

# Acharya J.C.Bose and Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore: The Tale of a Great Friendship\*

It is a tremendous honour for me to speak about two great personalities: Rabindranath Tagore and J.C.Bose. The 150th birth anniversary of J.C.Bose just preceded the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. This is quite natural, since they were just two and a half years apart in age. That this talk is being delivered on 23 November is actually somewhat significant for 73 years ago, J.C.Bose breathed his last on this day in 1937. In a bizarre coincidence, 23 November is also very significant in the life of Rabindranath Tagore. In 1902, Tagore lost his wife on 23 November and five years later, in 1907, his youngest son Shomindranath, whom Rabindranath considered to be the most talented individual he had ever seen, also died of cholera on 23 November. In fact, these coincidences led Rabindranath to even turn to occult practices for a number of years.

Interestingly, this was also a period when the friendship of Rabindranath and Jagadish Chandra Bose was at its highest. We will come to that period in some detail later but before that, I must answer an oft-asked question: what is the utility of celebrating somebody's centenary or 150th birth anniversary with such pomp and ceremony? What does one hope to gain by celebrating these events? My answer is

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