Chapter - V

CONCLUSION

In my thesis I proposed to offer a comparative study of Nature and Spirituality in the poetry of Rev. N.V. Tilak and G.M. Hopkins. I have looked at their work from a holistic viewpoint. Comparative Literature is an examination of literary texts is more than one language, through an investigation of contrast, analogy or influence or a study of literary relations between two cultures.

Colonial India witnessed besides other things a cultural and religious invasion: India was exposed to Christianity, at the same time Britain absorbed Eastern Hindu and Buddhist theology. There was an interchange of philosophical thought and a coming closer between East and West. Many English scholars translated the works of major Indian writers thus making available a treasure of literature, transcending geographical boundaries. In the Introduction we have seen how comparatives literature exposes the similarities, dissimilarities and parallels between two literatures. In the conclusion I wish to sum up my observations and present, the striking similarities and dissimilarities in the life and work of Rev. N.V. Tilak and G.M. Hopkins.
INFLUENCES

[A] FATHER

Rev. N.V. Tilak hailed from a high caste Hindu Chitpavan Brahmin family. His father possessed an unusual personality. He hated the sight of infant Narayan as he believed he was inauspicious and a bad omen to his family. Narayan was deprived of paternal love from his violent and abusive father. But his maternal grandfather loved and taught him to see the bright side of life. This glaring sterility of love, from his father made Narayan thirsty for God's love whom he addressed as Father. Narayan has composed most of his Bhakti Poetry, addressing it to father God Narayan's upbringing conformed to strict Hindu codes of ritual worship and Vedic scholarship in Sanskrit. G.M. Hopkins belonged to a distinguished family of the upper middle class. His father was a decorated diplomat with a flair for poetry. He was a conventional religious protestant Christian with a strictly Puritan upbringing. Gerard received a sound education at Baliol in the classics and was conversant in Latin, Greek, German and was an English grammarian. The father imagery in his poems is attributed to his strict protestant upbringing with belief in the male God - head of the trinity.

[B] MOTHER

Narayan's Mother Jankibai was modestly educated but her father by virtue of being a sanskrit scholar she had imbibed a flair for learning.
Later she composed poems but they are lost to the world today. Under Jankibai's tutelage Narayan became a devout scholar in literature rather than Mathematics, a taste that his mother helped him to develop. A very loving soul she passed away when Narayan was only 11 years of age due to physical abuse by his father. Gerard Manley Hopkins Mother Kate was herself a writer and a musician who well versed in German, a language few learnt at the time. Hopkins received a rich tradition of diverse talents from his parents. His sister Grace was an exceptionally talented music composer and another sister was a nun. The similarities are that Tilak and Hopkins inherited their love for learning from their families especially from their mother. However, the economic condition of N.V. Tilak's family was modest due to his father's irratric ways of working. On the other hand Hopkin's family was very prosperous because of his father's social stature.

TEACHER/GURU

The turning point in Tilak's life was brought about by Ganesh Shastri Lele, the famous Vedic scholar who was instrumental in recognizing the rick potential in Tilak. He taught his intellectually endowed student the vedic knowledge in Sanskrit. The other was Rev.Ballantine an American Christian Missionary who fostered Narayan's conversion to Christianity. The most powerful singular influence on his spiritual explorations had
been that of Sant Tukaram. Narayan soulfully, imitated, Tukaram's style of composing 'Abhangs'. Tilak paid tribute to Tukaram as his guru. Gerard's life course was steered by Cardinal Newman whose powerful impact caused his conversion from protestantism to catholicism. In poetry he had the highest regard for the American poet of democracy Walt Whitman. In theology he looked up to the 12th Cen. Philosopher Duns Scotus of Scotland and moulded his poetic aesthetics from Scotus's 'quiddidas' which he later termed "inscape and instress."

[C] CONVERSION

Tilak and Hopkins converted from a prior faith to a new religious order. Tilak converted from Brahmanical Hinduism to Protestant Christianity whereas Hopkins converted from English Puritan Protestantism to Roman Catholicism. Tilak was ordained a protestant priest in the American Marathi Mission while Hopkins was ordained priest in the Jesuit order after 14 years of rigorous religious discipline. The conversion of both poets left an indelible imprint on their psyche. Their past being embedded permanently in their unconscious mind, it did not fade way but surfaced to find utterance and expression consciously, or it forever lurked in their sub-conscious. The conversion of Tilak and Hopkins was met with disdain, disapproval, anger, disgrace and disbelief by their respective families as well as by the society of that time. Tilak's conversion came as a shock to the brahmins of his time more so because
the Indians has garnered the strategy to overthrow the colonial masters through the Indian struggle for independance. They were stunned to discover that the talented patriot had converted to the demonic Britisher's religion. This was nothing short of a great betrayal. He was ostracised by both his family and the community. In the case of Tilak the society even tried to take his life. Gerard's parents and friends were shocked by his conversion and more so objected to the Jesuit order of priesthood which was extremely rigorous in regimentation. The seclusion and isolation would be bitter for a young energetic man. His father admonished him over his decision but he received undying love and care from his mother. Both his parents were Summoned when he lay on his death bed and breathed his last. Catholic priests were denied marriage and the Jesuits above all were the highest cadre of priests. Most of Hopkins' friends attributed his premature death to the rigours of monastic life.

