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Beyond the Veil: A Comparative Journey through Tagore's *Shesh Lekha* and some of Rumi's Verses

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Abstract

This article explores the thematic and philosophical similarities and differences between Rabindranath Tagore's *Shesh Lekha* (Final Letters) and Rumi's poems related to death and the afterlife. Both poets delve deeply into the concepts of mortality and the soul's journey beyond death, presenting death as a transformative process rather than an end. Tagore's reflections in *Shesh Lekha* are rooted in Hinduism and the concept of samsara, perceiving death as a return to the divine unity and a peaceful transition. In contrast, Rumi's Sufi-inspired poetry emphasizes death as the soul's return to the Beloved, an eternal reunion with God. The article compares their views on death as a metaphysical transformation, exploring how both poets use metaphor and spiritual imagery to describe the soul's ultimate return to the divine. Tagore uses tender, serene imagery, while Rumi employs passionate, ecstatic language to evoke a sense of spiritual longing. Despite differences in cultural and philosophical contexts, the poets' works reveal a shared belief in death as a passage to spiritual awakening. Tagore's tone is meditative, reflective, and accepting, while Rumi's tone is filled with longing and divine love. Through specific poems, the article highlights how both Tagore and Rumi articulate a mystical journey, offering profound insights into the human quest for spiritual unity and transcendence. Their works reflect complementary, yet distinctive, views on the nature of death and the afterlife, resonating with universal themes of love, surrender, and the soul's eternal quest for reunion with the divine.

Keywords: Rabindranath Tagore, Rumi, Divine, Death, Spiritual awakening

1. Introduction

Death is a universal experience that has been a subject of fascination and contemplation for centuries. Poets and writers have used their literary skills to explore the mysteries of death and the afterlife, offering their readers unique perspectives on these timeless themes. In this article, we will compare two literary works that deal with death and the afterlife: Rabindranath Tagore's *Shesh Lekha* and Rumi's death-related poems.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was a Bengali poet, philosopher, and artist who is widely regarded as one of the greatest literary figures in Indian history. His works, which include poetry, novels, essays, and plays, have been translated into many languages and have influenced generations of writers and thinkers. *Shesh Lekha*, which means "The Last Letter," is one of Tagore's most famous

poems and deals with the themes of death and the afterlife. Rumi (1207-1273) was a Persian poet, jurist, and theologian who is considered one of the greatest mystical poets of all time. His poems, which are written in Persian and Turkish, deal with a wide range of themes, including love, spirituality, and death. Rumi's death-related poems, which are scattered throughout his works, offer a unique perspective on the afterlife and the nature of the soul.

The exploration of death as a theme in literature transcends geographical, cultural, and religious boundaries. Among the many poets who have approached the subject, two luminaries—Rabindranath Tagore and Jalal al-Din Rumi—stand out for their profound and spiritual reflections on mortality. Tagore's *Shesh Lekha* (Final Letters) and Rumi's some spiritual poems offer rich and nuanced insights into the human condition, particularly how death is not an end but a transformation, a journey toward union with the divine.

This comparative study seeks to explore the philosophical and literary similarities and differences between Tagore's and Rumi's treatment of death. While Tagore's reflections are grounded in a blend of Bengali spiritualism, romanticism, and his personal engagement with loss, Rumi's works are deeply rooted in Sufism, focusing on the mystical journey of the soul. Both poets, however, express a similar transcendence of the physical death, viewing it not as annihilation but as an awakening or a return to the divine source. This article aims to delve into the stylistic, thematic, and philosophical aspects of death in the works of Tagore and Rumi, with specific reference to Tagore's *Shesh Lekha* and Rumi's poems related to death and spiritual transformation.

1.1. Literature review

The theme of death and the afterlife has been a central subject in literary and philosophical traditions across cultures. Poets, theologians, and scholars have long explored the mystical, existential, and spiritual dimensions of mortality. Among them, Rabindranath Tagore and Jalal al-Din Rumi stand out as two of the most profound voices who have reflected on death as a transformative journey rather than an end. This literature review provides an overview of existing scholarly interpretations of their works, focusing on their thematic and philosophical approaches to death, the influence of their respective religious traditions, and their literary techniques.

