THE HIGHEST SELF

Man is not merely body and mind that belongs to the external, visible, concrete world. He is essentially a spirit that relates to the invisible, intangible and abstract world. And his roots ever lie in the celestial world, the eternal home of man. Only when man transcends his body, mind and physical self, he can come into contact with his spirit. This spirit that remains concealed in man is the highest self of man. To be aware of his spirit and to be in contact with his highest self is the ultimate destiny of man. To attain this ultimate goal man needs to undergo spiritual evolution. When man gets into communion with his spirit, he can achieve perfection in his spiritual evolution and attain bliss which is beyond the reach of mortals. It’s the bliss of yogi. About this destiny of man, Dr.S.Radha Krishnan comments:

The seeking for our highest and inmost self is the seeking for God. Self-discovery, self-knowledge, self-fulfillment is man’s destiny¹.

“The soul is the perceiver and revealer of truth”. That’s what Ralph Waldo Emerson says in his essay “The over-soul”. When man turns his spiritual gaze inward, he discovers the Highest self
there, enters into communion with it and man grows to a greater life and a new infinity.

Man is blessed with the spark of the divine. Within the soul of every human dwells the divine. So each soul, as proclaimed by Swami Vivekananda, is potentially divine and the goal in life is to manifest this divinity. The divinity that lies veiled in human soul is what is known as the Highest self. This highest self is the essential constituent of human life. To know and to live in the consciousness and harmony of the highest self is the goal of human life which only true spiritual seekers, seers and saints achieve as the spiritual realization of the ultimate. The Vedas and the Upanishads and the Gita offer man the treasure of knowledge about the world of the highest self in each soul and guide man as to how he can approach the highest self and how he can attain the ultimate spiritual realization.

Munduka Upanishad declares one who realizes the Atman realizes Brahma and one who realizes the Brahma realizes the
Atman, one who realizes the Brahman becomes the Brahman² – Munduka Upanishad, III II.9

The Gita also says that the knowledge about Atman and the Brahman is a sovereign science. The knowledge of the Highest self in fact is the essential part of Hindu religion, Indian culture and heritage. Our ancient Indian seer-poets like Valmiki and Vyasa with their profound, soaring vision captured the Highest self and sang of it in their poetical works.

The divine possibilities in man can be explored only when man is capable of fathoming his own self and the large self of the universe and of man’s discovering of the life divine through the merging of his own self with the supreme, transcendental, cosmic self. This Aurobindonean conception of the divinity is well traceable in “Foot-Falls” of Harindranath. A mystic poet with profound, celestial and soaring mystic vision, Harindranath, conscious of the Highest self within his soul, is seized with spiritual unrest for it, embarks on a spiritual quest to reach it and attain the spiritual realization
through the union of his self with the highest self. So his poetry, as prophesied by Sri Aurobindo, is a kind of mantra – a direct and most heightened word embodying the soul’s vision of the supreme reality that finds its fulfilment in “Foot-Falls” of Harindranath.

In “Foot-Falls”, Harindranath depicts splendidly, his profound ache, thirst and quest for the highest-self. The sequence of poems records his unceasing travel through thick layers of gloom of the mundane world towards the light of his highest self to merge his own self with the highest self as the ultimate and sublime goal of his earthly life. In the preface to “Foot Falls”, Harindranath himself testifies to this idea in his own words:

These sonnets may be considered to be an expression of my union with my highest self, a sort of intimate Journal of my experiences of a constant life within, which has always made me thirsty to reach the River of the soul ever waiting for all who may care to quench such thirst. (Preface, Foot-Falls)

Just as every spiritual seeker searches for his true and essential self, Harindranath too embarks on a quest for the highest self that constitutes greater life and he takes up an untiring travel towards his spiritual destination and spiritual realization. About this greater life, Dr.S.Radha Krishnan, the Philosopher – King, states, “Religion
begins for us with an awareness that our life is not of ourselves alone. There is another, greater life enfolding and sustaining us. This is precisely what Harindranath attempts in “Foot-Falls” when he struggles to attain greater life beyond the mundane life through the realization of the highest self in him and merging of his own self with the highest self. But one can not label Harindranath as a religious poet in the dogmatic sense, for what is revealed in his poetry is spirituality wrapped in the garb of mysticism. Here, again, Dr. Radha Krishnan clarifies the difference between religion and spirituality:

Religion generally refers to something external ... while spirituality points to the need for knowing and living in the highest self and raising life in all its parts. Spirituality is the core of religion and its inward essence and mysticism emphizes this side of religion.

