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Part : III

ALIENATION
&
HARMONY

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I

It is significant that Rabindranath quotes from Sayana's commentary on the *mantra* referred to above (*Rg. Veda*, X. 90.6) with approval in the second part of his essay, *The Religion of an Artist*, where he propounds the theory that alienation precedes creation. He intends to show that the genesis of the world is the model of creativity.

To begin with, Rabindranath distinguishes between *fact* and *truth*. By 'fact', he means any value-neutral entity, which may be said to constitute the datum of scientific enquiry. "All that is inert and inanimate is limited to the bare fact of existence" (*Tagore on Art and Aesthetics*, p.45). A fact is something trivial and provokes no sense of wonder, and hence, by itself reveals no truth. Facts are many, unrelated, and there can be no end to collecting facts. There is no certitude in facticity. Again a fact always undergoes "contradictory changes through the discovery of new data. We can never be sure that we have come to know the final character of anything that there is" (*Ibid*, p.48). Insofar as knowledge is concerned, facts are, thus, indefinite and are provisional in nature. They are fragmentary and give no satisfaction to the knower, unless they are related to a whole in which they become meaningful. To know a thing is to know it as something significant for the knower. Significance is transfactual, since cognitive significance is a value. Thus to know a thing under the category of the facts does

not amount to knowledge, but to information. And information is not knowledge. To be informed is having a set of facts about something, while, on the other hand, to know is to enter into a relationship with the object known. Knowledge reveals the human significance of an object. An object known is not merely something of which we are aware, it is something *valued* as significant or meaningful to the knower.

Truth, on the contrary, for Rabindranath, is relatedness, or the unity of facts. Inter-relation of facts is truth. He illustrates this point with the example of a scientific law. A *law* of science expresses the *truth* of all the facts, which comprehends and explains. Once we have formulated the law, we are then freed from the "tyranny" of facts. We have at our disposal an "inference ticket" which enlarges our comprehension of the situation. On the discovery of a law or by being subsumed under a law, facts become meaningful, and shorn of their bare facticity they emerge, no longer as isolated events, but as instances of the generalisations made about them. A *law* is "one truth which governs numberless facts" (*Sadhana*, p. 26). A fact, in itself, "has no beyond", says Rabindranath.

Anything that is insignificant, unrelated to human situation or stands apart from inter-relations is a fact. Contrarily, truth is any awareness of state of mind, which is marked by an experience of joy or aesthetic delight in consequence of finding or seeing or establishing some inter-

relations between things. But it is not a passive awareness, though the account has an overtone of contemplative passivity. To see the *truth* is to achieve something creatively. "we make truth ours by actively modulating its inter-relations" (*Religion of Man*, p. 136).

A fact, when it is related, in a human situation, to a person, gains the status of truth. When it is related to the person, we have some kind of an awareness which refers to a conscious existence for whom it is truth. Thus truth, for Rabindranath, is a human phenomenon, it is a value, for which he reserves the name "reality". "Reality is human, it is what we are conscious of, by which we are affected, that which we express" (*Ibid.*, p.134). In other words, truth as reality is creative unity. How is this creative unity possible? He says that we can be conscious of the inter-relations or unity or truth of things because we have a *personality*, which is defined as follows : "a self-conscious principle of transcendental unity within man which comprehends all the details of facts" (*Ibid.*, p.119). This principle is *functionally* similar to Kant's "transcendental apperception". It is not only a precondition of the possibility of all knowledge, it is also a sufficient and necessary condition of dealienation.

Personality is a very important concept in the philosophy of Rabindranath. Personality is self-consciousness, but it is not a point without content of its own. It is the irreducible surd of experience in one way, and in another, it is

the pre-condition of all experience. Ownership of experiences presupposes personality as a unitary subject, self. But it is not a mere thinking self, it is also the *creative* self. Significant thought, for Rabindranath, is a creation. It is not an empty *cogito*, but blissful self-existence. And yet it must not be mistaken for a passive, conscious spectatorship, *nirvivesa cinmātram*. Personality is the subject inasmuch as it cannot be identified with any or all of the data of experience, disclosure in relating experiences in a creative way. It is both a pre-supposition of experience *and* is known *in* experience. It is "transcendental" in the Kantian sense insofar as it necessarily refers to the objects and persons that enter the domain of its awareness. It is the dimension of human awareness or the being of man. It has two aspects : "In its negative aspect it is limited to the individual separateness, while in its positive aspect it ever extends itself. "The latter is an extension of consciousness, which manifests itself in knowledge, love and action. Personality is the creative faculty of man and as such "transcends the component parts of his own character" : For Rabindranath, *harmony*, which consists in transcending the components, is the defining characteristic of creation. Thus, personality is the aesthetic self of man. Man is a person and is *essentially* a creator. The aesthetic self is man's total self, since, in aesthetic apprehension along the greatest possible extension of consciousness is to be had.

Thus, any statement about man in terms of transcendence, personality, creation, relatedness or harmony is

to be regarded as *synthetic* in being descriptive of the *nature* of man, and also *analytic* as defining the concept of man. Any such statement is *metaphysical*. Since it will express ultimate generalisations. And as originating from the creative or the aesthetic self of man, such statements, in Rabindranath, often have an emotive meaning as well. In short, the status of the ontological statements made by Rabindranath, is at once cognitive and emotive. It is also evident that a pair of any two such statements will be equivalent assertions, and the set of predicables are inter-definable within the system.

