

Chapter – II

Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore

Before we launch upon the subject, it will be wise on our part to determine the starting point in Rabindranath's philosophy. Where from to start Rabindranath? Tagore's philosophical ideas underwent a regular course of evolution. The poet himself was fully conscious of the tide of evolution that occupied the field of his mind. Rabindranath, we have seen, enjoys the mystic moods and rises to poetic rapture or bursts into songs. Most of his lyrics are born under mystic environments. In a mystic mood the poet feels the presence of the supreme reality and is seized with real joy, art takes its birth, poetry and songs do flow. Hence, his lyrics bear the stamp of the absolute, they are nothing if not philosophies.

Rabindranath is not an academic philosopher. Besides poetry, though he has written many a philosophical discourse, yet he has never schematized his views. He has not built what is called a philosophical system. Contemporary Indian philosophers are mostly non-academic, they care very little for theories, immune from logical errors (contemporary Indian philosophy, Edited by Radhakrishnan and Muirhead). They aim at opening their hearts and expressing their feelings. All contemporary Indian thinkers whether academic or non-academic explain the old Indian philosophy and their originality lies only in matters of explanation. The *Vedās*, the *Upaniṣads* and the six systems are being interpreted in newer and newer lights. Besides these, the *Pūrānas*, *Tantras*, the *Gītā* and the religious systems have been the objects of elucidation. Such contemporary Indian philosophers as Rammohun Roy, Devendranath, Keshabchandra, Dayananda, Vivekananda, Rabindranath, Gandhiji and Aurobindo draw inspiration from the ancient Indian wisdom.

The starting point in Rabindranath is pessimism. Like those oriental sages who compiled the six systems of Indian philosophy he starts from pain but it is surely not the last word of his philosophy. *Sāṃkhya*, *Yoga*, *Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣika* and *Mīmāṃsā* philosophy aim at annihilating the pains and sufferings of the world. Lord Buddha's only mission was to find out the remedy for pains and evils. In '*Sandhyā-Sangū*' the poet is overwhelmed by pain, sorrow, doubt and disappointment and he finds no relief whatsoever. To him the entire universe is only a mine of infinite sorrow and pain. None the less the poet invites them to take possession of his heart which is all alone. If we try to ascertain the root because that has led to the poet's disappointment, we find that it lies in his narrow perspective. In *Sandhyā-Sangū* the poet treats the nature as separate from man and he sets up a barrier between man and man. The notion of separateness blurs his vision and leads to sorrows and disappointments. It should be borne in mind that his pessimism is lonely a means and never an end while to Schopenhauer it is both a means and an end. Pessimism as a means to optimism is a characteristically Indian idea and in Rabindranath we only hear its echo. After *Sandhyā-Sangū* comes *prabhāt sangū* where we get a faint hint of salvation out of the deep dark ocean of pain and sorrow.

Now we can see two distinct sets of ideas whenever we discuss Rabindranath's view regarding the relation between the absolute and finite individuals. Like the Sāṃkhya he sometimes highlighted the Absolute and the acceptance of Absolute Reality nullifies the claims of many finite individuals. On the other hand, he has also followed the path of Ramanuja and *Bhakti* Schools. It seems that he has tried to make a firm organic relation between the Absolute and the finite. Now the question may be raised: What is the main teaching of Tagorian philosophy? Most of us may call himself as a concrete idealist, an *Viśiṣṭādvaitavādins* or a

follower of *Vaiṣṇavism*. But the poet himself has admitted that he believes in an organic relation of the Absolute with finites. We can see that his philosophy is closely related to the Hegel's philosophy. Some followers of Rabindranath state that whenever he explained the *Upaniṣhads*, he wrote in the veil of absolutism but in fact he believed in concrete idealism. But this theory is not grounded on strong logic, for the *Upaniṣhads* may be explained in both ways.

To explain the relation of the external world with the individuals the poet sings: "My heart is open and the entire universe follows into it"¹.

In the *Gūā* he got a glimpse of the real, and wished for *Jīvan-Devatā*. The poet philosopher realized the values of finiteness. Humanity to him is a meaningful item of the cosmic order. This same theme is revealed in his different literary works like *Kathā Kaṇikā*, *Kāhinī* and *Kṣaṇikā*. *Naivedya* talks of love for human being and all Infinite beings. We can notice that poet's mind is calm and secured in *Gūāñjali*, *Utsarga*, *Gitālī* and *Gitimālya*. He has loved this cosmic world and enjoyed the colour and sound of this earth. He loved the every individual entity and human being of this world. He said in one of his poem: "I do not like to die in this beautiful world. I like to live amidst men"². On the other hand, the poet also spoke in the same tone that "Yes I shall become Brahman. I cannot think of any other idea but this. I will definitely say – I shall become the Infinite..... the river says, I shall become the sea. This is not her audacity but truth and hence humility. And this is why she aspires for an union with the sea"³. In the *Sādhanā* he said, "yes we must become Brahman, we must not shrink from avowing this. Our existence is meaningless if we never can expect to realize the highest perfection that there is. If we have an aim and yet can never reach it, then it is no aim at all"⁴.

Sankara has said the same thing – “I shall become Brahman for I am He”. To make it more clear we can quote from the ‘*Thoughts from Tagore*’ – ‘Man who is provident, feels for that life of his which is not yet existent, feels must more for that than for the life that is with him; therefore he is ready to sacrifice his present inclination for the unrealized future. In this he becomes great for he realizes truth. Even to be efficiently selfish man has to recognize this truth and has to curb his immediate impulses – in other words, has to be moral. For our moral faculty is the faculty by which we know that life is not made up of fragments, purposeless and discontinuous. This moral sense of man not only gives him the power to see that self has a continuity in time, but it also enables him to see that he is not true when he is only restricted to his own self. He is more in truth than he is in fact’⁵.