PRIESTHOOD

Narayan Waman Tilak was married to Laxmibai who was illiterate but her husband educated her thus causing her emancipation. She authored the phenomenal a work 'smrutichitre' her autobiography, but on a closer scrutiny one can find a total biography of Tilak from birth to death. In protestantism the priest can marry and raise families while serving, the church. The asceticism in Hinduism is achieved within the family structure Bhramacharya - Celibate / bachelor. Grihasta ashram - Marriage, household, children, vanaprastha ashram - old age, retire to the forest to
live an ascetic's life servering links with the material world. Gerard M. Hopkins was celibate because Roman Catholic Jesuit Order of priestly word were forbidden matrimony in alliance with their role model Jesus Christ. It is heart rending to note that Hopkins wrote numerous letters to his mother Kate from the seminary giving her every detail of his life. His mother stood by her son through all the ordeals of his monastic life.

[D] CULTURE

The British ruled India in the nineteenth century yet it was rampant with disease, high mortality rate, illiteracy, child marriage, superstition, untouchability, caste system and evils of the dowry system. Women were considered vassals. Ritualistic worship was the order of the day and only Brahmins would officiate in the rituals. Asceticism was considered a desirable attitude to life and many Brahmins would travel to Benaulim in search of Vedic knowledge. The British Subjugation of Bharat as a colony of slavery was repugnant to educated, enlightened Indians, who joined the freedom movement with a burning desire to overthrow the British rule. Tilak although a christian priest was a patriot at heart. He penned a number of lyrics extoling the virtues of his beloved mother land after his conversion he broke the shackles of caste that were bound in his mind as a chitpavan brahmin and he could eat from anyone's hand. In his own house he first empowered his wife Laxmibai. Hopkins hailed from a
rich aristocratic cultural background in which he led a comfortable life enjoying all creature comforts. The colonial march of the British throughout Asia and Africa, instilled in the British psyche a sense of inflated pride as the unconquerable. Gerard's father being a diplomat was into British politics in a serious way. The Hopkins were exposed to the wealthy and powerful families of the elite society. That is why Gerard's asceticism came as a rude jolt to the Hopkins family. Young Gerard had the grit to turn his face away from such material well-being, wealth, power, women to pursue a spiritual ideal and embark on a spiritual quest. Yet Hopkins was not blind to the evils of industrialization, the landless labourers and the exploited poor people of England. He wished his country to be free from exploitation and injustice to her people even though it meant confrontation with the monarchy - The Queen of England. He penned patriotic feelings in his poetry but the society of day felt it was a betrayal to the high strata that he hailed from.

POETRY

Rev. N.V. Tilak composed abhangs in the Bhakti tradition of Sant Tukaram. He is credited with a rich corpus of hymns sung in every Marathi congregation of protestant churches. He threw, light on various aspects of christian spirituality especially the numinous spiritual experience of God. In the abhang style Tukaram makes a humble plea "Tuka Mhane". Tilak makes an innovation to 'Das Mhane in the ending - or last line. Rev.
N.V. Tilak subscribes to all three types of spirituality Cosmic, Acosmic and Messianic. Tilak is not as great or universal a poet as Hopkins but among the Marathi speaking Christians he is the greatest Tilak's nature poetry is truly typical of an innocent child approaching a beautiful flower. His poetry is an exquisite example of truth and beauty. Yet his nature poetry is conspicuously simpler than his spiritual poetry. His spirituality is a celebration of God in terms of human relationships of father, mother, guru, brother, sister, friend, even his nature poetry is an extension of similar metaphors. The most striking feature of Tilak's poetry is his sanskrit learning, his vocalulary, word-power, heightened metaphor and Brahmin influence and cultural terms. It is said that he would tie a small bell (ghungroo) to his ankle and dance to the rhythm of the abhang in the kirtan. This practice is a carryover from his past. The warkari practise of becoming God-intoxicated. This dancing in the kirtan or in preaching the gospel was a strange sight for the Christians of those times in Maharashtra. Tilak is essentially a renaissance man in Marathi literature. Gerard Hopkins, composed poetry in the sonnet metre and form encapsulating the poetic philosophy of Duns Scotus which he perfected as inscape, instress, sprung rhythm. The Jesuit scholarship is clearly visible in the compactness of his vocabulary. He coins new words, stresses syllabus, invents new grammatical structures and introduces inmagery like the Metaphysicals Romantics and pre-raphalites in the English literary tradition. His numinous spiritual experiences are so strange in character
that it baffles the common reader beyond comprehension. His use of
metaphors is so powerful that he attributes the hawk to Christ. But in his
poetry human relationships like mother, brother, sister, friend are
significantly absent. This is due to the fact that all relationships had to
the severed when one entered the seminary. The catholic priest of the
jesuit order leaves his home to study theology in the seminary and after
ordination spends a lifetime teaching in seminaries. The Jesuits are the
think-tanks of Roman Catholic Theology. Their hierarchy stems from
priest-bishop - archbishop - cardinal - pope. The powerful influence of
Cardinal Newman on the young priest is evidence of Hopkins' high
intellectual calibre. His spirituality could be set in the framework of the
third type i.e. Messianic spirituality however the acosmic was in his
sub-conscious too. The all pervading energy in the universe is attributed
to the power of God. Hopkins' nature poetry is a pulsating account of the
variegated design in creation. The individuality of an object in nature is
so distinct that Hopkins is overawed with the whole of creation.

I have made modest efforts to throw light on the various aspects of
the poetry of two priests - Rev. N.V. Tilak and G.M. Hopkins. One an
Indian Protestant Marathi priest and poet and the other a British Catholic
English Priest and poet. I humbly acknowledge the debt I owe to my
father - a priest - Rev. N.H. Athavale who initiated me into theology. My
wife was a catholic before her marriage to me and this synthesis of two
sects of Christianity has provided me with a fuller understanding of
spirituality in the theological context. This academic quest and endeavour has given me true, joy of discovery and realisation of spirituality in its varied connotations.