CHAPTER IV
MYSTICISM IN GITANJALI

I

In the preceding chapters I have tried to explore the ideas, the tendencies and influences which went into the formation of the concept of mysticism, which was to remain central in Tagore's thought throughout his life—something indispensable to the whole being of Tagore, the man who experiences and the mind which creates. In addition to this, the discussion was pursued to a great length to show that the tradition absorbed by Tagore was nothing but the grand mystical tradition. This fundamental concept will be seen running through the writings of Tagore and influencing his work at every level: in his poems, his plays and his critical essays. As the various ideas revolving centrifugally around, and constituting this central concept, are found scattered widely in his poems, I have tried in the succeeding chapters to concentrate on the poems as have shown him as a mystic and a thinker—constantly concerned with this unified and integral system of thought.

Tagore's mysticism is neither a creed nor a philosophy but a practical way of looking at the world with a pure soul. He
reveals, in his poems, his vision of life which is an attempt at the purification of the soul and the realization of the inherent unity in all.

It is a mysticism of limpid clarity, a vision made concrete, even sensuous. Nature's mystery, the mystery of the primordial unison of the soul with her, the joy and wonder of it - all are woven into the texture of the poems and vivified with an imagination that can externalize an intuitive vision with symbols and images startlingly new.1

Indeed, mysticism is a striking feature in Tagore's poetry, especially in *Gitanjali*, wherein he had the vision of unity or oneness in all things; of the one inseparable in the separate phenomena of the universe. He was not only a poet, but also a seer, a mystic. He lived a life of inward excitement and passion, and this emotional excitement of Tagore was due to his mystic or spiritual experience. As a mystic, he differs from the western romantics who found themselves in spiritual wilderness, in an aimless, meaningless, godless world, and it is against this background that his poetry gains an importance, an immediacy, a spiritual significance that the modern world cannot afford to ignore. 1

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genesis and character of mysticism in his poetry:

I had so long viewed the world with external vision only... when of a sudden, from some innermost depth of my being, a ray of light found its way out, it spread over and illuminated for me the whole universe... This experience seemed to tell me of the stream of melody issuing from the very heart of the universe and spreading over space and time, re-echoing thence as waves of joy which flow right back to the source... And as we become aware our love goes forth; and ourselves are moved from their moorings and would fain float down the stream of joy to its infinite goal. This is the meaning of the longing which stirs within us at the sight of beauty... The stream which comes from the infinite and flows towards the finite - that is the Truth...

The Vedantic texts define the essence of Brahma - the absolutely real as Satyam, Jnanam and Anantam, which can be translated as Being, Intelligence and Infinitude. Since that which is infinite is bliss - Yo vai bhuma tat sukham - the essence of Brahma may be re-defined as Sat, Chit and Ananda - Existence, Awareness and Bliss. It is this aspect of the Infinite that Tagore has embodied in Gitanjali and declared that the entire creation is a joyous expression of His play; to realize Him was to establish a

close communion with nature and thereby rising above self-love, materialism and worldly attachments. To Tagore, mysticism was essentially an attitude of the mind based upon an instinctive conviction of unity, of oneness, of likeness in all things. The object in Gitanjali, therefore, is to elevate the soul of man from materialism and to establish a perfect communion between man, his surroundings and the Ultimate Reality. His Gitanjali poems hold, as it were a mirror unto the poet’s mystical experiences.

The poems in the Gitanjali are organised architecturally and arranged in logically connected groups. Each succeeding poem is related to the previous one and the one that follows. The following main groups are found in it:

(i) First Group (1-7) : It reveals the immensity and vastness of God’s love and the deep relationship of love existing between God and the poet.

(ii) Second Group (8-13) : It deals with the way how to realise God. He can be realised through love of humanity.

(iii) Third Group (14-36) : Here the poet describes his intense yearning for complete identification with God and also the pangs of separation and obstacles in the path of God-realization.
(iv) Fourth Group (37-57): The poet reveals his intense joy when the union with God takes place.

(v) Fifth Group (58-70): God also partakes in the joy born out of this union. The phenomenal world is Maya, the veil that separates man and God.

(vi) Sixth Group (71-78): The poet says that man should realise the eternal through the bondage of separation. He should ungrudgingly dedicate himself to the service and love of God.

(vii) Seventh Group (79-103): The feeling of separation is the main cause of sorrow in human life. Death is the messenger of God who will bring to an end this feeling of separation. Death will dissolve this veil of Maya and will "take the soul on its voyage to its eternal home."

The Gitanjali phase of Tagore's poetry lasted for about eight years— from 1906 to 1914. Although Naivedya and Kheya are also collections of devotional poems, they differ in tone and temper from Gitanjali. The religion of Naivedya and Kheya is the religion of a moralist. In Kheya one finds Tagore at his best, waiting on the river-side, watching boats ferrying to and fro, hesitating, oscillating, his mind 'divided into two', sad all through because he knows he will have to leave his homeland, the earth, which has been much more than a home to him, and annuished by a new love of whose fruitfulness he is still much in doubt. In Gitanjali his next work, he has crossed over to the other shore.
Wordsworth in his "Preface to Lyrical Ballads" defines poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings", yet he adds an oxymoronic statement:

"It takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility." 3

A poem in its moulding has got the factors of life and percepts: one's experiences gained from life, either one's own or transmuted from others, is moulded into a shape studded with the principles of life. And Gitanjali is no exception. To the one who listens deeply the incantation of each of the lyrics cannot but see a moulding of a drop of tear in its author and a sigh of deep grief in their tunes. Gitanjali has its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility. Tagore was a Job of the Old Testament in his life experience. As Job was tested by God this devotee too was tested of his faith and innocence. Tagore was faced with a series of bereavements in the first decade of the 20th century. Soon after Tagore's family shifted to Shantiniketan for a fresh life, his beloved wife Mrinalini Devi left him on the 23rd of

November, 1902. It was a great shock to him as she was very much a part of him. That particular night he was on the terrace pacing to and fro. And then, quite naturally his emotions began to get expressed through verse:

As the moments of night were spent on the bed of sorrow my eyes were tiresome.

Tagore had felt that his beloved had left him before rewarding her gifts to him for what’s hers can be entrusted only to the her Lord. Tagore in his unconscious mood is seeking her in the house, but then he slowly understands that she is not here on earth:

My house is small and what once has gone from it can never be regained. But infinite is thy mansion, my Lord, and seeking her I have come to thy door.

(Gitanjali, LXXXVII, p. 58).