Harmony between finite and Infinite:

India is a land of *Vedānta*, which means that all are one – all are Supreme Brahman But still now this theory remains within the purview of theory. For this our society is suffering from casteism, ritualism and superstition. Thus religion, which dominates Indian life, fails to perform its function of uplifting the living standard and quality of Indian people, and it becomes an intellectual asset of the few, an instrument of exploitation of many. The Global man, Rabindranath, had a special interest on human society. His interest was neither national nor international but universal. His main aim was to reconcile divergent religions by stressing the similarities among them and ignoring their differences, with all their differences, they should live together harmoniously. The only basic truth of religion is the divinity of man. ‘The kingdom of God is within you’ – says Jesus Christ. The goal of spiritual life is to realize this divinity. To Vivekananda, “Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man”.

Rabindranath has discussed about the finite and the Infinite and he just tried to make a union among them. In the context of his philosophical ideas '*Philosophy of Religion*' should not be taken to imply the study of conceptual relation between the terms in religious discourse as it is understood now-a-days. Nor should it be taken to mean philosophical enquiry into the religious phenomena as it used to be in earlier decades. Far less it is a systematization of the central tenets of any historical religion. The reasons are not always obvious. Tagore was born in a family, members of which led a movement of religious reforms. For a time, he was also associated with its institutional affairs. But for authenticity's sake, he laid down the office. He loved to describe himself as an outsider or *Brātya* in respect of the institutional or doctrinal aspects of religion. And yet he invoked religious categories, not only to express his own ideas, but also for commenting upon them extensively. Religious insights, embedded in such scriptures as the *Upaniṣads*, were to him matters relating to the spirit of man. Tagore's extensive use of the *Upaniṣadic* insights and metaphors, in his numerous prose as well as poetry, comprise a body of literature that should be valued for its philosophical content and richness of suggestions.

In this infinite, as Tagore has observed, "there is no partiality and contradiction. Each and every part of Infinite is free from contradiction and hence precious. The contradiction prevails so long that it is not known to us as a part of the Infinite, the embodiment of love. Before the realization of the Infinite our eye remains infatuated and narrow and hence the absence of harmony among men owing to which superiority and inferiority among a particular section of people can be felt. When the Infinite is realized, the vision or '*Satyadṛṣṭi*' in Tagorian phrase arises and due to this the harmony among men of different sections can be felt. This view of Tagore is supported by the *Puruṣasūkta* of the Ṛg and *Atharvaveda*, which speak about the

Divine organization of the *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya* etc. It is also said that the whole world is a Divine sacrifice. Here each and every natural phenomenon serves the Divine purpose. As every man of the world and every object of the nature is the reflection or part of the Divine, there is no contradiction or disharmony among nature and men. In order to realize this truth, “*Satyadṛṣṭi*” through the eye of the Divine is essential. The same idea has been expressed in a mantra of the *Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣad* which runs as follows: “*Cākṣuṣaścakṣuriti*”. Tagore’s experience of the presence of the Divine in natural objects is reflected in different songs and poems composed by him. It appears to us that man, God and nature are three in number, but essentially they are one. From this the underlying harmony among all from the standpoint of the Divinity is known. For this Tagore has said that a man can depend on another man and hence, we, being high, want to make others higher. If a Brahman disregards a *Śūdra*, it is disregard to himself. If he were respectful, he would have respected others. For no man is separated and hence one should be given due honour by another man, which indicated the existence of underlying harmony among men, which is supported in the *Īsopaniṣad*.

To Rabindranath there is another type of harmony between the finite and Infinite. This kind of harmony always resides within the Man i.e. individual. The object of this kind of harmony is man’s ego (*aham*) and soul (*Ātmā*). There is a constant fight between two. An individual’s ego wants to bind him in this worldly objects, whereas his soul longs for infinite, which is represented in his poem – ‘*Dui Pākhi*’ i.e. two birds. There one bird who is confined in a cage is narrating its miseries of confinement to another bird who is enjoying the taste of freedom. The miseries of ego are reflected in the dialogue of the confined bird while the freedom of the soul is represented in the words of “free bird”. A constant fight is also going on between soul and

ego. This is beautifully represented in these lines – “*Dujane Kehā KareBojhite nāhi pare, bujhate nāre āpanāya. Dujane ekā eka jhapati mare pākha katare kahekāche āya*”⁶. The metaphor of birds might have been borrowed by Tagore from the *R̥gveda* where it is stated that there are two birds: One busy in tasting palatable fruits while another witnessing it. Here two birds are representing ego and soul. They overcome their conflict and exist in a calm harmonious condition. The ego is essential for the fulfillment of the soul, but after the attainment of perfection ego is not at all useless or *Māyā*. To Rabindranath ego is as true as the soul. Here is the real harmony which may be called “Identity-in-difference”. As an individual’s ego overpowers his soul, he becomes selfless due to which he will maintain his individuality as well as will have connection with all with the help of his soul. At this time *Ānanda* which is reflected in the *Upaniṣadic Mantras* like “*Madhu Vātāṛtāyate Madhu Kṣaranti Sindhavaḥ*”⁷ etc. comes and it seems that they are two birds existing together in a friendly manner due to having bliss. The harmonious picture which comes to our mind is that a man who is enjoying and roaming at the same time endowed with ‘*Śāntam Śivam Advaitam*’. There are few characteristics of the individual which lead him to austerity and sacrifice is the essence of a man. In a man there are two entities: one is simple man and another is Universal Eternal man. Through this a man can bring Universality in thinking, action etc. Here he exceeds his limitation and reaches the Infinite stage.

