

Fakir Lalon Shah: A prominent Bengali Philosopher, Mystic and an icon of Bengali Literature

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Abstract

Lalon, also known as Fakir Lalon Shah, was a prominent Bengali philosopher, Baul saint, mystic, songwriter, social reformer and thinker. Considered an icon of Bengali culture, Lalon inspired and influenced many poets, social and religious thinkers including Rabindranath Tagore, ^[1,2,3] Kazi Nazrul Islam, ^[4] and Allen Ginsberg ^[5] albeit he "rejected all distinctions of caste and creed". ^[6] Widely celebrated as an epitome of religious tolerance, he was also accused of heresy during his lifetime and after his death.

Keywords: Fakir Lalon; Biography; Bengali Literature; Philosophy; Rabindranath Tagore

The era of Bangla literature which was exclusively dominated by the Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore had had a notable contribution from another poet who is popularized as Fakir Lalon till today. This the time when a good number of poets other than Rabindranath Tagore wrote in their respective fields of choice, no doubt. But Lalon's domain of endeavor was quite exceptional, novel and even unlike his contemporaries. So, to say, his ambience of poetry was found on mysticism instead of materialism. Significantly, since the past till the present moment the poet's overall details particularly his biography has turned out to be the much-debated topics of the people.

For not earning authentic information about his parentage, birthplace and religious identity, people have fallen into a bewilderment mixed with presumption, controversy and doubt in particular. Interestingly, the Lalon specialists have failed to reach a conclusion concerning these matters of his parentage. Even, the dates of his birth as well as death and the life duration he lived are fairly contradictory. So far as some conceive, he was born at the village Horispur in Horinakundu under the see of Jhenidah district, while others contradict that his parents domicile happened to be located of Bhagura in Kumarkhali of Kustia. Similarly, the year of his birth in the know of the present generation is not one but two such as 1774 and 1777 respectively as the Lalon researchers have opined. The context related to his religious identity has triggered a bizarre type of duality. The question as to whether he was a Hindu or Muslim is still unresolved.

He made his restive life steady and restful after he had settled permanently of Cheuria nearby Kustia town with enormous knowledge glanced from his nomadic life. Eventually, here he came into Rabindranath's contact which opened up a new horizon for his career of creativity. It was Rabindranath who brought him to the lime light of the then enlightened stratum of the society by publishing twenty of his lyrics in the Haramoni unit of the Probashi- a newspaper of Kolkata in the Bangla year 1322. Needless to say, prior to this step, unknown, unnoticed and undiscovered Lalon was walled within the compass of the rural folk. How much overwhelmed Rabindranath was with his talent! The melody as well as the speculation of the former overflowed the mind of the latter with thrill and pleasure.

When British colonialism pervaded the realm of politics, darkness of ignorance made the society backward and prejudices blocked free thinking. This prolific genius rose up as a blazing comet of great spirituality in the landscape of our literature. Though destitute of institutional learning. This uncertificated learned with his powerful inherent sight studied the core of the society, which enabled him to arrest the problems there. Though his lyrics he has depicted the vices folly hypocrisy of the theologians in the society with special stress on the superstition, fanaticism, orthodoxy, bigotry and misguidance of creed dealers. By all means, he made sure he had the thought stand against the blind imitation of the misled society. As an icon of secularism, he vehemently opposed ethnic distinction as well as the command disharmony emanated from

diverse sects of religions. All his life, he tried to justify the gist of so-called creeds namely Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and others but he formed no difference between them. Hence, he has been branded as an iconoclast.

The great humanist Lalon was the upholder of English poet Coleridge's doctrine of universal love. He either believed that he Prayeth best who loveth best, which corresponds to Coleridge. There's no denying the fact that all his life, he cherished the dream prosperity of his mind, he has strived to comprehend the transience of human life, human beings' subservience and submission to Almighty and His sweet will.

He, being a metaphysical poet by nature, has philosophized about the existence of the omnipotent and omniscience of creature with the inclination of knowing means relation with Him. In support of the omnipresence of creature, he reached a concept that creator abides everywhere and in every human being's heart, which tallies with English poet William Wordsworth's theory of pantheism. For this reason, he has suggested all to search only their own heart for the existence of creator instead of travelling for off places. This is the exact replication of Greek philosopher Socrates saying (Know Thyself) Even Rabindranath Tagore's concept of life God (Jibon Debota) is alike to his belief very exquisitely, he has defined man's affinity with God. Though the allegory of human soul (Jib atma) and heavenly soul (Param atma). A human life can reap the harvest of its success only when these two souls have a union. It's a matter of deep perception that each and every creature on earth is the incarnation or the reflection of Almighty symbolized by heavenly soul (Param atma). From his lifelong meditation, he has perceived that getting the close contact of this heavenly soul is seldom practical because this very seemingly nearest at hand soul is actually far beyond the reach of human beings. The fact has appeared before him as an unintelligible mystery or mysticism. He decided his entire life with relentless effort to have an access to his almighty (the man of heart) who is as unreachable as untouchable.

His philosophy is concerned with an imperative rapport between guru (religious teacher) and his disciple (the devote). if may sound novel but true that the knowledge which is pre-requisite for the proximity of creator is not available in formable education or otherwise prevalent wisdom. A certain sort of inner intuition beyond the materialistic domain law serve this purpose. this situation necessitates the tutelage of the guru for the disciple. he is found to be antipathetic towards the offbeat course of family life, that is to say as an escapist in the norm a baul he enjoyed derestricted life of recluse. his philosophy rulers to peculium queries with regard to mam's pre-natal existence, eternity. nemesis of worldly acts and the like. he had heavenly bestowed sensibility which he utilized to unearth this mystery. he was both a thinker and a discoverer undertook the mission of finding the true. The unhead and the untold and thereby his inner eye opened up.

The things he had addressed in his creativity have become universal transcending the ambit of other poets. He has thought out direction in respect of what should be the habit of human body to creator. As per his experiential knowledge, came the vital ingredient of human body is to be utilized sagaciously. Otherwise the core of the body will be razed. He has opined that only synthesis of knowledge and behavior activities can awaken the soul in the human body which is a key factor to contain evil instinct. voluminously, he has he has composed songs which tends to reveal his devotion to almighty creator and analysis to multilinear things related to Hadith, the Quran, the Gita and Bible respectively.

From his biographical study, it is known that this mystic philosopher and a dedicated researcher of spiritualism dropped down on the icy lap of death of the last dawn of his life singing his last song (Par koro he doyal chand amarey) to leave behind a host of fans to tod lament for him. He has been extinguished forever but lighted a spiritualistic candle for men of all ages, the guru of our literature as well as music he has justifiably celebrated him as the emperor among the poets Bijoy Shankar, Hassen raja, Kangal Harinath and the like his lyrics will constantly cater to the expansion of human mind and its thought.

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