The collection of this outpoured grief at the death of his beloved wife is collected in Smaran. Within a few months after

the departure of Tagore’s wife, his second daughter Renuka became sick. In 1903 just after nine months Renuka followed her mother. The next cause of his bereavement was the death of Satheese Roy, a growing poet whom Tagore loved as his own son. In 1907 his youngest son Sameendra died of cholera at the age of thirteen. Within five years Tagore became a lonely man. His wife and two children had died, the eldest daughter was outside Bengal with her groom, the third daughter had been recently married and the only son was in the United States doing his studies. It was in these circumstances that Tagore wrote the lyrics of *Gitanjali*. Like great saints and mystics, Tagore’s religious insight originated from saddest thoughts:

I am here to sing thee songs. In this hall of thine I have a corner seat. In thy world I have no work to do; my useless life can only break out in tunes without a purpose. When the hour strikes for thy silent worship at the dark temple of midnight, command me, my master, to stand before thee to sing. When in the morning air the golden harp is tuned, honour me, commanding my presence.

(*Gitanjali*, XV, p.9).

The songs are set to tunes and their true world is not only music but also poetry. They bring "strange consolation" for they
express in perfect language some permanent human impulse.

And they strike not merely at what men consider their major passions but at the roots of life, at the vital experiences that sustain it and give grace and truth of life's unquiet dream. They discover, they explore, they realize new empyreans of the spirit that illumine the two deepest realities of life - Beauty Truth.

Tawore, a firm believer and an ardent devotee of the Supreme Being, wavers to answer to his people, though he recognizes Him everywhere:

I boasted among men that I had known you. They see your pictures in all works of mine. They come and ask me, 'Who is he?' I know not how to answer them. I say, 'Indeed, I cannot tell’. They blame and they go away in scorn. And you sit there smiling.

I put my tales of you into lasting songs. The secret oothes out from my heart. They come and ask me, 'Tell me all your meanings'. I know not how to answer them. I say, 'Ah, who knows what they mean!' They smile and go away in utter scorn. And you sit there smiling.

(Gitanjali, CII, p. 67).

To Taqore, God remains more at the realm of experience and encounter, than at a conceptual level of understanding of the supreme, to be conveyed to the people. The poet, in the lyric, has realised God through his songs and has done his best to describe the various aspects of His divine majesty. People come to the poet and ask him to explain and analyse the identity of the Formless so beautifully portrayed in his songs. But, he is unable to do so as the mystic experiences of His realization cannot be explained away in words. The presence of God can only be experienced through absolute faith in His glory and greatness. The result is that they assume him to be an ignorant imposter who cannot express his feelings and they go away in contempt.

God’s presence is all pervasive. He is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. He is present in man’s body, heart and action. Therefore it is the duty of man to keep himself pure and free of all evil so that his body, mind and heart become the temple of God. Throughout the length and breadth of Taqore’s vast poetic lore, only one voice reverberates and that is the Upanishadic teaching - Reality is One. Monism happens to be the key word with the poet and he therefore, frequently quotes the Upanishadic
texts and firmly believes in the oneness of the Reality. The Upanishads say with great emphasis.

"Know the one, the soul. Only those of tranquil minds, and none else, can abide in joy, by realising within their souls the Being who manifests one essence in a multiplicity of forms."6

God is one, but the one becomes many. But why does the one become many? Tagore explains:

Our self is ... merely individual and finite, where it considers its separateness as absolute, it is Satyam where it recognises its essence in the universal and infinite, in the Supreme self, in Paramatman.7

God is Rasa and that is why He though one becomes many. He creates man for playing and for expressing love with him. In Gitanjali the poet exclaims:

O thou Lord of Heavens, where would be thy love if I were not?

(LVI, p. 37)

There is an eternal thirst in God's heart for the finite. God and man ever remain bound up in an indissoluble tie and the truth of the one lies in that of the other. And for this tie the immanent God takes multi-faceted forms. Laxness rightly writes:

What an enviable God, this God of Tagore: the 'great friend - the Beloved, the lotus flower, the unknown man playing a lute in the boat wond'rer on the river! A God akin to Tagore's can be found in the Jewish biblical poetry belonging to the Mediterranean Basin ... Nowadays our God in the West is either the director of the Big All World Firm Inc., or the primitive imaginary playmate of the childish mind... This is why a spiritual reality like Tagore's probably shall remain only one more eastern wonder to the western mind yet for a long time to come.8

II

The chief traits of mysticism that can be observed in *Gitanjali* are:

i) **God as Father** (Pitra devo bhavah): Rabindranath Tagore believed in the unity of mankind. He disapproved of all fragmentation and segregation in the name of religion, caste, creed, nationality and a false sense of superiority. For him there was only one language— the language of the heart; there was only one religion— the religion of love; there was only one caste— the caste of humanity and there was only one God— who is omnipresent. He therefore dreamt of a free India in which his countrymen will be fearless and their head would be held high with self respect. Tagore thus prays to God to lead his country into that heaven of freedom where spirituality, universal education, truth, righteousness, peace, love and non-violence will reign supreme:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up
into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit; Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action - Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

(Gitanjali, XXXV, p. 20)

ii) God as Mother (Matru devo bhavah): The poet addresses God as his beloved mother and says:

Mother, I shall weave a chain of pearls for thy neck with my tears of sorrow
The stars have wrought their anklets of light to deck thy feet, but mine will hang upon thy breast.
Wealth and fame come from thee and it is for thee to give or withhold them.
But this sorrow is absolutely mine own, and when I bring it to thee as my offering thou rewardest me with thy grace.

(Gitanjali, LXXXIII, p. 55)
In this lyric, the poet addresses God as mother and says that he will weave a chain of pearls with his tears of sorrow. And this would be his offering to the mother Goddess. As the poet cannot give anything connected with wealth or fame, for these are the blessings of the Goddess, he realizes that the only thing that belongs to him is his sorrow. He will therefore weave a chain from his tears, which are like pearls, and present it to the Goddess. And he is absolutely certain that not only will the Goddess accept his present and wear it round her neck, but will also be pleased with him and would give him a reward.

iii) God as Child (Vaatsalya bhava or as the relationship between Sri Krishna and Mother Yasoda): The poet addressing God as a child says:

When I bring to you coloured toys, my child, I understand why there is such a play of colours on clouds, on water, and why flowers are painted in tints — when I give coloured toys to you, my child.

When I sing to make you dance I truly know why there is music in leaves, and why waves send their chorus of voices to the heart of the listening earth — when I sing to make you dance.
When I bring sweet things to your greedy hands I know why there is honey in the cup of the flower and why fruits are secretly filled with sweet juice – When I bring sweet things to your greedy hands.