It is said that Tagore has a glorified ego. To him ego is an entity through which a man can be united with the Infinite. Due to ego he will have discontent in his mind and in order to get rid of this situation he longs for the Infinite through his soul. After the realization of the Infinite, the ego, the finite and the Infinite remain together. One will be meaningful if the other exists and

everything will be meaningless if we deny others. So, both are essential for the existence of the both. For establishing this harmony soul remains as a bridge between them, which will find support in the *Upaniṣadic Mantra*. To Rabindranath this stage of harmony can be said the actual liberation. The importance of the soul can be realized from the analogy of lyre. The string of the lyre can produce tune if it is connected with two poles. Between the two one is finite and another is infinite. This doctrine is beautifully explained in the Tagore's poem named '*Vairāgya*'. 'A person, who would like to reach the stage of salvation wants to leave his wife, house, property etc. When he is ready to leave everything, he realizes that God does not exist in the external world, i.e. jungle, Himalaya etc., but in his surrounding objects amounts to leave God'. In the poem '*Svarga hate bidāi*' emphasizes the same thing.

Now we have to know why Tagore has given more emphasis in bringing harmony in man. The only cause is to check one-pointed development in man. He observed that in the religious practice the enjoyment and the desire of happiness is discouraged. All these restrictions are put forth to a *Sādhaka* so that he does not destroy harmony after learning too much towards wordly enjoyment. Any type of prohibitory order, either in society or in family, is generally introduced in order to bring harmony in an individual. If any individual wants to take unfair means or is addicted towards some object, he should be warned. If not, he would lean too much towards unwanted object and destroy harmony, which is not desirable to mankind.

Buddhadeva, and the themes and values associated with Buddhadeva, you will find profusely strewn, in the whole range of Rabindranath Tagore's (1861-1941) creativity in his

poem and songs, prose writings and congregation addresses, dramas and dance-dramas, and none-the-less, in his translation of *Dhammapadas* and other verses related to Buddhism.

To speak with, let me cite a few ballads from Tagore's '*Kathā O Kāhini*'. The very first one, I like to cite, is "*Srestha Bhiksha*". The story element is derived from *Ābadānaśataka* as stated by Tagore in the sub-title of the ballad. In the name of Lord Buddha, Anāthapindādā went a begging in Sravastipur to collect the most sincere and genuine kind of alms. The king, nobles and rich merchants instantly gave him enormous money and riches, which Anāthapindādā did not accept. The womenfolk of aristocrat families showered all their precious ornaments near Anāthapindādā in the name of Buddha. They remained heaped and strewn on the streets of the town. Anāthapindādā accepted nothing. But, when a poor girl gave Anāthapindādā her one and only one torn piece of cloth by hiding herself beyond a tree-trunk at the outskirt of the town, it was considered by Anāthapindādā as the most precious and gracious of all the alms. Anāthapindādā blessed the girl and proceeded straight to the Lord Buddha for offering him this very alms.

In between the 18th and 27th *Āswīn* 1306 B.S. Tagore wrote several Buddhistic ballads which are still very popular among the school-students for the purpose of reciting them in celebrations, functions and prize-distribution ceremonies. On the 18th *Āswīn* Tagore wrote the beautiful ballad "*Pūjārini*". Its story is also derived from *Ābadānaśataka*. The king Bimbisār of Magadh was a true Buddhist. But, when his son Ajātasatru succeeded on the throne, he became a severe Hindu revivalist and order to banish Buddhism in his territory. The queen had nothing to say. The other aristocratic and accomplished ladies too had to remain silent despite their heartfelt

devotion for Buddha. It was only Śrīmati, a beautiful court-dancer of Magadh, at rue flower of Lord Buddha, fearlessly performed all the ritualistic deeds of Buddhism. At an autumn night she lit lamps at the altar of the *stupa* and performed her *ārati* with heartfelt dedication. The pathetic tragic end came when Ajātasatru's armed guard slew her. That was the last *ārati* performed by Śrīmati.

The ballad "*Abhisār*", a sweet and touchy love poem, written by Tagore is based on *Bodhisattwābadan-Kalpanā*. The young hermit Upagupta lay asleep beside the boundary wall of Mathurā. It was a cloudy night of *Śrābaṇa*. The young and beautiful court-dancer Bāsabadatta stumbled against him. Out of apologetic compassion, she wanted to take him into her house. Upagupta agreed to go to hers in near future when proper time would come.

In the late spring in the month of *Chaitra* Upagupta came across Bāsabadatta lying half conscious beside the city-trench. Being attacked with small-pox she had been cruelly removed from human habitation and mercilessly left there by people. Upagupta took her on his lap, gave drinking water in her mouth and smeared her with sandal paste. He affectionately told her that this night was the proper time of their tryst. This was a moonlit night. The blossoms were dropping down from the trees and cuckoos were cooing.

"*Pariśodh*", quite a lengthy ballad, is based on a very complicated story of *Mahāvastu Abadāna*.

Bajrasen, a horse-trader of Taxila, came to sell horses. Robbed of everything of cash and kind, he fell into a very wretched condition. Moreover, he was arrested by the royal force on a false allegation of theft from the royal exchequer.

Śyāmā, the most beautiful girl of the city, a court-dancer too, instantly fell in love with Bajrasen, a youth of manly stature.

Śyāmā, rescued Bajrasen by some miracle as it were. Uttīya, an adolescent lad, a selfless admirer of Syama, shouldered the charge of theft and sacrificed his life at the hand of prosecutor. Uttīya, did all this at the request of Śyāmā, who tried to conceal this inhuman act. But, lastly she confessed this to Bajrasen. Bajrasen could not reconcile himself of being in love with this kind of woman, the perpetrator of such a crime. After a severe psychological conflict, Bajrasen refused to accept Śyāmā.

This very ballad was later on transformed into the popular dance-drama *Śyāmā*, in the quite last phase of Tagore's creative life. The dance-drama *Śyāmā*, is a grand, massive and magnificent creation. Psychologically, it is extremely turbulent. Bajrasen's psyche, in conflict between love-attraction and moral prick, is a unique scene of the dance-drama.

