



Valmiki: The Epitome of ‘Integral Life’

Dr Arnab Chakraborty

Assistant Professor, Future Institute of Technology

Abstract

The paper, “Valmiki: The Epitome of ‘Integral Life,” focuses on the first play of Tagore as a literary masterpiece in exploring Aurobindonean concept of integral life. This study briefly discusses the meaning of integral life as propagated by Sri Aurobindo. Moreover, it seeks to explore the importance of transformation of consciousness in achieving integral life. Although, *Valmiki Pratibha* (or *The Genius of Valmiki*, 1881) is analysed from different angles by many critics over different time, very few critics have successfully addressed the play from the perspective of integral life. This paper also explores the practical implications of integral life as well as its success in shaping and rectifying one’s character even in today’s world.

Keywords

Valmiki, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, integral life, transformation of consciousness,

Rabindranath Tagore had chosen his plays as the tool of propagating certain ideas. His first play *Valmiki Pratibha* (or *The Genius of Valmiki*, 1881) is no exception. It was first published in 1881, when Tagore was merely twenty years old. In the same year the play was staged before the-then eminent scholar like Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, Sir Gurudas Bandyopadhyay, and Haraprasad Shastri on 26th February, 1881. The play took its final shape through different editions. Rumpa Das vividly captures the publication history of the play:

The first edition of the play was also published at this time [26th February, 1881], and the subsequent editions were published only after the composition of *Kaal-Mrigaya* (*The Fateful Hunt*) - another play inspired by an incident from the *Ramayana*. In fact, the latter play was composed following the success of the first, and the second edition included the song-portion of the forest-nymphs, as well as some ten songs from *Kaal Mrigaya*, some in their entirety and some in modified versions. The second edition was published in February 1886. (104)

Although, the play, primarily, was a prose drama, Tagore finally converted it into a verse drama besides bringing few other changes. But, the central theme of the play remains unchanged.

Valmiki Pratibha (or *The Genius of Valmiki*) does not discuss any event from the *Ramayana*. It explains why and how the *Ramayana* was written. *Valmiki Pratibha* mainly deals with the life of robber chief 'Ratnakar' and his transformation to a sage, 'Valmiki'. Tagore chose the legend of the notorious dacoit leader Ratnakar for definite purpose. Rabindranath considers the theme of this great transformation for the plot of his very first play and improvises the content as well as the technique of expression according to his purpose. As Sisirkumar Ghose quotes Tagore in *Makers of Indian Literature: Rabindranath Tagore*: "The *Ramayana* story of conversion is retold, how the robber chief, Ratnakar, turns into a poet" (61).

From Sisirkumar Ghose to Rumpa Das, many critics have analysed different aspects and qualities of *Valmiki Pratibha*. But very few have, successfully, explored the transformation of dacoit leader Ratnakar to Valmiki from the Aurobindonean point of view of integral life. Thus, this paper will seek to explore Ratnakar's transformation of consciousness in achieving integral life.

By 'integral life,' Sri Aurobindo meant the integration of all psychological planes. According to him, the outer planes (the physical, the vital and the mental) should be integrated with the inner planes (inner physical, the inner vital, the inner mental), with the leadership of the innermost being, the psychic. This integration brings harmony in life and in our outer activities as well. Although, Tagore did not use the term 'integral life,' he used different expressions like 'all life,' 'all comprehensive life,' 'harmony of life' or 'complete life' etc., for the same idea. The integration of Matter and Spirit is the essence of Tagore's philosophy. While Sri Aurobindo speaks of it theoretically, Tagore practises it in his plays. The difference between them is that

Sri Aurobindo is specific about the planes, whereas Tagore speaks from his extraordinary perception of life, spontaneously with his general principles on life.