1.1.1. *Tagore and Rumi on Death: A Philosophical and Literary Perspective*

Numerous studies have examined Rabindranath Tagore's and Rumi's poetic engagements with death, emphasizing their spiritual reflections and philosophical depth. According to Radice (1987) and Bhattacharya (2006), Tagore's approach to death in *Shesh Lekha* is deeply meditative, tender, and accepting, rooted in Hindu Vedantic thought, particularly the Upanishadic concept of the eternal soul (Atman) and its union with Brahman (the Supreme Reality). Tagore perceives death not as annihilation but as a return to cosmic unity, a continuation rather than a cessation of existence. His philosophy resonates with the Hindu belief in the cyclic nature of life, death, and rebirth (samsara).

On the other hand, Rumi's poetry on death, as explored by Schimmel (1975) and Barks (1997), embodies a Sufi mystical vision. Death, for Rumi, is a joyous reunion with the Beloved (God), an ecstatic dissolution of the self (fana) into divine eternity. His imagery often draws upon metaphors of love, longing, and intoxication, emphasizing that the soul's true home lies beyond the material world. The *Mathnawi* and *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*, two of Rumi's most celebrated works, frequently illustrate death as a wedding night—a metaphor for the final, blissful merging of the soul with the divine. Mojaddedi (2012) highlights that in Rumi's view, death is a spiritual awakening, not a loss.

While both poets view death as a passage to a higher existence, their tonal differences are evident:

- Tagore presents death with serene acceptance and quiet reflection, embracing it as a natural progression in the cosmic cycle.
- Rumi, in contrast, expresses passionate longing and ecstatic surrender, portraying death as the moment of ultimate spiritual fulfilment.

1.1.2. *Cultural and Religious Influences on Their Poetic Philosophy*

Tagore and Rumi's reflections on death are deeply embedded in their respective religious traditions—Hinduism and Sufism. Scholars such as Dasgupta (1996) and Sen (2013) have explored how Tagore's works integrate Hindu philosophical thought with Western humanism, making his poetic vision both introspective and universal. His notion of death aligns with Advaita Vedanta, which sees the soul as an eternal entity, temporarily embodied in human form, ultimately merging with the divine source.

In contrast, Rumi's interpretation of death is deeply influenced by Islamic mysticism (Sufism). Sufi scholars like Chittick (1983) and Helminski (2000) emphasize that Rumi's poetic themes of annihilation of the self (fana) and eternal subsistence in God (baqa) represent a Sufi approach to spiritual transcendence. The Quranic concept of returning to God upon death strongly informs Rumi's poetic expressions, and his mentor, Shams of Tabriz, played a significant role in shaping his mystical perspective. Despite their distinct cultural backgrounds, both poets present death as a moment of liberation—Tagore through peaceful resignation and Rumi through divine intoxication.

1.1.3. *Literary Devices and Symbolism in Their Poetic Expression of Death*

Literary scholars, including Radice (1987), Barks (1997), and Mojaddedi (2012), have analysed the symbolism and metaphors Tagore and Rumi employ to express death as a transition to a higher state of being. Tagore's use of imagery in *Shesh Lekha* is soft, introspective, and nature-centered. He compares death to a setting sun, a closing curtain, and the quiet passage of time, reflecting his tranquil approach to mortality. His poetic language suggests a gentle transition rather than an abrupt end, reinforcing the cyclical nature of life and death in Hindu philosophy. Rumi's metaphors and allegories, on the other hand, are fiery, ecstatic, and filled with the imagery of love, longing, and reunion. Rumi frequently personifies death as a lover, a friend, or a liberator, inviting the soul into the arms of divine love. His use of symbols such as the reed flute (representing the soul's exile from God) and the moth and flame (symbolizing the soul's burning desire for unity with the Divine) reinforces Sufi mysticism's central themes.

1.1.4. *Comparative Literary Studies on Tagore and Rumi*

While extensive research exists on Tagore's and Rumi's individual works, comparative studies remain relatively limited. Chaudhuri (2015) and Alam (2020) discuss the cross-cultural significance of their poetic visions, emphasizing their shared universalism in spirituality. The comparative perspective reveals how two poets from vastly different traditions arrive at similar conclusions about the nature of death and the afterlife. Existing research also highlights that while Tagore remains deeply tied to Indian literary traditions, blending romanticism with spiritual thought, Rumi's influence has transcended Islamic mysticism, appealing to readers across different religious and secular backgrounds. Studies by Elahi (2018) and Nasr (2007) suggest that both poets provide a deeply humanistic yet spiritual perspective on mortality, making their works relevant to a global audience.