When I kiss your face to make you smile, my darling, I surely understand what pleasure streams from the sky in morning light, and what delight that is which the summer breeze brings to my body – When I kiss you to make you smile.

(Gitanjali. LXII. p. 41)

Like Blake and Wordsworth, Tagore too found a mystic quality in children. He spontaneously invested the everyday picture of children playing on the sea-shore in a cosmic manner:

On the seashore of endless worlds children meet.

(Gitanjali. LX. p. 39)

Glorifying the innocence of children, he hopes the regeneration of men lost in worldly pursuits. Truly, "Heaven lies about us in our infancy." The above lyric reveals a father's love for his child. When he gives colourful toys to his child, he understands the importance of multi-coloured flowers and colourful clouds.
He realizes why there is sweet music in the rustling leaves and the murmurous sound of the waves, when he sees the child dancing. He understands why the cup of flowers are full with honey and the fruits with delicious juice, when he gives sweets to the child. He feels the presence of the all pervading joy in the shining sky, in the morning light and in the soothing summer when he joyfully kisses the child. The poet then suggests that, truly speaking, we are all the children of God. As a father pleases his child in various ways so too God has created countless, beautiful objects - colourful clouds, sweet-scented flowers, juicy fruits, the radiant morning light and the cool breeze - for the entertainment of His children.

iv) God as Lover (Madhura bhava or as the relationship between Mirabai and Sri Krishna):

This conception of Divine love is purely Vaishnava ideal. This philosophy of Vaishnavism emphasizes an organic relation between God and man. Its first principle is that everything is God and all the actions of man should be dedicated to Him. To find God in everything and to find Him in the human self are the two inveterate habits of a Vaishnava.

Tagore expresses this Vaishnava faith when he says that God permeates the entire universe. Like all other mystic-poets, Tagore too describes God as a lover:

Where dost thou stand behind them all, my lover, hiding thyself in the shadows? They push thee and pass thee by on the dusty road, taking thee for naught. I wait here weary hours spreading my offerings for thee, while passersby come and take my flowers, one by one, and my basket is nearly empty.

(Gitanajali, XLI, p.23)

The Vaishnavas say that God is eternal, man is eternal and love too is eternal. At every birth this drama of the infinite wilfully and gladly allowing itself to be caught in the snares of the finite — is being enacted anew. Tagore writes,

There is One and the One says, 'I shall become many.' The One wanted to appreciate its unity in diversity and the creation began. 10
The Infinite manifests itself in the finite and herein lies its truth and beauty. The Infinite needs the company of the finite beings and the latter also aspires for the love and communion of the former. The kernal of Vaishnava-lore lies in Viraha or separation. The supreme Lord has separated man from Him so that he may feel the pangs of separation. Though God is one yet He creates within Himself a plurality of souls, for, from them He receives love and adoration. It is undoubtedly a limitation of God but then, it is a self-imposed one. The fulfilment of Vaishnava Godhead lies in love and this is why God imposes on Himself the above mentioned limitations. There is an eternal thirst in Him for the company of human beings. Tagore says:

Day after day you buy your sunrise from my heart, and you find your love carven into the image of my life.

(Fruit-Gathering, LXXVII, p.214).

Thus the poet is the beloved and God is the lover and like a true beloved he waits sincerely and patiently for God and on His arrival determines to give himself unto Him for love.
v) **God as Beloved** (A superior variety of Madhura bhakti or as the relationship between Ramakrishna Paramhamsa and his Lord.)

Here the poet takes God for his spouse:

Yes, I know, this is nothing but thy love. O beloved of my heart — this golden light that dances upon the leaves, these idle clouds sailing across the sky, this passing breeze leaving its coolness upon my forehead.

The morning light has flooded my eyes — this is thy message to my heart. Thy face is bent from above, thy eyes look down on my eyes, and my heart has touched thy feet.

*Gitanjali, LIX, p. 39*

In this lyric, the poet speaks of divine immanence. He is certain that the golden light which dances over the leaves is nothing but the love of the beloved of his heart. He sees her love in the clouds which are idly sailing across the sky, and also in the passing breeze which leaves its coolness on his forehead. The light of the morning sun has flooded the eyes of the poet. He is sure that this light is the message of his beloved to his heart. He then imagines the face of his beloved bent from above and her eyes looking downwards on his own eyes. It appears to him that his heart has touched the feet of his beloved. Thus the poet sees love to be reflected everywhere. Even the natural phenomena and
the forces of nature seem to the poet to reflect the message of
his beloved.

vi) **God as Master-Poet:** Tagore adores God, the Master-Poet
saying:

My poet's vanity dies in shame before thy sight. O master
poet. I have sat down at thy feet. Only let me make my life
simple and straight. like a flute of reed for thee to fill
with music.

*(Gitanjali, VII, p. 5)*

Here the poet's vanity vanishes into nothingness in the presence
of God who is the superb poet and musician. The poet is fit only
to sit at His feet. He composes highly effective and beautiful
songs only due to divine inspiration. Before seeking complete
union with the Lord he would make his life simple and straight.
An expert musician can fill a straight and simple flute of reed
with sweet and captivating music. Similarly he can fill the reed
flute of life with divine music only when his life is simple and
pure. Echoing the same note, Sri Aurobindo says that true love
and complete union are possible only in simplicity and uprightness:

Voice of the sensuous mortal, heart of eternal longing,
Thou who has lived as in walls, thy soul with thy senses wronging!
But I descend at last. Fickle and terrible, sweet and deceiving,
Poison and nectar one has dispensed to thee, luring thee leaving.11

Thus, the poet realizes that if he wants to be divinely inspired, he must make his life upright, for only then a straight reed can be made into a flute and resound with music when it is played upon.

vii) God as Master (Daasya bhakti or as the relationship between Hanuman and Sri Rama); Tagore writes:

The universe in the form of a song is never separated from the eternal singer. Nor is the song made out of any external stuff. It is his very heart bursting into a melody. The entire cosmic process exists in Him, in the form of a complete song but its manifestation is not all at once. The expression is subjected to the law of evolution but every step therein bespeaks the eternal note.12

Addressing God as a singer and the universe as His song,

Tagore says:

I know not how thou singest, my master! I ever listen in silent amazement.

The light of thy music illumines the world. The life breath of thy music runs from sky to sky. The holy stream of thy music breaks through all stony obstacles and rushes on.

My heart longs to join in thy song, but vainly struggles for a voice. I would speak, but speech breaks not into song, and I cry out baffled. Ah, thou hast made my heart captive in the endless meshes of thy music, my master!

