

STUDY MATERIAL FOR DEGREE-III (HONS.), ENGLISH, PAPER-VII

Dr. Suman Sinha

Department of English

R. N. College, Hajipur

NAME OF THE POEM : SILENT STEPS

NAME OF THE POET: RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Silent Steps is a poem composed by the great poet Rabindranath Tagore. Rabindranath Tagore, (1861-1941) also known as Gurudev was a man who was a visionary, a saint, a seer, a philosopher, a poet, a dramatist, novelist, story writer, a composer and a painter. He wrote on numerous topics like religion, love, romance, nature and children. His poems are philosophical, mystical, spiritual and divine in nature.

In **Silent Steps** Rabindranath Tagore expresses his devotion and faith in Almighty. He believed that even though god is not visible to eyes his existence cannot be denied. His presence can be felt in various ways. In this poem he is like a true seeker of god who can hear his silent steps in any state of life, happy or sad. Everything present around is a manifestation of the great God, our creator, who is omnipresent (all present), omnipotent (all powerful) and omniscient (all knowing).

Silent Steps is taken from the long poem **Gitanjali**. **Gitanjali** is divine and philosophical in nature. It is a spiritual journey from finite to infinite and from ignorance to enlightenment. The poem **Gitanjali** which means 'Song Offering' sings of the glory and immanence of God. It truly dwells upon the Indian Bhakti tradition. This poem also reveals Tagore's personal quest of Divine. The poem was originally written in Bengali and later in 1912 it was published in English. Rabindranath Tagore received the prestigious Nobel Prize for literature for his most brilliant composition, **Gitanjali** (Song Offerings). He became the first Indian, rather, the first non- European to receive this honour. The songs of **Gitanjali** are based on the themes, like man, nature, humanity and god. In his search of eternal peace and oneness with the ultimate reality he explores relation between God and man, God and nature, nature and man and soul and humanity.

There are 103 lyrics in **Gitanjali**. **Silent steps** is the forty fifth lyric of this poem. This poem emphasises the religious and the spiritual fervour. The poem begins with a question, 'Have you not heard his silent steps?' The answer emphasises the strong faith of the poet in God, the supreme power. He cannot be perceived physically but his presence is definitely felt around. He is always present around. The poet's faith in the existence of Almighty establishes him as a true and firm devotee. The poet claims the existence of the creator everywhere. His presence can be felt in every aspect of nature. Whether it is day or night he exists. It is only a matter of belief and faith that one can hear him approach. Rabindranath Tagore believed in the close association of God and man.

*Many a song have I sung in many a mood of
mind, but all their notes have always proclaimed,
'He comes, comes ever comes'.*

In the above lines, the poet describes the songs he has written in different moods. He claims that in every note of the music the sure and certain arrival of god can be felt. God always resides in the heart of a human being hence he never fails to visit man in every condition. The sadness or happiness is nothing but the manifestation of the great creator. In other words, God is present in every form and every aspect of nature.

In the fragrant days of sunny April through the forest path he comes, comes, ever comes.

In the rainy gloom of July nights on the thundering chariot of clouds he comes, comes, ever comes.

In the lines above the poet declares the presence of God in the sweet and fragrant smell of the pleasant sunny weather of April. He treads through the path of forest in the form of 'fragrant smell'. He is also present in the gloomy rainy season in form of cloud. He never leaves the human beings whatever the condition is. Whether it is the bright and pleasant days of April that depicts happiness or the dark rainy season of July that depicts sadness, sorrow and difficulty, God is always present to guide us and lead us.

In sorrow after sorrow it is his steps that press upon my heart, and it is the golden touch of his feet that makes my joy to shine.

The poet reaffirms the existence of Almighty in the above lines. God is present even when human beings suffer. It is the presence of God that gives strength to human beings who are able to endure through this situation. It's the blessing showered by the creator that makes us shine in joy. This realisation of the presence of that power helps one to attain salvation or enlightenment.

The word 'ever' depicts the universality and permanence of the existence of omnipresent God who is the creator of this universe. The inseparable relation of god and human and god and nature cannot be denied. The aspects of nature, like '*sunny April*', '*gloom of July nights*', and '*thundering chariot of clouds*' used in the poem emphasise the relation between God and nature. It also renders beauty to the poem along with depiction of love and care for human being. Thus, **Silent Steps** is a poem of hope and joy and faith and belief.