In spite of being the first play of Tagore, *Vālmiki Pratibhā* depicts best the process of transformation. It covers a great span of time and events in human life. The most striking fact about the first play of Tagore is his selection of the subject matter. Perhaps there is no parallel in the history of Indian epic or world epic which can match the grandeur of the conversion, or in Aurobindonian term the transformation of consciousness. This transformation of consciousness is considered to be the first step towards the integral life. It would not be an overstatement to say that it plays a major role in attaining integral life. Sri Aurobindo, himself, makes it very clear that how much important the transformation of consciousness is in one's life. Regarding these issues he advises:

First, the consciousness must be transformed, then life, then the forms. It is in this order that the new creation will happen . . . We must live integrally the truth, the beauty, the power and the perfection hidden in the depth of our being. It is then that all life will become the expression of the sublime, eternal, divine Joy. (Manibhai 11)

The order that Sri Aurobindo states here is exactly followed by Valmiki in *Vālmiki Pratibhā*. Tagore's *Vālmiki Pratibhā* starts with a prayer. The forest nymphs are reporting the present condition and mourning the present situation:

Our sacred forest resembles the somber burial-ground
The garden bewails, and so moans the breeze,
The deer is alarmed, the birds sing no more,
The green forest-cover is bathed in gore [.] (R. Das 104)

Thus, the forest nymphs at the very opening scene are trying to grab the reader's attention at the beginning. Their complaints intensify the dramatic atmosphere. It is clear that unnatural phenomena are taking place in the forest and the Edenesque forest is gradually losing its grandeur. Therefore, the forest nymphs are lamenting their present condition and praying to the goddess Durga. The forest nymphs act as the choric character in this play, who are reporting the present violence of the forest and at the same time making the readers aware about the lost glory of it. They are desperately seeking for the boon of Mother Durga for restoring the normalcy.

After the opening dialogue by the forest nymphs the first robber appears in the scene. He narrates the event of huge looting which he has fled just before the gory scuffle with the victims takes place. But he is an opportunist; he won't settle for a bit less allotment. He presents a funny description of his own appearance. He is cunning enough to claim an equal amount of looted belongings with the partaking robbers. With his apparent vigour of voice and plump appearance he wants to succeed in the argument with his fellow robbers. As his colleagues are not so courteous to allow him an equal amount of share, they involve in a verbose argument. The conversation

between them is full of wit and humour. Especially the second and third robbers finely mock the superficial gallantry of the first robber. They rightly accuse him of worthlessness. When they are about to engage themselves in a broil their chief, Ratnakar¹ enters the scene. Since he is the commander of the group, other robbers get alarmed and stop their quarrel. To please their leader the robbers, sing of unity. However, the readers do not find any difficulty to understand the deceptive objective of their effort. The continuous conflict between appearance and reality plays a major role in this play. Moreover, it depicts different sheds of conflict; sometimes interpersonal conflict, at the other time it is intrapersonal. The robbers await their leader's instruction, they ask for it. Commanding his men Ratnakar leaves. His men are ready to abide by the directives of their chief. The short and direct instruction reveals the character of Ratnakar. He is straight forward and clear-cut in his business. His conscience is completely subdued. This deleterious and astute attitude depicts the cruelty of his character. His men are permeated with their leader's aggressive stance. They are infected with malice. They search for the prey enthusiastically. In the meantime, a lonely little girl loses her way in the dense forest and those felons make no mistake. They try to capture the forlorn girl apparently facilitating her with deceptive equivocation. The little girl with all her innocence gets entrapped and is taken captive by the cruel robbers. They drag her ruthlessly. Subsequently, the forest nymphs through their conversation depict the sorry condition of the girl and the utter brutality of the felons. Furthermore, they are perplexed finding no one to save the child. The first scene ends with this pitiful portrayal by the forest nymphs.

The second scene opens with Ratnakar praying before Kali, "the goddess of ruthless might and destruction" (R. Das 105). He is getting impatient for his offerings. He craves for the sacrifice to satisfy Kali. Here, Ratnakar is bold and furious. He seeks for the blessings of Kali by pleasing Her with the fresh blood of sacrifice. His men come back and report their leader about the unsullied and pristine offering that they have got hold of. Ratnakar gets excited and he is eager to abide by the rites for sacrifice:

Bring the dagger. Mother *Shyama* is thirsty,
Go fast– serve her with blood.
Her edacious flicking tongue, those sparkling eyes,
Her grisly teeth are rushing by crunching every which way.