However, mysticism as pointed out clearly by Dr. S. Radha Krishnan is not a tendency to see things in a sentimental haze, nor is it the habit of the human mind to entertain contradictory beliefs nor a confusion of thought. “It is the admission of mystery in the universe.”
So Harindranath is not religious, but highly spiritual. He endeavours to raise his life to greater life through his consciousness of the highest self and by living in the Highest self, he touches upon the inward essence of human life, displaying spirituality which is the Kernel of true religion. So Harindranath as the true spiritual seeker with the vision of a seer chooses to sing of the mystery in the universe – The Highest-self. The highest self that Harindranath sings of is the supreme Transcendental self, the Divine Being and the cosmic soul that lies hidden in man as a spark, a flame, aspiring to grow into the eternal Fire.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya’s “Foot-Falls” is a collection of 128 sonnets that presents a ceaseless stream of the poet’s mystical outpourings about the world of self with which the poet is deeply preoccupied. “Foot-Falls” gets closer in its imagery and treatment of the theme to Tagore’s “Gitanjali”. Though Harindranath echoes Tagore in his mystical thought and style, he can not be wholly described as Tagorean. While Tagore in Gitanjali sings of a variety of subjects such as God, man and nature, Harindranath chooses his highest self to be the sole subject which is delineated in varied ways
with matchless dexterity. “Foot-Falls” as the title indicates apparently, is an expression of the poet’s spiritual journey towards the highest spiritual goal and it is the mystical journey which the poet takes up with the intimate consciousness of his highest self and the spiritual thirst for his union with his highest self. The sonnets in “Foot-Falls” mirror the deep spiritual quest of the poet and dramatize the varied reflections, moods and experiences associated with the journey of poet’s self towards the sublime goal of his highest-self. Each sonnet in the collection celebrates the poet’s insatiable, spiritual thirst for his highest self. Like Tagore, Harindranath approaches his mystical goal, weaving strikingly the rich texture of romantic imagery around his spiritual journey with rain-bow hues of his spiritual thirst and quest and exotic, poetic fragrance of myriad full-blown blossoms.

Harindranatha’s spiritual journey towards his spiritual destination as revealed in the sonnets is dotted with the glowing, enchanting gems of images like beloved, friend, companion, bride, bee, sea, ocean, harp, chariot, bird, eagle and voyager. The poet’s journey is a voyage on an ocean and often, a climb to a mountain
summit and sometimes, a soaring flight into the vast, infinite space towards the materialization of the poet’s high spiritual destination.

To the poet, his highest self is his beloved, bride, friend, and wife whom he loves so passionately and for whom he pines, thirsts, and searches so untiringly and with whom he embarks on his spiritual journey so confidently and with whom he longs so restlessly to be united as the realization of his ultimate destination and culmination of his mystical journey and spiritual odyssey. His highest self is not just his beloved, but the very source of his life and his being. The poet hails his beloved. “Thou art my precious source of life, thou art /My being, thou art all in all to me.” (Sonnet 2). So quite naturally, his beloved becomes his very inspiration that keeps ever burning within him like a fire, “You are my soul, my beloved, my own/ Your inspiration burning like a fire.” (Sonnet 59). The poet always feels thirsty for his beloved and her love and quests for her, “These eyes are ever thirsty for thy face/ This heart is ever hungry for thy love.” (Sonnet 4)
The poet does not behold his beloved in some mysterious worlds he dreams of, as she is not at all an abstract thing for the poet to experience. The poet is quite conscious of the truth that his beloved and her beauty are simply concrete things that he can always glimpse everywhere in the world around him. The poet proclaims, “Something in me can see thee everywhere./ From the tall mountain to the crawling ant.”