(Gitanjali, III, p.3)

Here Tagore regards God as a singer, in comparison with whose music, human songs are silenced. Divine music is infinite and holy like God Himself. The poet, in this lyric, conceives God as a great and wonderful musician. In vain does he try to fathom the secrets of His art. God’s music is luminous and thus lights up the whole universe. It is also vital and life-giving. It has an irresistible power which crosses all obstacles that lie in its way. The poet wishes to sing in unison with this music but its wonderful beauty makes him speechless with amazement. In his bafflement all that comes out is a cry. If he holds his listeners
spell-bound with his songs, the Master's music captivates his own heart and makes him incapable of anything else. The lyric is an eloquent testimony to the power of music but the poet is here just a listener to the incomparable music of his Master, the supreme musician. The self, thus, remains restless for the attainment of the Supreme Being; it has felt the music of the Divine Being in his heart; and his whole being wishes to go beyond the limits of his own self and be one with the supreme, the Lord of his life - his Jivandevata.

God is thus the Master and the song of the poet is only a vain imitation. Yet the poet sings at the command of the Eternal Singer and he is proud of this fact:

When thou commandest me to sing it seems that my heart would break with pride; and I look to thy face, and tears come to my eyes.

... ... ...

I know thou takest pleasure in my singing. I know that only as a singer I come before thy presence.
I touch by the edge of the far-spreading wing of my song thy feet which I could never aspire to reach.
Drunk with the joy of singing I forget myself and call thee friend who art my lord.

(Gitanjali, II, p.2)
viii) God as Friend (Saakhya bhakti or as the relationship between Sudama and Sri Krishna): God is further described as a friend:

When my play was with thee I never questioned who thou wert. I knew nor shyness nor fear, my life was boisterous.

In the early morning thou wouldst call me from my sleep like my own comrade and lead me running from glade to glade.

On those days I never cared to know the meaning of songs thou sangest to me. Only my voice took up the tunes, and my heart danced in their cadance.

Now, when the playtime is over, what is this sudden sight that is come upon me? The world stands in awe with all its silent stars.

(Gitanjali, XCVII, p. 64)

God’s immanence is stressed in these lines. The poet says that, during the greater part of his life he had played with God as a friend and an equal. His life had been carefree and playful and he had not cared to know Him. In the early hours of the morning the Divine companion used to awaken him and like a playmate would run with him. But he never bothered to know the meaning of the songs he had heard from his companion. The poet had moments of
the consciousness of the divine presence but he had not cared to 
realize the significance of such moments. However, in the evening 
of his life, when the playtime was over, the poet realized that 
he had not played with an ordinary person but with the Divine. It 
was quite late in life when he understood that the whole universe 
is bound to the feet of God and all creation, including the sky 
and the stars, bowed down its head before Him in awe and 
reverence. The great American writer, Emerson said:

Ineffable is the union of man and God in every act of the 
soul. The simplest person who in his integrity worships God, 
becomes God; yet for ever and ever the influx of this better 
and universal self is new and unsearchable.13

ix) God as a King: The beggar-poet invites God in the dress of a 
King:

When my beggarly heart sits crouched, shut up in a corner, 
break open the door, my king, and come with the ceremony of 
a king.

(Gitanjali, XXXIX, p.22).

To picture God as a King is a universal tendency found in every religion. God is the ruler of this universe. Poets, mystics and philosophers bestow Him with palacious mansions, comfort and richness. Tagore gives a poetic version of the mythical story of Lord Krishna and his boyhood friend Sudama:

I had gone a—begging from door to door in the village path, when thy golden chariot appeared in the distance like a gorgeous dream and I wondered who was this King of all Kings!

My hopes rose high and me thought my evil days were at an end, and I stood waiting for alms to be given unasked and for wealth scattered on all sides in the dust.

The chariot stopped where I stood. Thy glance fell on me and thou camest down with a smile. I felt that the luck of my life had come at last. Then of a sudden thou didst hold out thy right hand and say 'What has thou to give to me?'

Ah, what a kingly jest was it to open thy palm to a beggar to beg! I was confused and stood undecided, and then from my wallet I slowly took out the least little grain of corn and gave it to thee.

But how great my surprise when at the day's end I emptied my bag on the floor to find a least little gram of gold among the poor heap. I bitterly wept and wished that I had had the heart to give thee my all.

(Gitanjali, L. p.31).
In the lyric Sudama offers Lord Krishna some rice that he was carrying with him: Lord Krishna eats it with pleasure and with each morsel that he takes Sudama grows wealthier. The poet pictures himself as a beggar going from door to door for alms. Suddenly, God, the King of all kings appears, comes to the poet and says, 'What has thou to give to me?' The bewildered poet, expecting to receive alms, instead gives a grain of corn from his wallet. But, 'how great my surprise when at the day's end I emptied my bag on the floor to find a least little gram of gold among the poor heap. I bitterly wept and wished that I had had the heart to give thee my all.'

The poet here glorifies charity and the renunciation of worldly possessions. Extolling sacrifice Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita:

For, nourished by sacrifice, the shining Ones shall bestow upon you the enjoyments you desire.

(III, 12)

On Me fix thy mind, be devoted to Me; sacrifice to Me; prostrate thyself before Me; harmonised thus in the Self, thou shalt come unto Me, having Me as thy Supreme goal.

(IX, 34)
Even as there is a variety of personal relationships between God and man in mysticism there are different modes of worship that can be seen in Gitanjali as:

1. **SHRAVANAM** or listening to the glory of the Lord:

   I know not how thou singest, my master! I ever listen in silent amazement.

   *(Gitanjali, III, p.2)*

2. **KEERTANAM** or singing the praises of the Lord:

   I know thou takest pleasure in my singing. I know that only as a singer I come before thy presence.

   *(Gitanjali, II, p.2)*

3. **VISHNU-SMARANAM** or contemplating the attributes of the Lord:

   Beautiful is thy wristlet, decked with stars and cunningly wrought in myriad-coloured jewels.

   *(Gitanjali, LIII, p.35)*
4. **PAADASEVANAM** or worshipping the holy feet:

Here is thy footstool and there rest thy feet
where live the poorest, and lowliest and lost.

(Gitanjali, X, p.6)

5. **ARCHANAM** or worshipping the Lord with awe and sincerity:

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

(Gitanjali, CIII, p.67)

6. **VANDANAM** or offering obeisance to God with a sense of deep-felt gratitude:

Life of my life, I shall ever try to keep my body pure,
knowing that thy living touch is upon all my limbs.

(Gitanjali, IV, p.3).

7. **SAAKHYAM** or worshipping the Lord as a friend:

Drunk with the joy of sinning I forget myself and
call thee friend who art my lord.