1.2. **Objective of the Study**

The primary objectives of this comparative study on Rabindranath Tagore's *Shesh Lekha* and Rumi's death-related poetry are:

- To explore the philosophical and thematic perspectives on death and the afterlife in Tagore's and Rumi's poetry.

- ii. To analyse the cultural and religious influences shaping their views on mortality and the soul's journey beyond death.
- iii. To compare the literary styles, symbolism, and metaphors used by Tagore and Rumi to depict death and spiritual transcendence.
- iv. To examine how both poets portray death as a transformative experience rather than an end, emphasizing themes of divine reunion and spiritual awakening.
- v. To contribute to the broader discourse on comparative literature by highlighting the intersections between Bengali-Hindu and Persian-Sufi spiritual traditions.

2. Method

This study follows a comparative literary analysis approach, incorporating the following research methods:

- a) **Textual Analysis:**
 - A close reading of Tagore's *Shesh Lekha* (Final Letters) and selected poems of Rumi to examine their portrayal of death, spirituality, and the afterlife.
 - Identifying key themes, metaphors, and stylistic elements that reflect their philosophical beliefs.
- b) **Comparative Approach:**
 - Contrasting Tagore's Hindu-inspired reflections with Rumi's Sufi-mystical interpretations of death.
 - Highlighting similarities and differences in their poetic treatment of the soul's journey beyond death.
- c) **Philosophical and Cultural Contextualization:**
 - Examining how Hindu philosophy (e.g., samsara, moksha, and atman) influences Tagore's work.
 - Understanding Rumi's Sufi perspectives, including fana (self-annihilation) and baqa (eternal union with God).
- d) **Thematic Categorization:**
 - Grouping poems based on themes such as death as transformation, divine love, spiritual surrender, and metaphysical longing to draw structured comparisons.

3. Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following key questions:

- i. How do Tagore and Rumi conceptualize death in their poetry?
- ii. What are the major thematic and philosophical similarities between *Shesh Lekha* and Rumi's death-related poetry?
- iii. How do the poets' cultural and religious backgrounds (Hinduism and Sufism) shape their perspectives on mortality and the afterlife?
- iv. What literary devices and metaphors do Tagore and Rumi use to depict death and the soul's transcendence?
- v. How does the tone of their poetry (meditative in Tagore, ecstatic in Rumi) reflect their distinct spiritual philosophies?
- vi. In what ways do Tagore's and Rumi's works offer universal insights into the human experience of death and spiritual transformation?

4. Discussion

4.1. Historical and Cultural Context

4.1.1. Tagore's *Shesh Lekha* in the Context of Early 20th-Century Bengali Literature

Rabindranath Tagore's *Shesh Lekha* (Final Letters), written towards the end of his life, presents an intimate exploration of death, mortality, and the spiritual journey. Tagore, born into a prominent Bengali family in 1861, was not only a poet but also a social reformer and philosopher. His works span a vast range of themes, including love, nature, nationalism, and spirituality. *Shesh Lekha*, captures his reflections on death, not as a sorrowful event but as a natural progression towards union with the divine.

Tagore's understanding of death was deeply influenced by the Hindu concept of samsara (the cycle of life, death, and rebirth) and the idea of the soul's eternal nature. His writings often reflect a synthesis of Eastern and Western thought, combining Indian spiritualism with the humanism of Western philosophy. In *Shesh Lekha*, Tagore expresses his acceptance of death as part of a greater cosmic order, and his poems are imbued with a sense of peace, resignation, and love.

4.1.2. *Rumi's Mystical Poetry and Its Context in 13th-Century Persian Sufism*

Jalal al-Din Rumi, the 13th-century Persian poet and mystic, was a central figure in the development of Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam. Born in 1207 in what is now Afghanistan, Rumi's work emphasizes the search for divine love, union with God, and the transcendence of worldly attachments. His writings, particularly his death-related poems, reflect the Sufi belief in the soul's journey toward the Beloved (God). For Rumi, death is not to be feared but embraced as a return to the divine. Rumi's works, primarily written in Persian, have been translated into numerous languages, and his poetry continues to resonate with readers worldwide. His most famous work, the *Divan-e-Shams-e-Tabrizi* (The Collected Poems of Shams of Tabriz), and the *Mathnawi*, both contain numerous references to death as a metaphor for spiritual renewal. In Sufi thought, death is seen as the ultimate liberation of the soul, freeing it from the constraints of the material world and allowing it to merge with God.