The poet quests for his beloved with his insatiably thirsty soul not to attain any spiritual powers nor does he proclaim any greed to acquire seer-hood. What, in fact, he thirsts for is just to be a seed and bloom into a blossom through his love of his beloved. The poet chants of the spiritual efflorescence he seeks:

I am all willing not to be a star,
So long as I can be an inner seed
Of sight which in the being’s hidden hush
Could grow into a gradual blossom – blush.

(Sonnet 24)

Though the poet lives in the materialistic world, experience day to day stress and strain of routine life, the poet ever carries within him “the living of flame of Truth” which is his own beloved and he never gets it extinguished. The poet addresses his beloved,
“Thou knowest that, beneath all stress, I strive/ To keep the living flame to Truth in me alive.”\textsuperscript{12} (sonnet 48)

His beloved is the blessed secret of his heart that quite amazingly performs the magic of transmuting the dull and the drab and the dead into the living and the colourful, “Yet, sometimes, deep inside the heart I hold/ A secret which transmutes dead grey to living gold.”\textsuperscript{13} (Sonnet 11)

At the very thought of his beloved, the poet experiences “…In my earthly limbs / I sense a multitude of molten fires.”\textsuperscript{14} (sonnet 13) Seeking passionately his beloved and his union with her, the poet prepares to attain immortal life. “Life must prepare to meet immortal life/ The beggar must accept to wear a crown.”\textsuperscript{15} (Sonnet 20)

“The image of the beggar accepting to wear a crown” here, marvellously brings out not only the ineffable beauty of poetic imagination, but also the truth about the pauper becoming a king, receiving the boon of immortality.
To be in love with his beloved and to have his love grow to its fullness is to be blessed with immortality for the poet, “My love shall grow to fullness and shall be/ Another name for immortality.”\textsuperscript{16} (Sonnet 121)

The poet and his beloved are so inseparably intertwined with each other that they together form a single entity. Seized with the feeling of oneness, the poet sings of this life, “Where there is neither the thinker nor thought/ where there is neither dreamer nor dream.”\textsuperscript{17} (sonnet 23). Through the apt and striking images of thinker and thought, dreamer and dream, the oneness of life is achieved with the merging of the lover (poet) and the beloved is most vividly pictured here.

Once again, employing the fascinating imagery of the honey-bee and honey of a blossom from nature, the poet stresses and drives home the depth of his love for his beloved and the most intimate bond existing between the poet and his beloved. The poet who had kept hovering around her like a hungry, restless bee for the honey hidden in the blossom of his beloved became a part of that honey,
“Yes! I who was a restless bee at first/ Like lone fulfilment now I lie in thee immersed.”\(^{18}\) (Sonnet 80)

With such full-blown, colourful blossom of love in his soul for his beloved and with the splendorous presence of his beloved by his side, the world looks no longer lustreless to the eyes of the poet, “with thee, divine Beloved! By my side / The greyness of the world shall pass away.”\(^{19}\) (Sonnet-11)

Complete surrender of self is what true love demands for the realization of love. Hence, the poet is well determined to make a whole surrender of his self, not in an ostentatious manner, but in a simple, serene and quiet way, “My own Beloved! May my self surrender/ Be very calm and very very tender.”\(^{20}\) ( sonnet 7)

The poet detests ostentatious worship and he feels no need for such worship of his beloved as he is in constant communion with his beloved and he ever responds to her call, “Is not all human worship but a pale/ Something which hides thy truth in scented smoke?.”\(^{21}\) (Sonnet 3) Here, the poet attacks and exposes the meaningless, fruitless, vain and showy worship of men, for the poet firmly
believes that such worship is vainglorious and serves no purpose and 
man fails to find the divine truth and to reach the divine goal he sets.