(Gitanjali, II, p.2)

In the early morning thou wouldst call me from my sleep like
my own comrade and lead me running from glade to glade.

(Gitanjali, XCVII, p.64)
8. **DAASYAM** or worshipping HIM with dedicated service:

Ah, thou hast made my heart captive in the endless meshes of thy music, my master!

*(Gitanjali, III. p.3)*

9. **ATMANIVEDANA**M or worshipping HIM with total surrender:

Have you not heard his silent steps?  
He comes, comes, ever comes.  
Every moment and every age,  
every day and every night he comes, comes, ever comes.

*(Gitanjali, XLV. p.27)*

Thus it is that thy joy in me is so full,  
Thus it is that thou hast come down to me.  
O thou lord of all heavens, where would be thy love if I were not?

*(Gitanjali, LVI. p.37)*

And for this, thou who art the King of kings hast decked thyself in beauty to captivate my heart.  
And for this thy love loses itself in the love of thy lover,  
and there art thou seen in the perfect union of two.

*(Gitanjali, LVI. p.37)*

Tagore thus strives to realize his divine nature. Initially he is separate from God (DVAITA) and holds various relationships with Him:

I know thee as my God and stand apart-  
I do not know thee as my own and come closer.  
I know thee as my father and bow before thy feet-  
I do not grasp thy hand as my friend’s.

*(Gitanjali, LXXVII. p.51)*
As the mystic advances spiritually, he enters into a partnership with the Divine (VISHISHTADVAITA):

Thou hast taken me as thy partner of all this wealth. In my heart is the endless play of thy delight. In my life thy will is ever taking shape.

(Gitanjali, LVI, p. 37)

Finally like a true devotee, he experiences oneness with the Divine (ADVAITA):

My poet, is it thy delight to see thy creation through my eyes and to stand at the portals of my ears silently to listen to thine own eternal harmony?

(Gitanjali, LXV, p. 44).

This experience led the poet to see the world not only with his eyes alone but with his whole consciousness. Mysticism is thus not mere intellectual admiration but the emotional love of God. Like a true mystic, Tagore surrenders his metaphysical faculties and lives in a sea of emotional beautitude. His love for the Divine is unconditional and one-pointed:

Let only that little be left of me whereby I may name thee my all. Let only that little be left of my will whereby I may feel thee on every side and come to thee in everything, and offer to thee my love every moment. Let only that little be left of me whereby I may never hide thee.
Let only that little of my fetters be left whereby I am bound with thy will and thy purpose is carried out in my life - and that is the fetter of thy love.

(Gitanjali, XXXIV, p. 19)

The mystic, when he tries to describe his inner experience of reality, gropes for metaphors and symbols. The metaphor of light is often used to describe the principle of reality, of infinity, of which a glimpse is got through mystical intuition:

Light, my light, the world-filling light, the eye-kissing light, heart-sweetening light.  
(Gitanjali, LVII, p. 37).

The passivity of the mystical experience is the most distinctive characteristic feature of mysticism. Once the higher power takes possession all voluntary preparation appears to lose its efficacy. Asceticism thinks in terms of suppression and regulation of the senses, whereas mysticism leads to the sublimation of the senses, whereby the senses are themselves transformed into gateways to self-realization:

Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight.  
...  
...  
No, I will never shut the doors of my senses. The delights of sight and hearing and touch will bear thy delight.  
(Gitanjali, LXXIII, p. 49)
Thus mystical insight suffuses a person's knowledge with a unique all-encompassing sense of integration and harmony. The mystic becomes a complete introvert and loses sense of his surroundings and experiences perfect satisfaction and beatitude.

The central theme of *Gitanjali* is devotional. It expresses the yearning of the devotee for re-union with the Divine. When it was first published in English it was commented that "such poetry is half a prayer from below and half a whisper from above; the prayer evoking response, or the whisper provoking the prayer, and always prayer and whisper chiming into song":

Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life.

*(Gitanjali, I, p.1)*

It acknowledges that the human soul has no significance unless it is filled by the Supreme. Birth and death are but the emptying and filling of the soul and the individual in this way partakes
of God's endless life, His immortality. Therefore Tagore says:

This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and dales, and hast breathed through it melodies eternally new.

(Gitanjali, I. p.1)

Mysticism thus emphasizes an immediate awareness of a relation with God, which is direct and intimate. According to Tagore, man is essentially divine; he is partly finite and partly infinite. However, one cannot identify the self with God as the absolutists in India identified the "Atman" with the "Brahman". The individual soul is torn between the world and God, being attracted by both. The self has two aspects: in one aspect it displays itself, and tries to be big, standing upon the pedestal of its own accumulations, but in its other aspect the self:

transcends itself and reveals its own being.

For, K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Gitanjali* is verily a record of the vicissitudes in the drama of the human soul in its progress from the finite to the Infinite. And this progress is necessarily conceived as a battle, as a journey and as a sacrifice culminating in a total offering of all that one is (ATMA-SAMARPANA) so that:

15

by losing one may gain all.

*Gitanjali* portrays a mysticism similar to that of the experiences shared by the great mystics of the world. Each lyric is a moment of communion with the Supreme and this feeling of oneness is distinct and differs from moment to moment. The various similes and comparisons are nothing but different levels of union with the One. The realisation of God is of the greatest value to man. Life should therefore be "God-centred" and not "self-centred", for when man realizes God, he becomes agnostic being. Out of sheer joy and delight God manifests Himself in innumerable individual souls. The souls have their origin from God, who

15. Iyengar, K.R.S. *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.
manifests Himself most fully in the soul than in any other object. Therefore, nothing is more real and perfect than the human soul:

God has many strings to his 'sitar', some are made of iron, others of copper, and yet others are made of gold. Humanity is the golden string and God's lute.16

But, egoism obstructs our spiritual harmony with God and offers a great danger to our development as real personalities. The poet, realizes this truth and accordingly portrays the different levels of union in the path of self-realization:

Something felt within the heart tries to find outside a shape as a poem.

... ... ...
This utterance of feeling is not the statement of a fundamental truth or a scientific fact, or a useful moral percept. Like a tear or a smile a poem is but a picture of what is taking place within.17

17. Ibid., p. 19.
Rabindranath Tagore, apart from being an ardent devotee and a firm believer of the Supreme Being was above all a very humble personality and profoundly soaked in the poignance of humility, he takes an account of himself - a sort of self-analysis - that marks the preparation of his inward vision:

The song that I came to sing remains unsung to this day. I have spent my days in stringing and unstringing my instrument. The time has not come true, the words have not been rightly set; only there is the agony of wishing in my heart. I live in the hope of meeting with him; but this meeting is not yet.