4.2. Philosophical Underpinnings of Death in Tagore and Rumi

4.2.1 *Tagore's Concept of Death: The Human Spirit and Divine Harmony*

In *Shesh Lekha*, Tagore's reflections on death are deeply spiritual and humanistic. He views death not as an end but as a return to the cosmic source, a reuniting with the divine harmony that governs the universe. His acceptance of death is framed within a larger philosophical framework of interconnection between all beings, as seen in his poetry and essays. Tagore often wrote about the concept of the Atman (soul) in Hindu philosophy, emphasizing that the soul is eternal and that death is merely a transition from one state of being to another. In his final letters, he expresses a profound sense of peace, writing that he feels no fear or regret in the face of death. For him, it is an inevitable process of returning to the divine source, which he perceives as an eternal unity.

In "The Last Curtain", Tagore uses the metaphor of love to describe the soul's longing for union with the infinite. He writes:

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. (Tagore, 1913)

Here, Tagore's love is tender and reflective, symbolizing the soul's quiet yearning for the divine. His imagery is gentle, evoking the closing of a curtain, suggesting a peaceful transition rather than an ecstatic union.

4.2.2. Rumi's Concept of Death: The Soul's Return to the Beloved

Rumi's view of death is heavily influenced by his Sufi beliefs. In Sufism, death is not the annihilation of the self but the release of the soul from the confines of the physical body. The soul, according to Rumi, longs to be reunited with its true source—God—and death is seen as the final step in this spiritual journey. Rumi's poetry often speaks of the soul's yearning for the divine, describing death as a return to the Beloved. In one of his well-known poems, he writes, "I died as a mineral and became a plant; / I died as a plant and rose to an animal; / I died as an animal and I was man. / Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?" (Rumi, trans. Nicholson, 1926). Here, Rumi suggests that death is a continuous transformation, with each stage bringing the soul closer to divine unity. For Rumi, death is a celebration rather than a tragedy. It is a release from the ego and worldly attachments, allowing the soul to merge with God's infinite love.

In his poem *The Guest House*, he uses the metaphor of a guest house to describe human emotion and experiences encouraging us to welcome every feeling, joy, sorrow as a visitor bringing wisdom.

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
Some momentary awareness comes
As an unexpected visitor. (Rumi, trans. Barks, 1995)

Both poets perceive death as a passage rather than a finality. They suggest that death is not destruction but a transformation—a movement from one state of existence to another. Tagore in *Shesh Lekha* expresses a sense of journey beyond death, an incomplete meeting with the divine, whereas Rumi views death as a return to the eternal source, much like a drop of water merging back into the ocean. Both poets frame death as a reunion with a higher power, filled with spiritual yearning. To deepen the comparison between Tagore and Rumi's perspectives on death, here are some specific poems from each poet that reflect their thoughts on mortality, the afterlife, and the soul's journey.

4.2.3. Rabindranath Tagore's Poems on Death

This poem, "When you came" ("Jokhon Eshechhile") reflects Tagore's quiet resignation to death. He acknowledges that death has come silently, taking away life's beauty, but he accepts it as a natural end.

When you came, I was alone, when I leave, I will be alone... (Tagore, n.d.2025)

Here, Tagore personifies death as a friend or beloved, similar to how Rumi speaks of death as a joyful reunion with the Divine.

The poem reveals a mystical longing, portraying death as a divine presence rather than a fearful end. In another poem, "Ami chanchal hye" Tagore expresses soul's restlessness before death, longing for eternal peace, and surrender to death as a higher calling. The poem expresses a deep sense of restlessness, as if the poet feels the approach of something inevitable—death. The title itself, "Aami

Chanchal Hey" (I am Restless, O Lord), suggests that the poet is aware of his fleeting time and is preparing for the final departure.