"*Mūlyaprāpti*", an idealistic ballad, is also derived from *Abadānaśataka* again so far as its story is concerned. The gardener Sudas refused to sell his one and only one untimely lotus at the price of thousands of gold coins proposed by the prospective buyers like a rich traveler and

the king Prasenjit on their way to visit the Lord Buddha. Sudas himself paid his tribute to the Lord with this very lotus in lieu of the priceless particle of dust from the Lord's feet.

“*Nagarlakshmi*”, a ballad of extraordinary virtue, is derived from a story of *Kalpadrumbāda*.

Famine broke out in Srāvasti. Buddha asked his devotees for help. The rich citizens like Ratnakar Seth, Samanta Jaysen and Dharmपाल declined with various pleas of unwillingness. It was only Supriya, Anāthapindada's daughter, a beggar herself, who took the responsibility of feeding the hungry folk from her humble resource of begging. So, Supriya is attributed as *Nagarlakshmi* of the famine-struck Sravasti.

The ballad “*Samanya Kṣhāti*” has no direct reference of Buddha or Buddhism. But Tagore derived its story from the Buddhistic literature *Divyabādanmālā*.

Each ballad is based on some or other basic human value, more precious than religion in ordinary sense. Love, compassion, mercy, sympathy, kindness, sense of just and unjust attitude, sense of morality from the core of human heart-are those human values. The story of the prose-drama *Candālikā* (1340) followed by the dance-drama *Candālikā* (1344) is derived from *Śārdulakarnābadana* as compiled in *The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal*, edited by Rajendralal Mitra.

The venue of the story of *Candālikā* is Sravasti, the famous ancient Indian city. Lord Buddha was residing in the garden-house of his disciple Anāthapindādā. Ānanda, another disciple, the hero of the drama, while returning to the monastery after taking his midday meal in a family of his inmate, felt thirsty. He saw Prakriti, a *Candāla* girl, fetching water from a well. Ānanda wanted water from her. After some hesitation, she served him water to quench his thirst. Ānanda blessed her and went away. Just after this event Prakriti became tremendously attracted to Ānanda. But finding no easy way to win this celebrated monk, she resorted to her mother, well-versed in black magic and sorcery. Prakriti's mother raised an altar of cowdung in the courtyard, lit fire and performed her black magic by offering 108 *arka* flowers in the fire. Being unable to resist the charm Ānanda became extremely repentant, began to cry and mentally surrendered to the Lord Buddha. Buddha could understand the situation by virtue of his omniscience. He recited appropriate chants. The spell of the black magic subsided. Ānanda came back to the monastery.

Tagore moderated this original story a bit to suit his drama and dance-drama. In Tagore's creativity we find that both Prakriti and her mother became repentant for bringing down the divine monk Ānanda to worldly sensuality. They prayed for his forgiveness, bowed down to him, and Ānanda blessed them along with chanting "*Buddho śuddho Karuṇāmahannabo....*"⁸ etc. Really, Buddha is the ocean of compassion and bliss. This drama shows that love knows no bounds, no one can be of lower birth, real bliss wins over erotic sensuality and evil spells of life are but passing phases of our journey towards a tranquil and enlightened state.

Several poems of the poetical work *Parīśesa* (1339) are related to Buddha and Buddhistic aura. While visiting the Borobudur Temple in Jabadwip (Java), Tagore wrote the poem “*Borobudur*”(23 September 1927). Recollections of the remote past of history are as if enlivened in the Buddhistic sculptures of the temple. The message of the temple is that of immense love divine- “*Buddher sharan lailām*” (i. e, I have taken refuge to Buddha).

While staying in Phya Thai Palace Hotel in Bangkok, Tagore wrote the poem “*Siam*” on his very first visit to Siam. This poem also bears recollections of the past all-encompassing Buddhistic days, prosperous in all respect- in enlightenment, in good deeds, in paintings and sculptures, in temples and relics, in liberation and peace.

While leaving Siam, Tagore wrote the second poem of the same title “*Siam*”, subtitled as “*Bidāykāle*”. The poem reminds us of the past friendship between India and Siam.

“*Buddhadeber prati*”, just a one-page but excellent poem, written in Darjeeling on 24.10.1931 on the auspicious occasion of the foundation of Mulgandgakuti Vihara at Śāranāth. It is a poem of evocation of the Buddhistic ideals and values, once spread out from country vastly and enormously. Buddhadeva is attributed as *Amitābha* and *Amitayu*.

“*Ameya premer bārtā Śata kanthe uthuk nihsari*”⁹. May the message of his profuse love resound in hundreds of voices.

In the addenda (*Samyojan*) portion of *Parīśesa* we find a beautiful poem- cum-song “*Himśay unmatta Pṛithwī*”¹⁰ under the title “*Buddhajanmotsaba*” (1333). It is a prayer- song for bringing peace and friendship in this terror-ridden world. It is also suitably applied as a chorus in the voice of Bhikshus at the end of the second act of the drama “*Naṭṭr Pūjā*” (1333).

The poetical work *Nabajātak* consists of the poem “*Buddhabhakti*”, written on the 7th January 1938 at Śāntiniketan. During the furious and ghastly war between Japan and China, Tagore read in the newspaper that the Japanese soldiers gathered together in the temple of Buddha and prayed for their victory in the war. Obviously, this is a feigned devotion, an example of paradox of devotion, a celebration of hypocrisy – since Buddha Himself is an incarnation of peace, not of war.