(Gitanjali, XIII, p. 8).

To wait for the blossoming of life is to wait for the message to be brought forth by the "sighing wind". Tagore has this agony of the soul to welcome the Ever Beautiful. The preparation goes on for the long awaited welcome for the Eternal:

I have not seen his face, nor have I listened to his voice; only I have heard his gentle footsteps from the road before my house. The livelong day has passed in spreading his seat on the floor; but the lamp has not been lit and I cannot ask him into my house.

(Gitanjali, XIII, p. 8)
With the waning of each day, the poet feels a sense of desolation, since the languid days of his life has made the vision of the All Beautiful utterly blurred. He feels that he has been cruelly avoided:

There are times when I languidly linger and times when I awaken and hurry in search of my goal; but cruelly thou hidest thyself from me.

(Gitanjali, XIV, p. 9)

However, the truth is that the poet is assured within himself that he is blessed with the "strong mercy" of the All Beautiful who always saves him from his "overmuch desire" only to be worthy of the "great gifts" — the body, the mind, the life, the light, the sky — in and around him:

Day by day thou art making me worthy of thy full acceptance by refusing me ever and anon, saving me from perils of weak, uncertain desire.

My desires are many and my cry is pitiful, but ever didst thou save me by hard refusals; and this strong mercy has been wrought into my life through and through.

Day by day thou art making me worthy of the simple great gifts that thou gavest to me unasked — this sky and the light, this body and the life and the mind — saving me from perils of overmuch desire.

(Gitanjali, XIV, p. 9)
And then, with benign adoration spreading wings "like a glad bird on its flight across the sea". Tagore waits for the command of the Life of his life to sing with a pride that presents him with tears of gratitude. The joy that he derives out of his Life eliminates all differences, all distance between him and the Lord and he greets the latter as his Friend to sing together endlessly. But, the poet thinks and thinks. In "silent amazement" he listens and in humble adoration elucidates the mystic resonance of his experience:

The light of thy music illumines the world. The life breath of thy music runs from sky to sky. The holy stream of thy music breaks through all stony obstacles and rushes on.

My heart longs to join in thy song, but vainly struggles for a voice.

(Gitanjali, III, p.2).

As the poet is not in a position to come up to the cadence of his Friend's song, he goes on to appreciate the song the rainbow of which spreads dreams in multitudinous colour and splendour. But yet again his language is soaked in tears and his voice gets choked in the aroma of mystic beauty wherein his ideas and
expressions are garbed in silence. And therefore he takes the mystic oath:

I shall ever try to keep my body pure, knowing that thy living touch is upon all my limbs. I shall ever try to keep all untruths out from my thoughts, knowing that thou art that truth which has kindled the light of reason in my mind.

I shall ever try to drive all evils away from my heart and keep my love in flower knowing that thou hast thy seat in the innermost shrine of my heart. And it shall be my endeavour to reveal thee in my actions, knowing it is thy power gives me strength to act.

(Gitanjali, IV, p.3)

In spite of all imperfections and inabilities, Tagore is fired with the spirit of the mystic promise - "the promise of a golden harvest" because he believes that the mystic light that illumines his inner vision will bring forth the fruits of his lost world of consciousness, his lost kingdom of being. Tagore, as such, has already prepared himself with the truth, that not salvation but the very spirit of renunciation through the purity of perfection, will show him the gateway to the Heaven of the Great Illuminator. And this is how the long awaited stormy night comes at last, and the meeting with the All Beautiful is about to take place:

I have no sleep tonight. Ever and again I open my door and look out on the darkness, my friend!

(Gitanjali, XXIII, p. 14)
But then, a sudden call to the apparently useless consequence comes as the poet looks at men hurrying to the King's market which makes him prepared for a prayer in mystic fulness. The catharsis of life tolls the time and the poet gets prepared to endear his great Friend with all his emptiness beyond "the strife of the good and the evil". He proclaims:

No more noisy, loud words from me—such is my master's will. Henceforth I deal in whispers. The speech of my heart will be carried on in murmurings of a song. Men hasten to the King's market. All the buyers and sellers are there. But I have my untimely leave in the middle of the day, in the thick of work.

(Gitanjali, LXXXIX, p. 58).

With this resolution for a premature farewell, as he feels mystically within himself, Tagore has a benign appeal for the noontime bees to come in the garden of his life at such untimely lazy hours. And with the humming of the lazy bees the poet looks forward to the mystic pleasure of the empty days.

Let then the flowers come out in my garden, though it is not their time; and let the midday bees strike up their lazy hum.
For many an hour have I spent in the strife of the good and the evil, but now it is the pleasure of my playmate of the empty days to draw my heart to him; and I know not why is this sudden call to what useless consequence.

(Gitanjali, LXXXIX, p. 59)

This poem depicts the special relationship between the poet and God. The poet firmly asserts that God indicated to him that He does not desire that the poet should sing His praises loudly as the common devotees do. That is why the poet would henceforth pray only in whispers, and express the deepest feelings of his heart in the murmurings of a song. He has no time to encase himself in the common activities of the daily life, like other men. As such the poet has already spent much time in the struggle of good and evil and therefore now God, who is the poet's playmate, desires him to be at leisure. The poet does not understand the reason of this call, nor what it leads him to, but he seems content to follow this call.

From the unfulfilled mission of the poet's life; from God's declination to fulfil man's small desires in order to fulfil the deeper desire for union with God; from the idea of God's immanence and the efforts to make the body, mind and soul as a
worthy dwelling place for God; from the firm belief that God is moving in his direction, though he cannot see him, to the assertion that the poet would hum his praise of God in a low voice, one sees that, apart from the development of his inward vision, the relationship between the poet and God is becoming deeper and deeper and perhaps more intricate.

As the poet progresses further in the development of his inward vision, he imagines himself to be the beloved of God and longs to be with the lover. He is sure that God will come to meet him and awaken him from his slumber. The light that then dawns in the inward heartland of the poet makes him eager for a vision of the King of his heart in silence:

If the sound of his steps does not wake me, do not try to rouse me. I pray. I wish not to be called from my sleep by the clamourous choir of birds, by the riot of wind at the festival of morning light.

Let him appear before my sight as the first of all lights and all forms. The first thrill of joy to my awakened soul let it come from his glance. And let my return to myself be immediate return to him.