Tagore, who often portrayed death as a return to the infinite, seems to be speaking directly to the divine. The poem conveys the idea that human life is full of movement and restlessness, but in death, the soul will find stillness and peace. Rather than fearing death, Tagore embraces it as a natural and even welcome transition. He acknowledges that the body is weak and temporary, but the soul is destined to merge with the eternal. This reflects the Upanishadic concept of the soul's journey beyond the physical world. The poems in *Shesh Lekha* reflect Tagore's most intimate and philosophical thoughts on death. There is no fear, only acceptance, as he sees death not as an end but as a return to the eternal.

4.2.4. Rumi's Poems on Death

The poem, "When I Die" (Translated from Persian), is one of Rumi's most famous reflections on death, in which he tells readers not to mourn because he is simply returning to his divine home.

When my coffin is being carried, don't think I am gone.
I am arriving at Love's doorstep. (1995)

This poem conveys Rumi's ecstatic acceptance of death as a transition into eternal love. Rumi expresses the idea of transformation and spiritual evolution through death, moving from one form to another.

I died as a mineral and became a plant,
I died as a plant and rose to an animal,
I died as an animal and I was a man.
Why should I fear? When was I less by dying? (1926)

This poem shares similarities with Tagore's belief in continuity beyond physical death. Rumi emphasizes that his soul will not die but instead soar into divine unity.

"Don't weep for me. This is my wedding night with God!"(1995)

This mirrors Tagore's mystical yearning in "Maran Rey Tuhoo Momo Shyam Saman", where death is seen as a divine encounter.

4.3. Death as a Metaphysical Transformation

4.3.1 Death as a Gateway to the Divine in Tagore's Letters

In *Shesh Lekha*, Tagore's treatment of death suggests that it is a process of transcendence. His letters are filled with an acceptance of mortality, and there is a recurring theme that death opens the way for the soul to reunite with the divine. Tagore often speaks of the eternal nature of the soul, which cannot be bound by the limitations of the physical body. He portrays death as an inevitable and beautiful release, a final journey toward the divine.

For example, in one of the final letters, he writes, "I do not fear death; I only long to be free from the chains of my body." This metaphysical transformation is consistent with his broader worldview that

death is an opportunity for spiritual liberation, an end to the suffering of worldly existence. Another deeply moving poem from *Shesh Lekha* (Final Letters) is "Janmer Gaan" (The Song of Life), one of the last poems Tagore wrote before his death. This poem beautifully captures his ultimate spiritual realization—life and death are but two sides of the same divine journey, culminating in the soul's return to God.

I have sung the song of life, today I sing my final song.
Let it now dissolve into the vast ocean of Your being.(Tagore,n.d.2025)

Here, Tagore compares his life's journey to a song, which has now reached its final note, seeking to merge with the infinite—the divine. This reflects the core Vedantic idea of Brahmalaya, where the soul dissolves into the Supreme Being.

Another powerful line from the same poem:

My melody is exhausted—now merges it with Your eternal tune. (Tagore, n.d. 2025)

This signifies surrender, a final offering of the poet's voice and existence to God. It aligns with the Bhakti tradition, where the devotee longs to become one with the divine music of the universe. This poem, like the others in *Shesh Lekha*, reveals Tagore's deep acceptance of mortality as a gateway to spiritual unity, making it one of his most profound metaphysical reflections.

4.3.2 Rumi's Perspective on Death as a Union with God

Rumi's mystical approach to death mirrors many of Tagore's ideas, though it is rooted in a distinctly Islamic context. For Rumi, death is the ultimate form of union with God. In his poetry, death is not an end but a transformation into a higher state of being, a return to the divine essence. Rumi's famous line, "When the soul has left the body, it will be in the garden of the Beloved," encapsulates this idea. In Rumi's view, death frees the soul from the limitations of the physical world, allowing it to merge with the divine. The metaphor of death as a lover's embrace is recurrent in his works. To Rumi, the soul's return to God is the ultimate fulfilment of its deepest longing, an eternal reunion in the "garden of the Beloved." The following poem sheds light on Rumi's yearning for merging with beloved God: "The Reed Flute's Lament" (from *Masnavi*), is about most about the soul's longing for reunion with God.