On the full-moon date of *Baiśākha* 1338 Tagore composed his song “*Sakala kalushatamasahara jaya hok taba jay*”¹¹, an excellent lyrico-tonal entity, dedicated to Buddha, attributed as *Mahāsānti*, *Mahākṣema*, *Mahāpuṇya* and *Mahāprema*. It is Buddha, who can eradicate all the stains of darkness from the world since he is *Sakalakaluṣatamasahara*. He Himself is the Sun of Enlightenment. We resort to Him, the repository of compassion, the prime source of liberation of man from the bondage of evils. The *Bhikṣu* of *Naṭṭr pūjā* sing this song at the end of the third act.

On the full-moon day of the 4th *Jyaiṣṭha* 1342, Tagore delivered his address “*Buddhadeva*” at the *Mahābodhi* Society, Calcutta, on the occasion of Buddhadeva’s birthday celebration. It was first published in *Prabāsi* of the *Āshādh* issue of 1342. In it, we find that

Tagore eulogized Buddha not as a God, but as the greatest man. Buddha remains the greatest of mankind of all the ages to come. He taught us –“*Akkodhena jine kodham*”¹², i.e., anger is to be conquered with non-anger.

Tagore has interpreted the stories of *Jātaka* as emergence and manifestation of Buddha in common man throughout ages after ages, generations after generations. Buddhadeva’s ideals have been flowing down in the heart of mankind.

In the book *Dharma* Tagore has referred to Ashok the Great, who ruled India not by his monarchical power but by virtue of selfless love for mankind as a whole. He learnt this selflessness from his sincere devotion to Buddha.

It is in Buddhism first that man is attributed with all the ideals of man. Buddhadeva freed mankind from the notion of a separate entity as god, from the ritualistic imposition of sermons of *Śāstras*, from the performance of rites of *yajñas*. Naturally, his followers made him god. Later on, we find that the Christians made Christ a god. Tagore’s belief is that the essential values of Buddhism have been surcharged in mankind of all religions.

“*Brahmavihāra*” is Tagore’s exposition of the Buddhistic ideals of promenading in the Absolute. We can promenade in Brahma through the peace of friendliness (*Maitrī*), through the sweetness of love, through a mind free from greed and jealousy, through simplistic way of life, free from infatuation of luxury. Cultivation of all these ideals will lead us to the light of wisdom. All of us can prepare ourselves towards the path of enlightenment by taking up *śilas* (precepts).

The precepts are simple in language, but priceless as moral guidance, e.g., *Panam nā hane, Nā cādinna madiye, Musa nā bhāse, Nā cā-majjāpa siyā*. Anger, malice and greed must be extinguished. A true Buddhist must observe these. The positive traits of a Buddhist are – service to the honest, voracious reading of various scriptures, learning of various fine arts, and practice of gracefulness, modesty, soft and pleasant speech. Thereby, the enlightened one can spread out one’s psychical domain throughout the whole creation of animate and inanimate world. So, the Tagore an interpretation of Buddhistic *Nirvāṇa* is never dire extinction of self, but extinction of selfishness, extinction of self-centeredness; never atheism or nihilism, but merging into the whole, fusion with the fullness. The fruit of love cannot be nihilism. It is peace, joy and bliss. Bliss does not come from imaginary heaven. It must come from human character itself by virtue of correct thinking, truthful but compassionate speech and honest deeds.

According Tagore, Buddhism is neither confined to *Hīnayāna*, nor restricted to *Mahāyāna*. Buddhism, in true sense, is prevalent in humanity in man’s endeavour for wisdom, man’s natural urge for love and man’s active energy for labor.

Dhammapada is a precious accumulation of sayings for guiding human mind and behavior. Tagore has translated some selected ones from four sections of *Dhammapada*. Tagore’s translations too are excellent verses, of course in Bengali. *Yamakabaggo* or *yugmagatha* may be expressed as “propositions in pairs”, the very first of the four sections. Among the pairs, one is on the negative trait and the other is on the positive trait of the same proposition. Just for example, I am exposing the very first pair in English:-

Mind is prior to religion since mind itself gives birth to religion. If one works and speaks in corrupt mind, distress will follow one just as the wheels follow the bulls.

If you work and speak in a delighted mind, happiness will follow you just as the shadow follows the body.

Apramadabagga may be called “a cluster of illusion-free propositions”. The meaning of the verse number six, chosen for you, is as follows:-

He, who is enchained in illusion, is a fool. A wise person keeps himself free from illusion.

“*Chittabagga*” consists of saying which may be useful for modern psychiatry too. I am stating the verse numbers 1, 10 and 11.

Mind is frivolous and unbalanced. A wise person directs it towards the proper aim like an arrow.

Your enemy harms you. A person, malicious to you. But you do more harm to yourself if you lull the unjust and untruth in your mind.

Your parents, kinds and friends may be much benevolent to you. But you will be more benevolent to yourself if you lead your mind along truthful track.

The last but not least in *Pushpabagga*. Let me cite the gist's of the verse numbers 6 and 10.

As the bumblebee extracts nectar from flowers without harming their colour, fragrance and beauty, so also the wise and honest persons extract the essence of this world keeping themselves aloof from its bondage.

Just as a florist makes a garland with various flowers, so also man should engage himself in various good deeds.

Tagore's discourses on *Sāhityer Pathe*, *Samāj*, *Itihās*, *Sanchay*, *Śāntiniketan* contain appropriate reference of Buddhism. Everywhere we find that Buddhadeva and Buddhistic ideals are held very high by Tagore.

The concept of "*Bṛihattara Bhārat*" as depicted in Tagore's *Kālantara* is greatly associated with the spread of Buddhism all over the Eastern, South-Eastern and Far-Eastern countries. It is Buddhism which held together all these countries in the concept of greater India.

The everyday behaviour of the Japanese, their patience, self-detrainment and sense of beauty pleased Tagore very much. These qualities came to Japan from India during the age of the spread of Buddhistic influence. Now, it is a pity that these qualities have been decaying in India itself.