(Gitanjali, XLVII, p. 28)
The poet identifies himself with a beloved who is eagerly awaiting the arrival of the lover. The beloved has been waiting for a long time, but in vain. It is almost the end of the night but the lover has not come yet. She is afraid that she might fall asleep out of weariness and that the lover might arrive when she is asleep. If that happens, she is not afraid that the lover would go back without meeting her. She tells her friends not to wake her up when the lover comes, for she would like to be awakened by the touch and the voice of her lover. She desires that the first thing she should see upon waking up should be the resplendent form of God, who is the incarnation of the first of all lights and forms. In this manner the beloved’s return to consciousness will also become her return to her lover. The poet wishes to have no attachment with things of this world, so that he may be able to attain perfect communion with God. In this festival of light the inward world of the poet flashes with the blessings of the King in the form of Truth eternal. He feels that all his sense and sensibilities, power of reasoning and erudition is hallowed with the radiance of the light as a gift from his King. Further, the poet feels within himself the agony as he introspects and awaits the fruits of his frantic appeal for the
light in "I want thee, only thee":

As the night keeps hidden its gloom the petition for light, even thus in the depth of my consciousness rings the cry - 'I want thee, only thee'.

As the storm still seeks its end in peace when it strikes against peace with all its might, even thus my rebellion strikes against thy love and still its cry is - 'I want thee, only thee'.

(Gitanjali, XXXVIII, p. 22)

A number of desires and wishes distract the poet, but they are all false and hollow except one. And that one true desire is for communion with God. The poet, therefore, desires that his heart should constantly keep on repeating this cry, so that other desires may not be able to exercise their power on him. His rebellious moods may seem to clash with his love of God, but even this is illusory. In fact, even in such moods his innermost desire is for God.

The poet wishes to meet his King, his "Lord of Silence" in mystic moments for these moments are pure and sacred. He hates the hardness of his heart and prays to God to bless him with mercy when he is in danger of becoming cruel and heartless. At times
when he feels low, dejected and forsaken, it is only God's splendour and magnificence that will cheer him up, and so he prays to Him to come upon him like a king, with all royal paraphernalia. The poet knows that the worldly desires are delusory and that their objects are as unworthy as the dust.

His prayer therefore is that God may appear in the form of thunder and lightening to warn him against unworthy desires and pursuits, so that he may be fully prepared to greet the King of kings in "golden splendour":

I sit on the grass and gaze upon the sky and dream of the sudden splendour of thy coming - all the lights ablaze, golden pennons flying over thy car, and they at the roadside standing agape, when they see come down from thy seat to raise me from the dust, and set at thy side this ragged beggar girl a-tremble with shame and pride, like a creeper in a summer breeze.

(Gitanjali, XLI, p.24)

Here the poet uses the favourite Indian image of the devotee as a bride who waits to be married to God, her lover. God, in fact, has promised to marry the poet, who imagines himself to be a poor, ragged beggar-maid. The maid waits upon her lover and during her long and weary wait she dreams about her lover who
would come out of his splendid chariot and raise her from the
dust, to place her by His side. Others would then be amazed with
surprise and consumed with jealousy. The poet knows it very well
that to find delight in the desires of the waiting heart alone,
in the magnificent panorama of nature, is to breathe an air of
consolation because the message of the mystic unknown is the
message of gladness within the mind:

This is my delight, thus to wait and watch at the wayside
where shadow chases light and the rain comes in the wake of
the summer.

Messengers with tidings from unknown skies, greet me and
speed along the road. My heart is glad within, and the
breath of the passing breeze is sweet.

(Bitanjali, XLIV, p. 26).

The "tidings from unknown" spheres makes the poet restless for
union with the Divine, and he is now in the mood of a child to be
lost anywhere in the freedom of thought and inner intentions. The
poet here celebrates the waiting itself as a joyful experience.
It is the certainty of a happy culmination which makes the
waiting so delightful. His hope is sustained by the fact that
God's messengers come now and then to reassure him of God's
coming, and then the poet's happiness gets transferred to the
objects of nature. The passing breeze seems sweeter to him, and the air itself smells sweetly of God's promise of meeting the poet.

The poet does not want to follow others who have adopted more arduous ways of fulfilling their spiritual ambitions. He even, at times, forgets the purpose of his quest and goes to sleep on the way. Yet, when he wakes up he finds that his love has brought him in God's presence. The poet thus waits for the laurels of despair and defeat, while all honour awaits the "heroic host":

All honour to you, heroic host of the interminable path:
Mockery and reproach pricked me to rise, but found no response in me. I gave myself up for lost in the depth of a glad humiliation — in the shadow of a dim light.

(Gitanjali, XLVIII, p. 30).

And amid this despair and desolation that makes the poet self-forgetful and serene with a beguine bowl, he goes to meet the King of all kings, when the splendour of the golden light suddenly flashes on the chariot in the distance and the moment of wonder springs in his mind:

I had gone a-beguine from door to door in the village path, when thy golden chariot appeared in the distance like a gorgeous dream and I wondered who was this King of all kings!

(Gitanjali, L, p. 31).
The mystic moment, indeed, comes when the King of all kings alights from his golden chariot, stands before the poet and asks for the offerings:

Ah, what a kindly jest was it to open thy palm to a beggar to beg! I was confused and stood undecided, and then from my wallet I slowly took out the least little grain of corn to give it to thee.

But how great my surprise when at the day's end I emptied bag on the floor to find a least little gram of gold among the poor heap. I bitterly wept and wished that I had had the heart to give thee my all.

(Gitanjali, L. p. 31).

Charity is one of the greatest virtues according to the ancient Indian beliefs. In many of the mythological stories the gods assume a human form in order to test the bounty of their devotees. The most generous man in Indian mythology is Karna, who had fought on the side of the Kauravas in the Mahabharata. God does not shower his blessings on miserly worshippers but on those who give to others whatever they have. Here the poet expresses the view that the gifts of God are directly proportionate to what one gives to others.
Tagore generally uses the motif of the voyage to stand for the quest of eternity. The human soul may be regarded as the pilgrim, the boat as the medium, and the boatman as the Life-Diety. The sea symbolises the finite life which must be crossed in order to attain the Infinite. The journey may also be equated with death, which is an essential stage in the passage towards eternity. And the poet is ready to embrace death in order to attain Eternal Life. This is a revelation of the great journey ahead into eternity amidst the aroma of darkness:

In that shoreless ocean, at the silently listening smile my songs would swell in melodies, free as waves, free from all bondage of words.

Is the time not come yet? Are these works still to do? Lo, the evening has come down upon the shore and in the fading light the sea birds come flying to their nests. Who knows when the chains will be off, and the boat, like the last glimmer of sunset, vanish into the night?