Listen to the reed flute, how it complains,
Lamenting its banishment from its home:
'Ever since they tore me from my root,
My song has been a sorrowful tune. (1926)

The reed flute (ney) is a central metaphor in Sufi poetry. Rumi compares the flute to the human soul, which has been "cut off" from its divine source (God). Just as the flute produces a sorrowful melody, the human soul expresses its longing for reunion with the Divine. The "root" represents God or the divine origin of the soul. Being "torn" signifies the separation of the soul from its Creator when it enters the material world. The "sorrowful tune" is the cry of every being that yearns for spiritual homecoming. In Sufi philosophy, the world is seen as a place of exile, and human existence is defined by the pain of separation from God. The sorrowful melody of the flute echoes this existential longing. Just as a flute must be hollowed out to produce music, the soul must go through suffering and purification to express its love for the Divine. The idea of spiritual exile is a common theme in

mysticism, reflecting the notion that true fulfilment comes only through reuniting with God. In Sufism, divine love is often described as a burning desire to return to the Beloved (God). The flute's lament mirrors the soul's love-sickness, a state in which it deeply yearns for its Creator. This longing is not despair but a reminder that separation is temporary and reunion is inevitable. Rumi's entire *Masnavi* expands on this theme, portraying the spiritual journey as one of transformation. The soul must pass through trials, detach from worldly illusions, and ultimately return to its divine source—just as the flute, once part of the reed bed, longs to be whole again.

"The Reed Flute's Lament" is not just a poem; it is a spiritual metaphor for every seeker. It tells us that the pain of separation is what drives us toward God. Rumi urges us to listen to this inner cry, recognize our longing for the Divine, and embrace the journey back to our true home.

4.4. Differences in cultural and philosophical tradition:

Despite their similarities, *Shesh Lekha* and Rumi's death-related poems also have some significant differences. One of the most notable differences is the authors' cultural and philosophical backgrounds. Tagore was a Bengali poet who was deeply influenced by Hinduism and Indian philosophy. Rumi, on the other hand, was a Persian poet who was deeply influenced by Islam and Sufism.

As a result, the authors' views on death and the afterlife are shaped by their respective cultural and philosophical traditions. Tagore's *Shesh Lekha* reflects a Hindu perspective on death, which emphasizes the cyclical nature of life and the idea of reincarnation. In contrast, Rumi's death-related poems reflect a Sufi perspective on death, which emphasizes the unity of all beings and the idea of union with the divine.

Another difference between the two works is their use of literary devices. While both works use imagery and symbolism, they use these devices in different ways. Tagore's *Shesh Lekha* is characterized by its use of metaphor and personification, while Rumi's death-related poems are characterized by their use of allegory. In *Shesh Lekha*, Tagore grapples with the inevitability of death while celebrating the eternal nature of the soul. One of the most poignant poems from this collection is "The Sunset of the Century" (translated by the poet himself). Here, Tagore reflects on the end of life as a natural transition, akin to the setting sun:

"The day that is dying is not afraid of the dark,
For it knows that the night is but a pause in the rhythm of life." ("The day that is dying", n. d)

Tagore's tone is serene and accepting, emphasizing the cyclical nature of existence. He sees death not as an end but as a merging with the infinite. This is deeply rooted in the Upanishadic idea of Brahman (the universal soul) and Atman (the individual soul), where the self dissolves into the eternal.

Rumi's poem "The Guest House" (from *The Masnavi*) also deals with the theme of mortality and the transient nature of life. However, Rumi's approach is more dynamic and metaphorical. He describes life as a guesthouse, where every experience—joy, sorrow, or even death—is a visitor to be welcomed:

Rumi's "The Alchemy of Love" (from *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*) uses the metaphor of love more passionately. Rumi describes love as a transformative force that dissolves the ego and unites the soul with God:

Love is the alchemy that turns pain into gold,
The fire that burns away the self,
Leaving only the Beloved. ("Love is the alchemy",n.d)

Rumi's imagery is fiery and intense, reflecting the Sufi concept of fana (annihilation of the self in God). His love is not just a metaphor but a spiritual practice, a means of transcending the material world.

4.4.1. Nature and the Divine

Tagore often uses nature to symbolize the divine. In "The Flower", he writes:

The flower said to the sky,
'I will not fade away,
For I carry within me the eternal spring. ("The flower said to the sky".n.d)

This poem reflects Tagore's belief in the unity of all creation. The flower, though transient, embodies the eternal through its connection to the divine. Tagore's imagery is rooted in the natural world, reflecting his deep reverence for life and its cycles. Rumi also uses nature, but in a more symbolic way. In "The Reed Flute's Song" (from *The Masnavi*), he uses the reed flute as a metaphor for the human soul, separated from its divine source:

Listen to the story told by the reed,
of being separated from the reed bed.
Since I was cut from the reed bed,
I have made this crying sound. (1926)

Rumi's imagery is more abstract, using the reed flute to symbolize the soul's longing for reunion with God. Unlike Tagore's celebration of nature's beauty, Rumi's nature imagery serves as a vehicle for spiritual allegory.