(Kundu, *The Genius of Valmiki* 2.13-16)

This speech of Ratnakar shows the heinous side of his character. He is only concerned with the prosperity of his affair and discards every kind of humane attribution. Presently he is at the nadir of morality. He has adopted a way of living which is extremely opposite to integral life. Rabindranath weaves the character of

¹ Though Rabindranath uses the name Valmiki from the beginning of the play, this study will call him so only after his transformation, therefore until his transformation he will be referred to as Ratnakar.

Ratnakar in such a manner that would emphasize his transformation in the most prominent way possible.

The little girl begs for her life when Ratnakar advances towards her for the sacrifice. The forest nymph also prays for the mercy of the girl. At this point the moaning of the little girl causes a psychological change in Ratnakar:

How has my heart turned thus?
 I cannot understand this sway of emotions.
 Why did my stone-heart melt? Oh why?
 How did tears find their way to my eyes?
 O what *māya* spreads over, opening the floodgates of the petrified soul?
 Everything is swept away, dear me, everything is washed away—
 The desert is submerged in flood of compassion. (R. Das 105)

The inner conflict of Ratnakar starts here. He experiences some unprecedented sensations. He himself is amazed at his feelings. This is the beginning of his intrapersonal conflict. Ratnakar discards the offering in a straightforward manner. Although, this is the beginning of his transformation he is not a completely changed person yet. His inner conflict compels him to command his men to look for a new sacrifice. But his men do not welcome their chief's command cordially: "Where will we find another sacrifice at this hour of night?" (Kundu, *The Genius of Valmiki* 2.38). Still, Ratnakar is the chief of his band, so he has got every right to pass commanding orders. His men are bound to follow their leader's instruction and the conscience-stricken Ratnakar is a new person to them altogether. He seems to be someone very strange to them. Previously, he used to remain indifferent even to acts of extreme brutality. But what has happened with him now! The felons miss out to sense the beginning of the transformation in their leader. Failing which they defy the new order of Ratnakar and persuade him to accept the little girl as the sacrifice for the night. But Ratnakar remains resolute in his decision. Such is the strength of inner conflict. Even the person who undergoes this cannot decipher his actions. A veteran criminal leader like Ratnakar is showing aversion to beheading a little girl. Moreover, he himself is astonished at his switch. In the first scene the readers get a picture of an awfully cruel Ratnakar. To be precise the first scene represents annihilation, violence and brutality, whereas the beginning of the second scene intensifies the ferocity of Ratnakar. But, as the play advances, a marked and definite change in Ratnakar gets prominent. Thus the second scene of the play ends hinting at the transformation of Ratnakar.

The third scene opens with Ratnakar contemplating his present mental state. It is the continuation of his feelings that he has experienced at the end of the last scene. His feelings are outdoing his instinct. The pungent emotional state gets intensified. He is somewhat at a loss. Ratnakar is suffering from intense mental distress. An unprecedented angst is tormenting him, piercing him into pieces. He is seeking for compassionate refuge. But his men do not welcome abrupt mental

change in their leader. They are bandits, cruelty is in their blood, and they should not abandon their ruthlessness. Their leader has ordered to set free the little girl but they cannot let the offering go free so easily. They conspire against their leader behind him. Ratnakar appears to be insane to his men. They intend to behead the little girl as offering defying their leader's order. The first robber proclaims himself to be the new commander. They prepare for the custom of sacrifice, drag the little girl mercilessly. The little girl, finding no way for liberation, prays to the Almighty. The robber band is all set to perform the execution.

The rift between Ratnakar and his men widens and the interpersonal conflict is intensified. The felon leader is discarding the act of cruelty. At present he considers human-offering to God as a sin. Here lies the answer why Rabindranath has highlighted the episode of little girl in this play. No other episode would have been able to generate such immense mental tumult in Ratnakar. This tumult is the basis of his inner conflict and this inner conflict would cause his ultimate transformation.

The third scene portrays a marked and definite change in Ratnakar, which appears to occur towards the end of the second scene. In one sense this scene is a continuation of the second one, but it strengthens the change of Ratnakar. It depicts the protagonist with a definite and marked change; more resolute and determined in his decision. This scene plays a pivotal role in the play. It propels the play towards its *denouement*.