Mocking at the merciless ways of the world to abuse and 
torture the truly religious minded men seeking God, the poet assaults 
and exposes the pseudo-religious practices of the world and religious 
hypocrisy of modern men, “Men talk of God, yet when man wants to 
choose Him/ They deem it opportune to torture and abuse him!” 22 
(sonnet 81)

With their hearts bound by immortal link, the poet asks his 
beloved to begin a journey together towards the glowing dawn, “A 
lonesome journey we shall begin:/ Our hearts are strong, our feet are 
fresh as flowers.” 23 (sonnet 1)

With his beloved being his companion and guide, the poet is 
quite sure that the sovereign beauty of his beloved would steer with 
utmost care, his boat set sail on his last, wondrous voyage, “Nobody 
knows but thou who steerest me/ with such exceeding care and 
equipoise.” 24 (sonnet 16)
Pinning his full confidence in his beloved’s marvellous skill in steering his boat carefully and safely, the poet voices, “And now that thou art by me, Guide and Friend! / I care not if the voyage has no end.”²⁵ (Sonnet 98)

Visualizing the scope of his journey with his beloved, the poet reminds her of their endless journey beyond the mundane world to the destination of the divine:

And yet from moon to moon, from sun to sun,
we must continue treading paths untrod.
Beloved mine! foot-falls are never done
That print the endless road which runs to God.”²⁶
(sonnet-105)

The poet is constantly in the grip of consciousness about the onslaught of time and the mystery and paradox of eternal farewell of life. The poet sings:

Time tolls eternally the closing bell
For all created life posing a cry,
Behind its vanishings, of sad farewell:
For what is life if not one long good bye?²⁷
(Sonnet 71)

About the knowledge of self he has gained through his journey and the realization of the divine in man, the poet chants:
Distance on inner distance I have trod
Gaining the knowledge that each man is only
A central loneliness in dwelling God
That, growing self-aware, is no more lonely.  

(Sonnet 68)

This blessed knowledge of self and the realization of the
divine in man makes the poet’s soul sing melodiously like a bird and
his warblings go beyond language:

My soul is singing sweetly as a bird
In gardens of an inwardness which lie
Beyond the need of language, phrase or word.
The floated gardens of some unknown sky.  

(Sonnet 62)

At times, the poet feels that there is no need for him to sing as
he did previously, for he, through silence, wins and feels the sweet
company of his beloved who is his “living truth”:

The thrill of song is such a little thing!
It is through sealed silence that I win
Your living truth, then wherefore should I sing?  

(sonnet 83)

Such is the height of yogic trance the poet has reached. The
poet in that yogic trance, withdrawing from the storms of the
materialistic world into the cave of silence, finds himself in the
soothing company of his sweet beloved and with her, he continues
his journey, “Silence is as a cave in which I dwell/ Above and unaffected by the storm.”\(^{31}\) (Sonnet 61)

Journeying quietly and swiftly with his beloved, the poet has reached a point where God becomes a concrete reality and the poet savours the taste of the divine, “How quietly we have approached a point/ Where God becomes a real living taste.”\(^ {32}\) (sonnet 58)

At that point which they have reached, having journeyed through ages, he and his beloved glimpse nothing but the divine between them:

How swiftly we have journeyed through
Eternities, each through the other’s eyes,
With nothing left but Him between us two.\(^ {33}\)

(sonnnet 58)

The poet is not so selfish as to think only about himself and his beloved and his union with her and the realization of his spiritual goal. Acutely aware of the ugly world around him, the poet envisions a supreme beauty and the golden age on the earth for which he and his beloved would toil, “Yes! We shall toil at beauty without rest/ Until the golden age on earth appears;”\(^ {34}\) (sonnet 28)
Charged with divine consciousness, experiencing the deepest raptures of his soul and journeying in the high companionship of his sweet beloved in search of ‘paradisal peace’, the poet finds the lingering glooms around him melt away, spiritual light flooding all over him. So he promises to keep his faith in his beloved unsullied till the perfect reign of paradise descends over the earth, “Until that time I hope to keep thy trust/ unsullied as a sword without a speck of dust.” 35 (sonnet 128) The poet clasping and brandishing the unsullied, ever-sharp, shining sword of faith like a soldier is really an apt image employed by the poet.