In the Aryan age, the Aryans were in conflict with non-Aryan tribes of India. It is Buddhism which brought conciliation among them.

Though Buddhism is not at all a cult of materialism, it is known through the study of history that during Buddhistic civilization India along with her neighbouring countries were highly prosperous in the arts, science, cultural reciprocation and all other aspects of worldly life including politics and public administration. This was possible, according to Tagore, by virtue of enhancement of man's inner power through Buddhistic way of life.

In conclusion, we may say that the Buddhistic way of life should be revived. We need not be saffron-dressed monks in a large scale; but we should follow the ideals propagated by Buddha since honest life, good deeds and universal love can save this terror-ridden world.

It is very important to remember that there is a unity among ego, soul and God but there must be sense of loyalty towards God. It may be argued that, as there is no superiority among men and God due to harmony, there is no question of being loyal to him. In response to it, it may be said from the Tagore's point of view that it is true that there is unity between men and God, but here God should be looked upon as father. As father's image is reflected in a son, God's image reflects on a man. It can be said in another way that God is manifested in a man as father is manifested in son. As we do not think to disrespect our father, we should be glorified by the Divine, but should not possess courage to disobey Him thinking as equal. Though a man is essentially same as God and for this he should be respected. If we disrespect Him then the harmony will not be attained.

Now we have to see how a man, remaining in ego can realize *Śāntam Śivam Advaitam*. The realization of this hymn gives rise to wisdom, action and love respectively in a man. In Tagore's philosophy action follows from wisdom and love from action. If we can realize the *Śānta*, we easily can realize *Śivam*. And like this from *Śivam Advaitam* can be realized. Each and every nature is co-related with each other. The Divine manifestation of the power is seen in the world. So long-peace or *Śānta* is not realized, an individual suffers from fear, doubt etc. When he sees the reflection of *Śānta* in all powers, he gets peace or fearlessness which is similar to the *Upaniṣadic* 'Abhih'. The word *śānti* is related to 'śānta', who remains in all powers. Of power is overpowered through peace or fearless and able to perform work. This auspicious works can be done due to *Mangala* or *Śiva*. If the *Śānta* nature and *Śiva* nature of the Divine are realized through knowledge and auspicious works respectively, the bondage of ordinary action and ego arising from that ceases due to the engagement in the performance of the auspicious action. At this stage a man can go through the path of love which is started from forgiveness, sobriety etc. leading him to the spiritual perfection. In this way Rabindranath Tagore has pointed out that wisdom, action and love are essential for having spiritual perfection. Through the actual union or harmony comes after the realization of the *Advaitam* yet the realization of *Śāntam* and *Śivam* are equally important in order to reach this stage without paying any attention to the *Śāntam Śivam* we cannot realize '*Advaita*' and it leads us to the land of unsuccessful. Like this the absence of wisdom and action leads to the break of mental equilibrium. So, for the betterment of human being *Śāntam Śivam* and *Advaitam* are very much essential.

Generally Rabindranath believes in creation but in '*The Religion of man*' he brings in the concept of evolution. How to reconcile creation with evolution? Evolution as conceived by him

is not mechanical or accidental. It is only emergent creation. He says: “we must know that the evolution process of the world has made its progress towards the revelation of its truth – that is to say some inner value which is not in the extension in space and duration in time. When life came out it did not bring with it new material into existence. Its elements are the same which are the materials for the rocks and minerals. Only it evolved a value in them which cannot be measured and analyzed. The same thing is true with regard to mind and the consciousness of self; they are revelations of a great meaning, the self expression of a truth. In man this truth has made its positive appearance, and is struggling to make its manifestation more and more clear. That which is eternal is realizing itself in history through the obstructions of limits”¹³. The eternal life realizes himself in finite forms by creating them. But he does not create them all at once. At the first stage there was only matter but it was not dead inert matter; life shone within its core. At the second stage finite life emerged. And at the third stage men with mind and consciousness appeared. The last stage is marked by a definite change in the direction of evolution or emergent creation. The spirit of life retires slightly to the background giving prominence to the spirit of man. The spirit of man has ‘an enormous capital with a surplus far in excess of the requirements of the biological animal in man.’ This surplus energy which is not exhausted in satisfying the animal needs goads man to express the infinite Self that lies dormant in him. The animal spends all its time in fulfilling its biological needs but man is mostly engaged in broadening his path of self-realization. Man’s spirit is a free spirit not chained to the animal self. And this freedom he utilizes only for expressing the Infinite in art, literature, morality and religion.

Rabindranath never believes in any unqualified dualism between Nature and man. Nature and man are not two irreconcilable realities in his philosophy. The same eternal life expresses

himself in both. Instead of saying Nature and man, we should rather say Nature hyphenated with man. As has been said earlier, when matter appears at the first stage of evolution, it is permeated with life. Both the infinite life and the human life are not to be found in its bosom. Only they have not yet manifested themselves fully. At the stage of early life in the vegetable kingdom, the infinite life and the human life are still dormant. At the stage of human life, only the infinite life remains to be realized.

Ancient Indian philosophers of the *Upaniṣadic* age realized the infinite life in matter, early life and human life. In the *Kathā*(2.3.2.): ‘All that there is comes out of life and vibrates in it.’¹⁴ In the *Śvetāsvatara*(2.17): ‘ I bow to God over and over again, who is in fire and in water, who permeates the whole world, who is in the annual crops as well as in the perennial trees.’¹⁵ Rabindranath only mingles his tune with that of ancient seers when says, “I faintly remember that there was a time in the history of creation when I remained identical with Earth. Green grass grew on my vast body; autumn light fell on my expanse; sun’s rays drew up the fragrant heat of youth from every pore of my long-stretching greenness; I lay still under the bright sky extending myself over all land, water and mountain. Autumn’s rays waved over me a life-force that was unmanifested and yet half-conscious”¹⁶. In another place he writes, “I can very well imagine, youthful Earth just emerged out of the vast watery expanse and worshipped the sun; I grew on her soil as a tree and blossomed. There was no animal life then. The unbounded sea roared around and sometimes engulfed the newly born land. I drank the light from the Sun with my body and like a child I shivered in an unconscious joy”¹⁷. In *Sonār Tari*: ‘Mother Earth ! For countless years you took me inside your body and revolved indefatigably round the sun in the infinite skies’¹⁸.