The fourth scene opens with a song by the forest nymphs. With the change in approach of Ratnakar the song also varies in its connotations. Though, the song speaks of sudden delight and pleasure, the transformation of the protagonist is not complete yet. Ratnakar is perplexed, perhaps misled too. He suffers from conflict again; illusion steers him the opposite way. Unable to discern the reason behind his mental annoyance, Ratnakar appears to be restless. He tries to fly away from the present situation desperately. Although, the course of emancipation remains obscure hitherto. To get rid of this enormous mental torment he resorts to his former vocation. Since, he has not been exposed to other affairs previously, relying on hunting turns out to be the only left pathway for his pent-up emotions. Once again, he intends to get elated and rejuvenated by practising his usual skills. He longs to overcome his grief-stricken state somehow. Forgetfulness seems to him to be the only solution for his suffering but then he is not such a blessed person. At this state of utter perplexity Ratnakar decides to embrace the arrow and the bow. He determines to opt for hunting with his troupe and get pleasure out of it. But the pensive mood does not beat a retreat to him. For Ratnakar, illusion obstructs in the way of his ultimate transformation. He is ignorant of the truth that is why he is duped with illusory thinking so easily. Here the observations of Sri Aurobindo seem to be justified:

The Adverse Powers are the forces and beings that are interested in maintaining the falsehoods they have created in the world of the

Ignorance and in putting them forward as the truth which men must follow. (Manibhai 11)

Illusion cannot clutch the control of Ratnakar for long; his conscience awakens from its hibernation. Ratnakar, once again, suffers from mental conflict. His anticipation to get rid of his morose feelings by the help of hunting does not work for him. In spite of getting pleasure out of it, he gets conscious of morality. He orders his men to throw away the bow; to discard the arrows. Earlier, they have pursued two fawns for their hunting. But Ratnakar considers them to be too innocent as their target. So he commands his men to spare them. His conscience is reawakening. The tearful eyes of the fawns facilitate in regaining his mental conflict. Ratnakar raises question regarding the rationality of their action. He denounces the act of hunting and decides to renounce it permanently.

Earlier, the wailing of the little girl has made Ratnakar contemplative and compelled him to ponder over his actions. Though, his conscience could not completely conquer his inner self, his mental conflict dissipates soon. Once again he indulges in inhuman actions. But this time the innocuous tearful eyes compel him to reconsider his moral stance. He is ultimately convinced not to harm any innocent creature. Rabindranath, here, has beautifully rendered the episode of the deer to elicit the mental conflict of Ratnakar. He could have drawn the imagery of any other animal, but, knew very well that the gentle figure of a fawn would facilitate the inner tension of Ratnakar in best possible manner. For the second time in the play the inner conflict of Ratnakar advances him towards integral life. According to Sri Aurobindo conflict plays a major role in integral life:

In subhuman life of animal there is a vital and physical struggle, but no mental conflict. Man is subject to this mental conflict and is therefore at war not only with others but with himself; and because he is capable of this war with himself, he is also capable of that which is denied to the animal, of an inner evolution, a progression from higher to higher type, a constant self-transcending. (Manibhai 11)

Ratnakar, truly, struggles mentally at certain stages of his life. External events just ignite his conscience at particular interval of time. His reactions to different issues portray the strength of his character and hint at every possibility of transcendence; this transcendence leads someone towards the integral life.

The conflict between Ratnakar and his men reaches the culminating point. They represent two kinds of forces. Ratnakar struggles from his inner conflict to embrace the modified mental state whereas his men are still preoccupied with their cruel instinct. Gradually, Ratnakar creates his individual identity and distances himself from his men.

The fifth scene opens with Ratnakar brooding in pensive mood. He ponders about the futility of life; he suffers from perplexity again. Ratnakar is mourning; he mourns the worthlessness of his life. At this point of his life Ratnakar realizes that

he has been misled. He is deceived by the falsehood of life. Throughout his life he has tried to appease his physical and worldly needs so far. As he keeps himself busy with the materialistic prosperity only, he could not achieve something noteworthy hitherto. His life is full of despair; he is left helpless to evade the fangs of impenetrable misery. Ratnakar suffers from mental vulnerability; he is unable to hold on his malicious intensity any longer. The feeling of desolation gets intensified gradually within him. Ratnakar is restless now; he is yearning for the emancipation. Getting baffled of his present condition he is looking for a support that he can rely upon. Therefore, he struggles for respite. This struggle would intensify his internal conflict. In his destitute, his men also desert him. So, he remains perplexed utterly. He has lost the purpose of his life; in fact, he did not have any particular purpose in life earlier. He is driven by his instinct so far. For his livelihood Ratnakar has mercilessly plundered the belongings of innocent people; even he did not care to slay ordinary men for his materialistic gain. But he gradually realizes that he is getting involved in the most heinous acts day after day. Therefore, he discards the feat of plundering and even hunting also. Since he has no knowledge of other trade, he is left clueless. He, himself admits his worthlessness again and again.