The mystic vision of the poet reaches its apogee in “Foot-falls”. It is not about the spiritual journey of the poet alone, but of every man who seeks the divine and who craves for the merger of his self with the highest self as the realization of his highest spiritual goal. The poet sings untiringly, mystically and optimistically in “Foot-Falls” of the highest self and “Foot-Falls” is the celebration of the union of human soul with the highest self.
“Foot-Falls” is the **Gitanjali** of Harindranath Chattopadhyaya. While in **Gitanjali**, Tagore pours out his devotion to the almighty, his ecstatic love of the creator, his mystical experience of the divine and his communion with God, adopting Indian Bhakti tradition of Vaishnava and Saiva mystics like Jayadev, Purandara Das, Meera and Andal, Harindranath in “Foot-Falls” chants of his ecstatic love of the highest self, his mystical experience of the highest self and his communion with the highest self. In **Gitanjali**, Tagore makes repeated references to the Indian concept of man-God relationship conceived in the forms of Jivatma and Paramatma in the Indian Bhakti tradition. In “Foot-Falls”, Harindranath refers to the relationship between human soul and the highest self. Whether it is the relationship between man and God or the relationship between human soul and the highest self, both Tagore and Harindranath sing of the relationship as an ancient, passionate and eternal loving bond existing between lovers, weaving around such intimate relationship, a colourful web of rich romantic imagery.

In “Foot-Falls”, the dominant theme that runs throughout the collection of poems is the highest self and the poet is obsessed with
this theme and sings of it ceaselessly. This theme of the highest self also recurs in other collections of Harindranath’s poems. The poet is on a spiritual journey and he continues his journey for ever like an untiring way-farer until he reaches his destination. The poet is so enamoured of the path of his journey that he is well determined to attain the unattainable – the highest self and walking lonely in mornings, Harindranath enjoys beholding beautiful morning clouds, the morning sun and sky and listening to a singing bird and his poetic heart being stirred into lyrics. However, it is not simply a morning walk the poet takes for his happiness alone. The walk and travel are in fact symbolic of the poet’s quest for the unattainable – the highest self. An ardent lover of the road and the way-faring, questing for the unattainable – the highest self, Harindranath proclaims:

I am a drunkard of the road whose foot-prints are as cups of wine
I strive through silence and through speech
The unattainable to attain
Is there no limit to my quest.\(^{36}\)
(The way-fever I am)

Undaunted by darkness and thorns, the poet marches ahead with an undying hope in his breast, “Un to the piercing thorns I say/
The promise of the rose is mine.\(^{37}\) (way-farer)
A prophet of eternal, radiant hope, the poet is quite sure that light comes bursting out of darkness, amidst piercing thorns blooms a rose and a rainbow appears shattering all clouds. Towards the goal of attaining these boons, the poet is travelling untiringly with a quest unlimited. The promise of the rose is the promise of the spiritual realization the poet is to attain.

Setting his sail, the poet embarks on his journey and he decides to continue his journey whatever obstacles he confronts and to reach his spiritual goal:

Nothing can block  
My journey, or crack  
My boat that is sped  
To your heaven afar,  
Nor deluge-shock  
Nor the starless black,  
For my soul is spread  
To your guiding star”\textsuperscript{38}  
(one pointed)