(Gitanjali, XLII.o.25).

The blessings of defeat that come in the life of the poet in the form of darkness make the poet a great mystic in the sense that the defeat he meets is the preparation for reunion with the Lord.
And therefore in all humility he says:

Then take away your hands and silently put up with your defeat, my heart, and think it your good fortune to sit perfectly still where you are placed.

These my lamps are blown out at every little puff of wind, and trying to light them I forget all else again and again.

But I shall be wise this time and wait in the dark, spreading my mat on the floor, and whenever it is thy pleasure, my lord, come silently and take thy seat here.

(Bitanjali, XCIX, p.65).

The poet thinks of his life as a boat which God will guide after he vacates his place at the helm. The poet therefore must surrender to death willingly and without struggle. Man should understand that the ship of life does not drift after death, but that God Himself will become the pilot. One should, in fact, thank his stars that God Himself sits at the helm of the boat. It is useless to light one’s little lamps at such a time, for they will be put out by the puff of the wind. It would be wiser to wait for Him in the dark, for God will definitely come. The poet then contemplates as to how he would feel on the day of his death:
I know that the day will come when my sight of this earth shall be lost, and life will take its leave in silence, drawing the last curtain over my eyes. Yet stars will watch as night, and morning rise as before, and hours have like sea waves casting like pleasures and pain.

When I think of this end of my moments, the barrier of the moments breaks and I see by the light of death thy world with its careless treasures.

\textit{(Gitanjali, XCII, p. 61).}

The poet here realises the futility of all transient things including death. He knows for sure that things would go on as before after his death. And therefore he should take an added interest even in the meanest things on earth. This mystic panorama of illumination, of an awakening and the poet's vision of union with the Endless create an indescribable atmosphere of awe and wonder throughout Gitanjali. Like a great mystic he controls his passion in an absolutely vacant mood of self-submission and self-forgetfulness. The light of the Lord that he receives enriches his inward vision and awaits re-birth in the compassion of the All Compassionate. Moreover the light of the King appears to the poet as the symbol of emancipation from all petty ignorance. It stands for the mystic revelation of
consciousness for truth;

... thou art that truth which has enkindled the light of reason in my mind.

(Gitanjali, IV, p. 3).

And finally the poet has a firm belief in the mystic truth that the Light of the Lord encompasses the mind and that the light of His music illumines the world. It is this light that leads the mind from the darkness of ignorance to the light of heavenly music. With this mystic belief in the infinite power of the Light of the Lord, the poet enjoys the mystic atmosphere of Nature — her abundance of infinite beauty in the morning and the evening; her silence like a sombre saint; her vastness like a sea; her emotiveness like the endless sea-shore. The mystic symbols that associate with such a serene atmosphere are the earth and the sky, the sea and the sea-birds, the mother and the child, the lover and the Lord Himself. Added to all these are the sun, the moon, the stars, the garlands, the flute, the traveller, and the beocar appearing as mystic replicas of the body and the mind.
Man essentially is a part of God. They may appear to look separate and distinct, but in reality they are one and the same:

It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust of the earth in numberless blades of grass and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers.

(Gitanjali, LXIX, p. 46).

The poet here celebrates his intimate connection with God. This mystic sense of simplicity and innocence in the poet is well represented through the saintly purity of children playing on the seashore of life and this marks a new epoch in the history of mysticism. The backdrop is remarkably laid: the endless worlds of the motionless infinite sky, the boisterous ripples of restless water, sand houses, empty shells, withered leaves - all create in unison a sense of unending mystery in the vast expanse of awe and wonder:

On the seashore of endless worlds children meet. The infinite sky is motionless overhead and the restless water is boisterous. On the seashore of endless worlds the children meet with shouts and dances.

...  ...  ...
On the seashore of endless worlds children meet. Tempest roams in the pathless sky, ships get wrecked in the trackless water, death is abroad and children play. On the seashore of endless worlds is the great meeting of children.

(Gitanjali, LX, p. 39).

The innocent play of the children in the weaving of their boats with "withered leaves" for the endless sailing in the vast deep sea. the ignorance of how to swim or cast nets and to seek the hidden treasures of the sea unlike pearl fishers and merchants and the meaningless ballads of the death-dealing waves adorn the children with the saintly personality of poignance and simplicity. The poet thus, very aptly contrasts the simplicity of the children with the guile and cunning of the crown-ups.

The real purpose of the poet's life is that of meeting God, i.e., to be blessed with the Lord's blessing of unison with unbroken perfection. And it is this mystic yearning that has abundantly brought forth the "pangs" of sorrow both in his dreams as well as in his "wakeful hours". His prayer therefore to the Lord is that he might bear with calm patience for the meeting with laughter
and the sound of the flute of the Lord:

As many days pass in the crowded market of this world and my hands grow full with the daily profits, let me ever feel that I have gained nothing—let me not forget for a moment, let me carry the pang of this sorrow in my dreams and in my wakeful hours.

When I sit by the roadside, tired and panting, when I spread my bed low in the dust, let me ever feel that the long journey is still before me—let me not forget for a moment, let me carry the pang of this sorrow in my dreams and in my wakeful hours.

(Gitanjali, LXXIX, p.53).

A great mystic belief has already made its root deep in the heart of the poet. He has now already become familiar with the Lord and now he wants to praise the glory of his Lord with songs unending. Thus one sees that Gitanjali is as good as the Book of Psalms. The relationship between God and man has so far been looked at from different points of view. They have been conceived as Master and Servant, Lover and Beloved, Boatman and Traveller, Musician and Listener, Seer and Seen, Father and Son. The world is His visible raiment: and the stars and planets are His handiwork. He is the abode of peace and the source of bliss. Gitanjali is
mystical yet there is a difference in it from the mysticism of the west:

Entering my heart unbidden even as one of the common crowd, unknown to me my king thou didst press the signet of eternity upon many a fleeting moment.

(Gitanjali, XLIII, p. 25).

But, the truth is that Tagore's Gitanjali is not a sigh of pain but an abundance of cheerfulness:

... And because I love this life I know I shall love death as well.

(Gitanjali, XCV, p. 63).

Tagore's mysticism does not sprout from the solitary asceticism but from the resourceful life in this world of men and animals. It is his humanism that distinguishes Tagore and makes Gitanjali unique. As has been observed above the esoteric nature of these lyrics is derived from the mystical quality found in them. The Divine is there with the poet as his lover and play-mate. And all through Gitanjali the poet reiterates the concern and love for
the world around. He prefers not a solitary pilgrimage but a procession with the flowing out of cheerfulness; the abundance of joy that welcomes even death as a quest.