In his absolute desolation when he desperately looks for a way out, he notices a couple of huntsmen. They plan to lynch a pair of bird rejoicing in love on a branch of tree. Ratnakar, observing their move, tries to dissuade them from hunting those innocent birds: “Stop, stop, what will you do taking away the bird’s life! / Both of them are delighted, singing in happiness”² (Tagore, *Valmiki Pratibha* 5.18-19). Since Ratnakar has advanced to some extent towards his transformation, he can no longer endure the brutal hunting of innocent animals. He has tried to resist such cruel action in recent past also; therefore, his men shunned him already. Still, he strives with his full effort to eradicate such violence from the vicinity. Actually, it is a desperate attempt on Ratnakar’s part to disarm those huntsmen from committing such heinous crime. Although his attempts go in vain, he renders his stance evidently as a half-transformed man. He asserts his acumens but the huntsmen do not pay heed to Ratnakar’s counsel; they kill one of the two birds. The reaction of Ratnakar seems to be more instinctive and pungent. Ratnakar utters a Sanskrit sloka, though not very consciously but spontaneously as the reaction to this sad event. That sloka by him is considered to be the first Sloka in Sanskrit:

*mā niṣāda pratiṣṭhām tvamagamaḥ śāśvatīḥ samāḥ yat
krauñcamithunādekam avadhīḥ kāmamohitam*³

(Tagore, *Valmiki Pratibha* 5.25-26)

Ratnakar condemns the event vehemently and inflicts curses upon the huntsmen saying that they would not get peace in the rest of their life as they have killed the unsuspecting bird engaged in worshipping its mate. But, the change in the

²This translation of the original text into English is done by me.

³ This is the Roman transliteration of the original Bengali text.

register of the dialogue of Ratnakar has greater significance. Ratnakar, himself, is amazed at his own changed dialogue. From now onwards he would speak in totally different manner, to be precise, completely transformed language. He begins exploring his undiscovered self. Presently, the gloomy mental state of Ratnakar starts changing; he can perceive the celestial light amidst utter darkness. He is extremely astonished at the advent of Goddess Saraswati.

The advent of Saraswati is symbolically significant also. Not only has her appearance brought in the light in the forest but the gloomy mental condition of Ratnakar seems to get vanished from this point of time; the veil of ignorance starts receding. Ratnakar reaches the final phase of his transformation. Now he comprehends the meaning of his life, moreover he recognizes the means of living it. He is leading towards a new path which is free from any kind of violence and is full of sanctity. This path is sculpted with the true essence of knowledge. Ratnakar presently understands the true meaning of religion and what kind of rites a man should observe.

When Ratnakar is longing for the blessings of Saraswati, goddess Lakshmi emerges before him. She enquires from Ratnakar the reason of his bereavements. She tries to pacify Ratnakar by offering him materialistic fortune. She requests him to engage himself in rejoices as she can remove every cause of his misfortune. Eventually she assures Ratnakar any amount of wealth as she is famous to bring delight in this rueful world by blessing one with fortune. She asks Ratnakar to pay her attention.

But Ratnakar is an almost transformed person now. He is about to complete his journey in becoming Valmiki (Valmik in Sanskrit means an anthill) from Ratnakar. So, he is not interested in any kind of materialistic pleasure. No amount of wealth can entice him anymore. Presently he pursues the path of true wisdom only. No adverse power can throttle his spiritual goal. He is mentally mightier than before. Even he is capable to gather enough fortitude successfully to refuse the appeal of goddess Lakshmi. Ratnakar directly refuses to accept the offerings by Lakshmi and prays her not to entice him by any sort of wealth; because, he is no more in need of those things. He requests the goddess to disappear as she is not the same whose blessings he seeks now.