“Heaven afar” and “guiding star” in these lines is the highest self – the eternal soul of the universe the poet ever hungers to reach and to have his own soul merged with it.
The poet is treading his lonely road like a possessed traveller responding to the call of the road, unmindful of the hardships. The journey the poet makes is not an ordinary one, but a spiritual journey with a spiritual goal as stated symbolically in a mystical fashion by the poet in poem after poem “The roadway calls my feet/ With a lover’s call” \(^{39}\) (Treader). Despite a rough, stony and risky road, the poet treads on, singing happily, “My soul becomes a song/ And my body becomes a harp” \(^{40}\) (Treader)

As a traveler resolved to reach his goal, the poet makes progress in his journey with each foot-fall towards his destination. The poet chants quite confidently, “I bear the goal in my tread / While each foot - fall marks a rose” \(^{41}\) (Treader)

In his journey, the poet makes errors, falls and slips and he seeks the guidance of the divine to lead him to his goal:

\[
\text{In several little ways} \\
\text{I err and fall and slip,} \\
\text{---------------------------} \\
\text{--------------------------} \\
\text{Lead me unto thy doors,} \\
\text{Beloved of my days.}^{42} \\
\text{(wing ache)}
\]
Intoxicated with the highest self, the universal soul, the poet calls it his beloved and takes an oath to sing of the melodies of his beloved he experiences:

Beloved, I have taken  
An oath to be thine own  
O let me be one living  
Expression of thy giving:  
Within me rouse and waken  
Thy melodies alone *43  
(Exemption)

With the eternal soul enthroned in him, the poet experiences unique, intimate relationships between his own soul and the highest self. The poet states:

We have looked for one another  
In forms which scarce abide,  
Some times as child and mother,  
Sometimes as groom and bride; *44  
(Emthroned)

Sometimes it is a relationship between lovers, between comrades, between brothers, between a child and a mother, between a bride and a bridegroom. Through such varied relationships, the poet seeks union of his own soul with the highest self.
A pilgrim treading a lonely path, the poet cries out to reach the
transcendental soul. The poet vents his spiritual anguish in the
fallowing lines:

I will cry out to thee from the depth of my soul
I will cry out to thee;
By crying to thee I will reach the goal,
I will cry out to thee.” 45
( I will cry out to thee)

With such an intense spiritual thirst to reach the highest self,
the poet treads on and is certain that someday he’ll realize his
spiritual goal:

with a cry I will storm thee some day and win,
Thou wilt open the door and invite me in,
I will cry out to thee as no man ever cried,
I will cry out to thee. 46
(I will cry out to thee)

The poet feels that he is possessed by the highest self and he is
in its enchanted grip and he can share the comradeship with the
highest self when he drops like a dew drop into its oceanic depths:

You have possessed me quite
In your enchanted grip,
Across deep miles of light
I seem to drop and slip
Like a lone drop of dew
Into the depths of you
Until upon a height
I share your comradeship 47
(Realization)
Aspiring to have the union of his own self with the highest self, the poet seeks to attain spiritual realization – the ultimate goal of every human soul. The poems dealing with the theme of the highest self manifest this spiritual thirst and goal of Harindranath Chattopadhyaya. A true mystic, Harindranath can not but be an intense spiritual seeker singing of the highest self ecstatically and sonorously, striking at the roots of the eternal truth of the universe and bringing out the essence of the spiritual and pouring out rich treasures of his high-soaring mystical soul. What Sri Aurobindo states about the mystic’s encounter with the self comes true in the poetry of Harindranath:

But to see the self is to meet the spirit in everything and the spirit reveals to us the inner and the inmost truth of all that comes from it, life and thought and form and every image and every power 48

Harindranath not only lived in the presence of the highest self and sang of it as a profound spiritual seeker in the ancient Hindu tradition of our great Indian seers and saints, but he also makes us aware of the highest self dwelling in every one of us through his most inspiring, lyrical and mystical poetry. He succeeds in stirring
the latent, indolent spiritual pool in his readers and lifts them above
the mundane to the spiritual horizons.

