



## Theme of Deliverance in Tagore's Play 'The Post Office'

PROF. SHWETA PANWAR

Assistant Professor in English

Samarpan Arts and Commerce College, Gandhinagar.

Tagore needs no introduction for the Indians. He was a great son of India who put the name of Indian with pride on the map of the world when he was awarded the Nobel Prize for his 'Gitanjali' in 1913. He was a multi-sided guenon - a poet, short story writer, novelists, dramatist, actor essayist and a composer of songs.

Tagore's play 'The Post Office' was originally written in Bengali in 1912. 'The Post Office' is rich in symbolism and allegory. It is a play about man's passionate cry for the far away, for the call of the awakening in the world of spiritual freedom. In his awakening to the call he carries with him the flower of love. In the play has been played by this Mall boy of Anita Desai, an Indian novelist, says about the book,

"In appearance the play is as modest as a dewy drop in effect it is as profound as the ocean". The play was written at the same time as the author's other book 'My Reminiscences' was published. Hence, it is reminiscent of the experience of Tagore's early childhood. The longing for the unknown and mysterious world, which was strongest tendency of mind (during his childhood) finds expression in this play.

'The Post Office' deals with the longing for freedom of Amal, a little boy who had been ill and confined to his room, and not allowed to go outside. He sits at his window, and questions everybody that passes by the curd seller, the watchman, the village headman, and the little flower -girl, Sudha. He wishes he could set up to that far away hill that he sees from his window. He tells Madhav, who has adopted him.

"I watched that man slowly walking on with his pair of worn-out shoes. And, when he goes to where the water flows under the fig tree. I have asked my auntie to let me go up to the stream and eat my gram flour just take him"

He is tired of sitting and talking to the strangers. He is informed by the watchman that the other side of the road is the Post Office, and some fine day there may be a letter for him from the king with the passing of time he becomes so ill that he is not allowed even to go near the window any more. Amal imagines the postman of the King coming down the hill-side. Finally, his life's journey is over where Sudha arises "When will he awake?" The Doctor replies, "Directly the King comes, and calls him."

It has been suggested by W.B. Yeats, an English Poet, about the play that deliverance is the theme of 'The Post Office'. He says, "It may come at any moment of life, though the child Amal discovers it in death, for it always comes at the moment when the 'I', is able to say 'All my work is thine". Tagore in the letter to C.F. Andrews, explained the meaning of the play.

"Amal represents the man whose soul has received the call of the open road. At last, the closed gate is opened by the King's own physician and that which is 'death' to the world brings him awakening in the world of Spiritual freedom.

'The Post Office' is a symbolic representation of two currents of thoughts, reflections on death and a mysterious call from the far off. The symbol of the letter is the most suggestive and significant in the play. It comes from a distant mysterious land, bringing a message from some one whom we hold dear to us. It is a sort of the bridge between the known and the unknown. The postman in Amal's imagination is a specially privileged person as he is the link between the distant and the nearby. The post office itself provides a realistic background to the symbolism of the letter. The King's physician, on arrival opens the door and windows of Amal's room. Amal goes to sleep perhaps it is the eternal sleep, the death. Amal wants to be the post man of the King, which means that he will carry the message of God from place to place.

Tagore himself commended upon this play. "I wrote 'Dakghur' (Post Office) in three or four days, about the same time I wrote 'Gitanjali'. I was very restless, just as I am now. That gave me the idea of a child pining for freedom, and the world anxious to keep it in its bounds, for it has its duties there". After reading 'The Post Office' one might ask who is Amal? Is he the human soul? Who is the King? Is he God? What does the letter mean? Is the message of deliverance? Whatever may be the answers to these questions (like these) it is obvious that Amal is simply a personification of the poet's own personal experience, having a universal significance.