

'BHANGAGAAN'-BROKEN SONGS

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Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything. - Plato

Music, the universal language, transcends all material and spiritual barriers to influence each soul it touches. Interpreted differently by each individual, it acts as a steady companion unwaveringly supporting us in all situations of life. The songs composed by Rabindranath Tagore are stellar composites of beautiful melody and meaningful lyrics. As we journey through the river of life, these songs are the wind in our sails, propelling us forward through good times and bad. Rabindrasangeet consists of a wide range of songs on different themes. These songs are influenced by music from all over the world. Some songs known as *Bhangagaan* (Broken song) are direct manifestations of Rabindranath Tagore's creative genius and ability to reinvent. These songs are of three types- the first two types were created by changing a song's lyrics (Bengali or some other language) keeping the tune same; while the third type was generated by composing a new tune for lyrics which were already present.

From a very tender age Rabindranath was surrounded by different types of music, ranging from Western folk to Eastern classical. Influenced by one such genre, the *Dhrupad*, he created the marvellous song *Prathamaditaboshakti* [*Dhrupad* song: '*Prathamaaad Shiv shakti*, a masterpiece of the legendary musician of medieval India, Baiju Bawra]. Traditional Indian classical music was so magnificently imbibed in him that he produced gems such as *Aanondodharabohichebhubone* [a song singing praises of nature's beauty and divine bliss, influenced by the *Maalkoshraag* based *Laagi more thumakpalangana*] and *Ore bhaifagunlegeche bone bone* [a description of the blazing beauty of a forest in the Hindu month of *falgun*, influenced by the *Parajbaharraag* based *Erima sab ban amuwa mole*].

India is blessed with a rich cultural heritage of which regional music is an integral part. Rabindranath researched music of the Mahishur region of South India, giving rise to songs such as *Labonyepunyopraan* (a song on the Spring season when the inner beauty of the soul is reflected in the ravishing beauty of the macrocosm) and '*Aanonodoloke mangalaloke* (a devotional song asserting the all-pervading nature of the omnipresent divine). He was assisted in his endeavours

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by his niece Sarala Devi Chaudhurani, the founder of the first women's organisation in India- the Bharat Stree Mahamandal. The creation of the evergreen songs *Jodi tor daakshunekeunaashe* (a patriotic song, 'If no one responds to your call then go ahead alone') and *Bhengemor ghorerchaabiniye jaabikeamare* (a song yearning for the beloved, 'Who will break the locks of my house and take me away?') can be attributed to the rustic, free-spirited *Baul* songs of rural Bengal. The soulful strains of *baul* music preaching liberal love have also been incorporated in the song *Aamarshonar Bangla* which was adapted as the national anthem of Bangladesh. No inspiration is too small or insignificant to the fertile mind of a creative artist. Not only did Rabindranath get inspired by the bards of Bengal (the *Bauls*), but also by Robert Burns, the bard of Scotland. His song *Auld Lang Syne* (long

ago) provided a template for the popular song *Puranoshei diner katha* (Can the memories of the good old days ever be forgotten?).

There are very few songs of the third type of *Bhangagaan* where a tune was composed for others' lyrics. Two songs of this type are *E bhorabador* and *Sundariradheaaobani* in the words of Vidyapati and Govindadas respectively.

This confluence of lyrics and music from different sources provides us with an array of unique melodies which were reconstructed and taken to new heights of excellence and popularity by Rabindranath Tagore. They add a new dimension to the already vast melange of Rabindrasangeet - a lifeline to Bengalis all over the world.

WIFE

Dr. C. Jacob*

You are not nothing, not worthless,
Supreme you are in all respects;
You are the queen of your domain;
None can replace you in your kitchen.

You govern your man and rule the rest,
Envied is your worth with distrust;
With those you live with day and night:
When do they know your fears and plight?

Ignore them and forgive them soon,
It is a great relief and a boon,
Besides peace of mind and happiness too;
Forgiveness is your utmost virtue.

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