Ratnakar yearns for the music that has changed his course of life. The resonance of the melody that he is cherishing in his heart is pricking him all the time. Actually, it is not only the music that Ratnakar is craving for; rather it is the congruity of life, moreover, the ultimate harmony of life. He has realized the true meaning of life. He does not believe in cosmetic pleasure anymore but in spiritual pursuit.

Ratnakar is longing for the grace of Saraswati like a baby depends on its parents for solace. Rationality cannot stand long in the way of attaining transcendence and Ratnakar getting completely baffled wishes to surrender himself

completely to the divine power. Sri Aurobindo makes an important remark on this trait; while discussing about the integral yoga or integral life he observes:

To be a Yogi, a Sannyasi, a Tapaswi is not the object here. The object is transformation, and the transformation can only be done by a force infinitely greater than your own; it can only be done by being truly like a child in the hands of the Divine Mother. (Manibhai 25)

Ratnakar does not aspire to become a Yogi, Sannyasi or a Tapaswi consciously. His cravings for the spiritual transformation are clearly depicted here in this play. Like a stubborn child his mind is obsessed with only one idea, the oncoming of Goddess Saraswati. For his absolute transformation he requires the much-needed support of the goddess of wisdom as one needs the blessings of supreme power in order to attain the ultimate transformation. Sri Aurobindo defines this supreme force as “Divine Mother” (Manibhai 25) and also suggests surrendering oneself to Her like a child. Ratnakar here undergoes the same condition.

It is no wonder that Ratnakar succeeds in the test of perseverance; Saraswati appears before him ultimately. Ratnakar jubilantly appreciates her presence and enjoys the divine atmosphere utterly.

Ratnakar is delighted at the appearance of Saraswati. He does not make any mistake in recognizing his muse. The external atmosphere is transforming rapidly; the universe turns lively; it casts its enchanting effect on Ratnakar. Everything around him is enlivened. The transformation of his mental state is externalized through the presentation of natural splendour. Ratnakar can even perceive the rhythmic and harmonious treading of the sun and the moon as well as of the universe at once. An auroral and magnificent atmosphere is created in the forest as well as within Ratnakar due to the presence of Saraswati. He can feel his inner integrity at every corner of his surrounding and natural phenomena; the forest has regained its Edenic essence. Ratnakar can feel the grace of divine power everywhere; the stars become poetic. The advent of goddess Saraswati in the milieu of poetic and luminous setting amaze Ratnakar utterly, he is confused for a moment. A shade of light is overshadowed by the glow of a newer radiance. Here again we get the echo of Sri Aurobindo regarding the issue of integral yoga or life:

The whole principle of this yoga is to give oneself entirely to the Divine alone and to nobody and nothing else, and to bring down into ourselves by union with the Divine Mother all the transcendent light, power, wideness, peace, purity, truth-consciousness and Ananda of the Supramental Divine. (Manibhai 24)

Likewise, Ratnakar is concerned about his spiritual pursuit only. His dogged devotion is rewarded with the cadence of poetry and the Edenic luminous radiance. His conscience is transformed and enjoys the divine pleasure; as Sri Aurobindo talks about “Ananda” (Manibhai 24), Ratnakar can feel this eternal bliss within him besides all other positive sensations. This is possible only when someone surrenders himself

or herself completely to the divine power and successfully pursues the integration with the supreme power. Ratnakar here has achieved that quest. He speaks about his ecstatic feelings within him again and again.

Ratnakar is witnessing the most beautiful manifestation of nature. Still, he is in trance, as if under someone's spell. Every natural element has been enlivened by his charming tint of imagination. New tunes are being composed by the passing breeze and the flowers are creating a melodious ambience by taking part in the harmonies. The veil of darkness and doubts is fading away; Ratnakar participates in the glorious celebration with nature. He is witnessing the graceful appearance of goddess Saraswati. Ratnakar resolves to be an ardent devotee at her feet eternally for bringing the grace of wisdom and the divine light in his so far insignificant and hollow life.