From the above quotations it is abundantly clear that man is identical with Nature and yet distinct from it. Prof. Pringle Pattison conceives a truly organic relation between man and Nature. His contention is that as man is organic to nature, the world is not complete without him. “The intelligent being is, as it were, the organ through which the universe beholds, and enjoys itself”¹⁹. He says, “I wish to present (this position) in the first instance from the side of the higher naturalism and to emphasize the fact of man’s rootedness in Nature, so that the rational intelligence which characterizes him may appear as culmination of a continuous process of immanent development. I desire to do so because it has always seemed to me that some of the eternal difficulties of modern thought arise from the unconscious habit of treating man as if he were himself no denizen of the world in which he draws his breath as if he were, so to say, a stranger visitant, contemplating abs extra an independent universe”²⁰. Rabindranath too would not like to put any barrier between man and Nature. Man is not an independently existing knower and the world also is not an independently existing fact to be known. Thus he steers clear of both relativism and agnosticism. If man becomes only an independent knower, he may invest foreign objects with his own subjective peculiarities and end in an unfortunate relativism. Again if Nature remains thoroughly alien to man, its own nature can never be revealed to him. Somehow the two have to be bound together indissolubly. But Rabindranath would not be content with Pringle Pattison’s concept of organic relation. In an organic relation the parts contribute to the unity of the whole. The organic concept does more justice to the whole than to each of the parts. It does not lay any emphasis on the unity of each part. But in Rabindranath’s philosophy every finite individual is as much a unity as the Absolute Himself. The Absolute does neither negate nor absorb the individual unities.

As one goes through the vast poetry and prose writings of the poet, one comes across Nature in various forms. Sometimes the poet treats Nature as a dynamic and restless principle. His concept of *Mānasa Sundari* is a peculiar amalgam of Nature, human love and Divine love. The Divine is sensed through Nature though it is not a mere means. Love for Nature and love for human beings have mingled and achieved their final fulfillment in Divine love. *Mānasa Sundari* has guided the destiny of the poet through portals of countless lives and deaths. Sometimes the poet has sought her company in prosperity and hilarity and sometimes in adversity and despair. She is moving, shimmering, half-seen and half-unseen reality. Again she is partly meaningful and partly mysterious. But there is another image of Nature. It is no longer fleeting and restless. It is calm and poised. The majestically serene aspect of Nature is depicted as *Natarāja*. Apparently *Natarāja* is restless in his *Tandava* dance but really he is calm. By his first step he reveals the outward world of forms but by his second he illumines the inner world of aesthetic joy. He, who can appreciate the true rhythm of *Natarāja's* dance, enjoys bliss and freedom. In the poem *Viśvanṛtya*, the poet refers to the pristine Reality who remains eternal amidst the manifold of natural changes and temporal relations (*Sonār Tari*).

Thus we see, Nature, for Rabindranath, is ever animated. He imagines Nature as the lover of the beloved who plays the game of love with man. Man also loves the Absolute *Jīvandeṃatā* and He too loves him in return. Are we to suppose that man's objects of love are two in number—*Jīvandeṃatā* and Nature? Such a supposal is unwarranted since *Jīvandeṃatā* is the full and perfect Reality and beyond Him there is nothing. When we speak of Nature as an object of love, we mean *Jīvandeṃatā* in the form of Nature. In such cases *Jīvandeṃatā* and Nature are identical. But do they remain identical for all times? As suggested earlier, the answer consistent

with Rabindranath's main philosophical tenet would be—Nature is identical with *Jīvandeavatā* and yet distinct from Him. Similarly man is identical with *Jīvandeavatā* and yet distinct from Him. He creates Nature and man out of Himself for His self-manifestation which is loved. In Rabindranath's theism there are three factors and not the usual two. God, man and Nature—these three factors intimately related to one another, constitute his theism. Nature is treated always as an end and never as a means. There are some philosophers who regard Nature as a means to man's salvation. When perfection is reached, Nature is relegated to the background. Nature helps man to elicit from within himself the values of personality. But Rabindranath thinks otherwise. Man has to develop his true personality which is nothing but the Divine personality. He has to accept each and every item of emergent creation. Rejection or avoidance is negation which defeats the aim of salvation. Treating Nature only as a means is also a subtle form of negation. But Nature is true in affirmation. It is as true as man and *Jīvandeavatā*. Thus the main features of Rabindranath's theism are (a) the universe owes its existence and continuance in existence to *Jīvandeavatā*, (b) He is both immanent and transcendent, (c) He realizes Himself in infinite love through man and Nature and (d) He has all the majesty of Nature and all the humanity of man.

Moral value is an important and necessary characteristic for human being, specially Tagorian philosophy is solely based upon this moral value. To Rabindranath 'religion' means 'nature' and this nature cannot be learned by practice. Man possesses two kinds of nature. One is for himself and the other is for '*Bhūma*' or universal man. It is said in the '*Mānuṣer Dharma*' that –

“Man generally deals with the pleasant and good. Those who are engaged in getting pleasant are always divided and those who adopts good are always appreciated in the society”²¹.

