of man expects songs from him and his style of walking expects the dance of waters. Why? Because he is a human being. A man must know how to live and how to enjoy life. According to Tagore, we do not live rather carry the burden of our disabilities.

Stressing on the human struggle for life, Tagore inspires us to observe and understand our history. Talking about the fingers of our feet, he argues that these are the fingers of our hands which have forgotten their history. It reminds us the Russian poet, Rasool Hamzatov, who writes that if you will shoot at your past with a pistol then the future will shoot back with a canon. Tagore represents a thesis on human struggle that human history is waiting for the victory of a humiliated man.

Sacrifice is a significant point which rises again and again in Tagore's poetry. He writes that although soil is disrespected yet it grows flowers for us. Living for each other is life, the celebration of life. The message is also presented through various natural phenomenons. The moon disseminates light to the sky and retains the stain with itself. He writes about the man lost in worldly dazzles that his eyes are not proud of eyesight but of eye glasses. He again writes that the smoke boasts of to the sky, and the ashes boast of to the earth, that they are the real brother and sister of fire. Disseminating the message of love and sacrifice, the poet writes: accept me as your cup which is filled and meant for you and your dear ones.

Self contemplation and self identity mingles with the universal contemplation and universal identity in the poetry of Tagore. He seeks human consciousness through it, which has all the right answers for all the questions. According to the French thinker, Louis Althusser, human being is caught into the trap of false consciousness. In the same vein, Tagore states: what you see, you do not see and what you see, is your reflection. This reflection is not human or humanity, rather, it is a negative alternate which can be removed only through self-contemplation and self-consciousness.

The poetry has innocence of a child and love of a mother. What is the place of a mother in one's life, Tagore teaches it in a very small poem: In the darkness, under the sheet of night,

as a child, I look for you, mother!. Tagore defines the home, in the same way: I am in the world of roads, night falls. Open the door, my home, my world.

Tagore does not consider death as an end. It also has the continuity of life. Life and death both are interchangeable. As walking is to put the step, it is also to place the step. What is death and where it is? It is in the gaps in life, which we could not live. Tagore suggests very easy formulations to live life that one should never present himself in such a way what he is not, otherwise, he will earn enmity from the world; If we tie the feet of a bird with gold, it will not be able to fly; One can only fly the dust by kicking it but cannot grow crops.

The God of Tagore has a deep love and relationship with human being. The God has high hopes from a human being. Every new born child brings a message that God feels shy when one says that he is blessed by God. Comparing God and man, he writes that, in love, God kisses to the finite while man kisses to the infinite. Tagore finds the greatness of God in his silence because when God doesn't speak then it gives the maturity to the ideas of a human being by developing them into a language.

As a conscious poet, Tagore writes about silence and the importance of words very seriously that these small thoughts are like the rumbling of leaves in the core of his heart. It is notable that before writing this book of poetry, the poet had been lost his wife, two young daughters, and the youngest son to death. Perhaps these painful incidents filled him with the realisation of the evanescent existence of a human being. That's why his poetry, addressed to himself, expresses infinite patience, modesty, and infinite divine and natural virtues. The pain lives within him silently as the evening lives in the hearts of the silent trees. He asks his heart to be silent because the high and long trees are prayers for him. He also shares the mystery of his living in these conditions by expressing his privacy through poetry. He writes that his life has those sections also which are empty and silent, and these are the empty places from which his busy days can take air and light. He is very balanced even in this life full of sorrows. He is happy that he is in this great world. Writing about the continuity of this world, he states that world does not leak because life is not a crack. Addressing to himself, he states, infinite traveller you will find your footprints across my songs.

Talking about the continuity of life, Tagore associates it with miracle, art and seriousness. He defines it in two words: "endless miracle". Exactly, the life is full of creativity and creativity is not less than a miracle for God. And, according to him, God meets to himself through creation.

The poetry of Tagore and the continuity of his dialogue both remain eternal with his last poem: "these must be my last words: I have faith in your love". And the reader listens all sides the prayer of an infant flower: dear nature 'never wither'.

Punjabi and English have been mingled with each other through Mauji Parindey and it is evident that it could not be possible without the mingling of the translator and the poet. It can be expected that Mauji Parindey will strengthen a man standing before the worst conditions of life, to struggle and cherish the beauty of life. No, doubt it's a remarkable contribution to both the languages.

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