4.4.2 Surrender and the Self

In "The Journey's End", Rumi writes about surrendering the self to the infinite:

"I have spent my days stringing and unstringing my instrument,
while the song I came to sing remains unsung."(1995)

This poem reflects Tagore's humility and his acceptance of life's imperfections. The unsung song symbolizes the soul's ultimate surrender to the divine, acknowledging that the journey itself is more important than the destination. Rumi's "The Way of the Lover" (from *The Masnavi*) also speaks of surrender, but in a more ecstatic and passionate tone:

The lover's way is to become the flame,
to burn away the self,
until only the Beloved remains."(1995)

Rumi's concept of surrender is more radical, involving the complete annihilation of the ego. His imagery is fiery and transformative, reflecting the Sufi ideal of losing oneself in God.

On the contrary, Tagore in surrendering the self to God, is meditative and emotional as he expresses longing for dissolution:

Gazing into the Great Void, I have said—
O Silent One, O Formless One, O One who pervades all—
Today I wish to cast off all fatigue
And dissolve into You. (Tagore, 2011)

The poet's desire to "dissolve" into the formless void reflects a complete surrender of individuality, echoing the Upanishadic idea of the soul merging with Brahman. This is not mere death—it is moksha, liberation through surrender.

Last line may represent both physical exhaustion from life and existential weariness. Tagore suggests that true rest lies not in sleep but in the abandonment of ego and desire, which is only possible through surrender.

Silence and Infinity are used as Metaphors. The use of "Great Void" is particularly rich. While "void" may suggest emptiness, Tagore uses it to suggest boundless fullness—the infinite, unknowable space into which the self must melt. Silence too is not absence, but presence beyond language. This poem takes self-surrender to its philosophical extreme. It goes beyond devotion or emotional submission. It's a mystic act, where the poet seeks annihilation of the finite self into the infinite. Here, Tagore blends Vedantic philosophy, Bhakti emotion, and poetic vision, creating a spiritual act of surrender that is as intellectual as it is devotional.

4.4.3 Tone and Emotional Quality

Tagore's tone in *Shesh Lekha* is reflective, tender, and often melancholic. His poems are like quiet meditations, filled with a sense of peace and acceptance. Even when dealing with themes of death and impermanence, there is a quiet joy in his verses, a celebration of life's beauty.

Rumi's tone is passionate, ecstatic, and urgent. His poems are filled with a sense of longing and desire for union with the Divine. There is a dynamic energy in his work, a call to transcend the material world and embrace the spiritual reality.

5. Conclusion

Rabindranath Tagore and Jalal al-Din Rumi, though separated by centuries, cultures, and religious traditions, share a profound and deeply spiritual engagement with the theme of death. Their poetic visions transcend geographical and philosophical boundaries, presenting death not as an end, but as a transformative passage toward the divine. Tagore's *Shesh Lekha* reflects a serene acceptance of mortality, embracing the cyclical nature of existence as part of the universal harmony found in Hindu thought. His verses paint death as a peaceful return to the cosmic order, surrender to the infinite. In contrast, Rumi's Sufi-inspired poetry expresses a passionate longing for union with the Beloved, where death is not an end, but the soul's ecstatic return to God. His language is fiery and celebratory, emphasizing the dissolution of the self into divine love.

Despite their differences in tone and religious outlook, both poets ultimately converge on the idea that death is not to be feared but embraced. Their writings offer a path to spiritual transcendence, guiding readers toward a higher understanding of the soul's eternal journey. Tagore's meditative reflections and Rumi's ecstatic visions together present a complementary perspective on the human quest for

divine reunion. Their works continue to resonate with contemporary audiences, offering solace and wisdom in the face of mortality. By weaving together poetic beauty and philosophical depth, Tagore and Rumi remind us that death, rather than a conclusion, is a doorway to infinite existence—one that leads to love, surrender, and ultimate unity with the divine.

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