The first is called *Preya* and the second is called *Śreya*. These two terms are translated in the *Rabindra Darshan* as 'object of desire' and 'value'. In our daily life what we want and what ought to want, these two factors exist in our nature. Most of us want the first because it helps us to fulfill the worldly desire. It limits the human nature and a man becomes egocentric and selfish. Tagore also said in his '*Mānuṣer Dharma*' that if one accepts the first, he loses his own human religion²². The *Upaniṣad* said it as degradation from himself. On the other hand, if any one accepts the second nature i.e. 'value' (*Śreya*) in his life, he will be something, but it is wrong to say, he will get something. For the second kind of human nature we do something which will give us the satisfaction and this satisfaction is not a sensual one but only mental. So it will long last and give us the unworldly pleasure. We do such kinds of work only for revealing the self, which resides ever one of us. This kind of action is called creation. It cannot be said the repetition of one thing but the unique creation by the artistic human mind. This creation comes from the inner side of an artist. We should remember that it is not created for our objective purpose. These creation can be said the touch of our infinite self.

Question may be raised why man does such kind of creative activity and when he does it. To answer this question from Tagore's philosophy we can say that the sense of value comes when he is in 'surplus' or when he exceeds himself i.e., his first nature. Man tries to create something and this inspiration comes from his artistic creative activity. This kind of activity is totally differing from the object of desire.

The traditional meaning of freedom is free from some bondage. Bondage is the first criteria for salvation or freedom. But in the Tagore's philosophy it is used in a different way and it carries a special significance. In Indian philosophical system and also in the west it is

described as freedom, salvation, *Kaivalya*, *Nirvāṇa Amṛta*, *Apavagga*, *Mokṣa*, *Svarūpa Prāpti*, *Brahma-prāpti* etc. But Tagore's concept of *Mukti* is unique in character. He accepts bondage as a pre-condition of freedom. In *Sādhanā* he said – “As a matter of fact, where are no bonds, where there is the madness of license, the soul ceases to be free”²³.

Tagore conceived man as a spiritual being. But Tagore's conception of the Man is radically different from the ancient Indian conception of Man. Although the picture of Man that he draws is basically spiritual, Tagore as unrelated to the world never conceives Man's spirituality. The self or spirit from Tagore's standpoint is a life force and not a substance.

On the '*Religion of Man*' and 'Creative Unity' he has interpreted the evolution of Man from his physical, biological level to a spiritual creative level of existence in the term of the ontological principle called 'Surplus in Man'. The 'Surplus in Man', according to Tagore, is indicative of man's uniqueness, creativity and transcendence from bondage to freedom. The surplus is the inner urge of Man that takes him beyond what is immediately given to him as a fulfillment of some need, utility or pleasure. In this sense the 'Surplus' has a moral dimension too. Also man's surplus means man's freedom from the objective fact-ridden world. It signifies a 'freedom' to unity, togetherness and communion with the world.

Rabindranath also accepted well as moral value. God is equivalent to beauty in his philosophy, because both the sense come after exceeding himself i.e. when a person in his surplus. To Tagore, beauty means the “inner truth which is nearer to man.” God is not the phenomenal quality but a transcendental one and it can't be defined with the worldly expression.

To discuss the human nature Tagore pointed out that the surplus, which exceeds him there he is true, for this he become true in renunciation. Because a man realizes himself through his selfishness. Man can be said animal and man both because man is defined as a rational animal. So sometimes he behaves like a beast. It is a kind of transcendence, transcendence within himself, his material nature towards the spiritual part.

As an Indian Tagore's philosophical surroundings were based on Indian tradition and culture. In the context of value Tagore said "Our life gains what is called 'value' in those of its aspects which represent eternal humanity in knowledge in – sympathy, in deeds, in character and creative works"²⁴.

Now it may be questioned: What is the nature of value? Is it a fact or other than fact, which can be known by institution? To answer this question three basic theories are developed i.e., (1) Objective (2) Subjective and (3) Subjective-Objective. The first theory says values depend upon the external object. Subject only sees or enjoys with the object but independently objects can exist. This theory cannot be accepted from Tagore's point of view. According to the second theory, values like beauty or good have no objective existence. When subject says a thing 'as beauty' only then it will be beauty. What is the Nature of value in Tagore's philosophy?

Nature of value— Many of us wrongly say that he was a subjective idealist. To prove this they can give example from Tagore's own poem and song like-(1) 'After beholding a rose I say – beautiful and it has turned into the same.'²⁵

(2) 'I have created you with the help of beauty of my mind.'²⁶

(3) 'Flower does not exist in the garden, but in one's inner mind.'²⁷

But these are taken from his poetic creation. In this context we quote from Sri Satyendranath Roy – 'We have to remember that poem and theorization are not same. In the court of theorization witness of poetry is not dependent. To give witness is not the task of poem. Only the direct meaning of a poetry can be taken into account in the witness but not the suggestive one.'²⁸

So, Tagore belonged to the third category i.e. subjective-objective idealism. According to this theory value or beauty, good etc. depend on both subject and object. Value resides in object but it reveals itself with the connection of subject. Such kind of idea is expressed in the words of Alexander. He says, "... truth and goodness and beauty, through, they differ from the secondary and primary ones in being creations of mind, are not real. They belong strictly to an amalgamation or union of the object with mind. But their dependence on the mind does not deprive them of reality. On the contrary, they are a new character of reality, not in the proper sense qualities at all, but values, which arise through the combination of mind with its object"²⁹.

The hidden truth of Tagore's philosophy is in wholeness and totality. In a word we can say that it is a real harmonious consciousness. It can be seen in his life, theory and ontology. He tried to express it among them. So, or this he did not accept such a thing which indicated only one. For this philosophy is not subjective or objective but the consciousness of bliss arising from the union of object and subject. For this Hiriyanna says – "Like ethics, aesthetics is dependent upon philosophy and like ethic, it aims chiefly at influencing life"³⁰.

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