The reader can hear the resonance of the foot-falls of the poet’s spiritual journey for the attainment of the union of his self with the highest self and is irresistibly enthralled and enlightened by the resonance and illuminations of the spiritual in these poems. Harindranath is found to be on the pinnacles of his mystical vision, telescoping and revealing the eternal Upanishadic truths and the eternal beauties of Indian culture and heritage.

Harindranath’s quest for the highest self and his soul’s longing to be united with the Highest self in “Foot-falls” bring to the mind of the discerning reader, Jayadeva’s Gita Govinda which is the culmination of the tradition of medieval Bhakti poetry. In Gita Govinda, through the poetic and spiritual metaphor of the Radha-Krishna play (Leela), Jayadev conveys the soul’s longing to unite with God who is the highest self and the ultimate truth. The soul’s hunger to be united with the Beautiful is what is manifested in Jayadev’s Gita Govinda. It is this aesthetic and spiritual experience of Beauty through its search for Truth that ultimately leads to the
soul’s attainment of beautitude and it lends depth to Gita Govinda. What John Keats sums up so succinctly in “ode on Grecian urn”, “Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty” comes alive in Gita Govinda. Influenced immensely by the poets of the Bhakti movement like Rabindranath Tagore, Harindranath in “Foot-falls” echoes the tradition of medieval Bhakti poetry of Jaydev and through rich, romantic imagery, he depicts the relationship between Atma (individual soul) and Paramatma (universal soul) and the individual soul’s longing to be united with the universal soul for the attainment of beautitude (Ananda). The bride waiting for her bride-groom to come and consummate their love through their union is a poetic and spiritual metaphor that lends depth and profound meaning to the poems in “Foot-Falls”.

In these poems focusing on the theme of the highest self, another distinctive feature of Harindranath’s mystical poetry is manifested. It is evidently of the Hindu vedantic philosophy. The poet exhibits a deep knowledge of the two branches of Hindu vedantic philosophy namely Dvaitam and Advaitam. Deeply rooted in vedantic philosophy, he embodies Advaita philosophy in “Foot-
Falls” that runs through the poems as a deep under current. The shrewd reader and critic can understand that, in “Foot-Falls”, Harindranath is deeply preoccupied with Advaita philosophy.

These two philosophical doctrines are originated from the Vedas, the sacred, spiritual scriptures of the Hindus. Though opposed to each other in approach, Dwaitam and Advaitam dwell on the nature of the God head and spiritual enlightenment of man. While Dwaitam declares that God and man are different entities (Duality) and their identities are separate, Advaitam emphasizes the oneness of the Brahman (non-duality) in the whole universe and the Brahman is ONE manifested everywhere and in all objects of the universe. Dwaitam and Advaitam are not merely the Hindu philosophical doctrines propounded by Sri Ramanujacharya and Sri Shankaracharya respectively and practiced by Indian sages, saints and spiritual people as in fact these two doctrines together define Indian culture and heritage.

Our mystic poets like Sri Aurabindo Ghose and Rabindranath Tagore who were sages, inextricably rooted in Indian culture and heritage, blessed with knowledge of the philosophical doctrines of
“Dvaitam and Advaitam” successfully produced major poetic works imbued with “Dvaitam and Advaitam” that carry the true Indian spirit in all its essence and glory. Harindranath Chatopadhyaya, following in the footsteps of these great masters, has chosen his poems to be vehicles of the vedantic philosophy. The poems in “Foot-falls” are perceptibly enriched with Advaita philosophy. In each poem of “Foot-Falls” the poet seeks to befriend the highest self within his soul, makes unending spiritual odysseys to reach it, enters into communion with it and endeavours to achieve “the union of his self” (Atma) with “the highest self” (paramatma) as the realization of his spiritual goal. Invoking the highest self from within his self in poem after poem in “Foot-Falls”, the poet displays Advaita philosophy. This is indeed the essential feature of Harindranath’s mystic vision that telescopes and manifests the transcendental truth of the infinite. The poems dwelling on the theme of the highest self unveil the poetic genius of Harindranath rooted deeply in Indian culture and heritage.
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