One thing is noticeable here; Valmiki has not demanded anything or prayed for any kind of boon as blessings from the goddess. But the august presence of Saraswati has not only palliated his agitations but the very own goddess of art herself blesses Valmiki with the most appealing tune ceaselessly. Likewise, Sri Aurobindo considers the ultimate blessings of God to be the outcomes of integral life:

... the surrender must be complete. Nothing must be reserved, no desire, no demand, no opinion, no idea that this must be, that cannot be, that this should be and that should not be; - all must be given.

To those who demand from Him, God gives what they demand, but to those who give themselves and demand nothing, He gives everything that they might otherwise have asked or needed and in addition He gives Himself and the spontaneous boons of His love. (Manibhai 22)

Similarly, Valmiki surrenders himself completely to the goddess and demands nothing. But in return he has got such a blessing which he could not have thought of even in his dream. It is true that Valmiki has suffered immensely for his emancipation, for his liberation of spirit; but the reward he has got in return is something unimaginable.

The soul of Valmiki has attained the freedom. The joy of this redemption is so great that it overshadows the earlier pangs. Without considering the consequences Valmiki has left the path of violence; even he has discarded the company of his cruel men. But he has gathered enough courage to pursue the path of truth, the path of wisdom. The magnitude of the blessings by the goddess not only belittles the agonies and torments of Valmiki, moreover it begets him the commencement of a completely new life.

The goddess of wisdom, Saraswati, has already blessed Valmiki with magnificent poetic genius earlier. Now she elucidates the intensity of her blessings; the whole country would applaud the poetic flair of Valmiki. Presently Valmiki is cleansed of his earlier misdeeds and successfully has undergone the purification of his soul. Here, the readers or the audience witness a reincarnation of a transformed

soul. According to the Aurobindonian doctrine of integral life Valmiki succeeds in surmounting the first hurdle by guiding himself successfully towards the transformation of consciousness.

Finally, goddess Saraswati gifts Valmiki her celestial harp. She promises him also that this harp will accompany Valmiki whenever and whatever tune he chants afterwards.

It may be true that Tagore has not mentioned much about the theme of the play but it can be said undoubtedly that he has obviously had inclinations towards the transformation of consciousness in his real life also. Otherwise, why a young playwright would select the legend of great transformation for his very first play!

Surely, Tagore had selected this topic for certain reasons. This selection cannot be a random one. This legend of transformation attracted him so much just because he, himself, was going through similar stages of transformation as an artist, moreover as a human being in his real life also. So, his creative urge as a playwright and his mental impulse found a good match in *Valmiki Pratibha*. It served both the purposes.

In the recent past, a Tollywood movie titled, *Muktodhara* (the title, again, is significant as Tagore has composed a play bearing the same name) showcases the play *Valmiki Pratibha* within it. Many convicts of Alipore Central Correctional Home have played the roles of major characters in this movie. Moreover, the protagonist of the movie, Nigel Akara, who plays the role of Valmiki, is also an accused of a brutal murder. In real-life, the earlier ruthless instinct of Nigel resembles the same of Valmiki. But, the mother like affection and true guidance of renowned dance-artist Mrs. Alokanda Roy has caused the transcendental modification in Nigel and others. The transformation of Nigel and his fellow mates as a human being proves the fact that transformation of consciousness can be achieved successfully through relentless and deliberate pursuit. Though this play was written one hundred and forty-three years ago, Tagore, through this play, renders finely how transformation of consciousness has got the practical values besides theoretical importance in achieving integral life, even today.

Works Cited

- Das, Rumpa. "Valmiki Pratibha (The Genius of Valmiki): A Study in Genius." *The Politics and Reception of Rabindranath Tagore's Drama: The Bard on the Stage*. Ed. Arnab Bhattacharya, and Mala Ranganathan. New York: Routledge, 2015. Print.
- Ghose, Sisirkumar. *Makers of Indian Literature: Rabindranath Tagore*. 1990. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2012. Print.
- Kundu, Mainak, trans. *Valmiki Pratibha*. 2015. TS. Collection of Arnab Chakraborty, Chandernagore.
- Manibhai. *A Practical Guide to Integral Yoga*. 1995. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1998. Print.
- Muktodhara*. Dir. Shiboprosad Mukherjee and Nandita Roy. Eskay Movies, 2012. Film.