Since there is no limit to the extension of consciousness, *personality* is freedom. Freedom consists of being related to other persons or selves. It is in man's nature that he can transcend the facts into truth, i.e. comprehend the details of experience through a creative unity by an unlimited extension of consciousness. Alienation, for Rabindranath, is bondage, since it leaves the self solitary as an ego, unrelated to other selves. It is self-alienation, since the truth of self lies in its extension of consciousness. The nature or essence of our soul is relatedness, hence alienation refers to a split between man's real nature, defined as *freedom*, and his existence as a lonely ^eego, equivalent to a state of bondage. For Rabindranath, self-alienation is thus a spiritual crisis.

He admits that alienation is a *fact* of human existence, though not the *truth* of it. Hence, to say that man is alienated, for Rabindranath, is not a necessary proposition. There are

varying in inverse ratio. The more a man is free, the less he is alienated, and *vice versa*. Since *freedom* is an expansion of consciousness, *alienation* is a shrinking or contraction of consciousness. The alienated self is unreal since human essence is freedom. The more the self is in harmony with others, the more real it is. Again, Rabindranath does not admit any absolute alienation, it is only radical. The *personality* of man is a necessary presupposition of every human experience either as alienated or free. Without the unitary consciousness of personality, even egoistic alienated existence is impossible. The minimum that is required for such a being to be there is to comprehend "all the details of facts that are individually *his*". This is alienation, because in spite of the comprehending act of consciousness, the extension is the narrowest, there is no looking beyond the immediate and the useful. Dealienation or freedom dawns when "our personality grows in its area with a large and deeper experience of our personal self in our universe through sympathy and imagination" (*Religion of Man*, p.131; see also the essay 'Soul Consciousness' in *Sadhana*). The state of dealienation is marked by the experience of delight, for in freedom we discover our own truth. It makes us glad. "Gladness is the one criterion of truth, and we know when we have touched Truth by the music it gives, by the joy of greeting it sends forth to the truth in us" (*Ibid*, p.107). It follows then that the alienated self is sad or at best arrogant. Persons, in alienation, "are gathered together in the dark" and "cannot see each other's

faces and features". For they are in "the confinement of a cramped spirit of restricted consciousness" (*Ibid*, p.234). For Rabindranath, then, freedom is communication, which implies self expression; alienation is the failure thereof.

We have remarked in Part I- II, p.33 that the alienated self is still a self. It is only less in truth than its counter self from which it is alienated. We have also referred to Rabindranath's distinction between self and soul. The soul is the truth of the self. By *soul* he means the principle of harmony in man. It is the positive mode of being in a non-solipsistic world. The self is the alienated ego, or man in his native mode of being. Rabindranath compares the alienated self to someone in a state of sleep "shut up within the narrow activities of physical life" (*Sadhana*, p.27). Or, again, "when a man lives the life of *Avidyā* he is confined within his own self. It is a spiritual sleep" (*Ibid*). The alienated person has a darkened consciousness, and creates "the hard separateness of the ego" (*Ibid*, pp. 26-27). But since the alienated self is basically a *personality*, it can transcend the details of facts that are individually his, and thereby enter into *soul-consciousness*. To transcend alienation completely means to attain *jivanmukti* - it does not mean reaching a transcendent plane or that new set of facts come to constitute one's being in place of the previous ones. It means that one has become able to *harmonize* the facts that one already has. It is a new way of looking at the facts, without any utilitarian consideration. It is creative participation in the world. It is to be with others in working out the historical possibilities of humanity.

As an alienated ego the self is obscure and loses all significance for the community of selves in which it should find itself. It is only by overcoming the alienation that the self sheds its egoistic insignificance and enters into interrelationship with other selves, and thereby it realizes itself in soul-consciousness. It is already evident that since dealienation is freedom, transcendence of alienation is a joyful experience, because by this process one discovers nothing else but oneself outside, in a more rich and fuller mode of being. For Rabindranath, the paradigm of dealienation is typified by the experience of love. He says, "whomsoever we love, in him we find our own soul in the highest sense" (*Ibid*, p.29).

Though alienation is a fact of the human condition, the dream lies in acquiring *Samyak drsti*, in growing into freedom. The alienated man does not represent the whole truth of man, he gives a distorted image of it, which can always be set aright by a change of consciousness. Two questions of allied nature can be asked : If, for Rabindranath, alienation is something given, why is it to be transcended? And why is transcendence of alienation necessary? The answer will be found in Rabindranath's concept of man. It may be remarked that the statement that a man is alienated is a value judgment, hence it has an action-guiding force. It is not a mere statement of fact which may either be passively accepted or rejected. The word alienation is used in a *pejorative* sense. It calls for an explanation and demands a reorganisation of the states of affairs. Alienation is relative to human essence, or the "truth

of Man" (*Religion of Man*, p.135).

Man is an "angel of surplus", a self-creating being, endowed with a distinctively human faculty, which Rabindranath calls *imagination*. With the aid of his imagination man projects an ideal representative of himself, which is yet-to-be. Man is always in tension between what he *is* and what he *ought* to be. Man creates himself in the image of his prospective ideal representation. Man feels assured to believe, and this is going to be a statement of philosophical anthropology, that his state of *yet-to-be* is *a priori* realized as an idea of human perfection or what Rabindranath likes to call the infinite. It is a projection in history, but as a *value* it is looked upon as logically prior to human existence, since it is a timeless truth. It is towards the realization of this ideal of *universal man*, as he calls it, that man constantly endeavours to become more and more human, to approximate the *human* truth. This is the meaning of history. The more human a man becomes the less alienated he is. The human condition is a perpetual transcendence. Thus, we find that in view of Rabindranath's concept on man transcendence of alienation is an ontologically generated necessity. It must also be noted that Rabindranath recommends the means for overcoming self-alienation in accordance with his view of the essence of self-alienation.

Dealienation, properly speaking, is not to be a historical phenomenon for Rabindranath, since the truth of man is a timeless ideal. Freedom is more a progressive realization of human essence than a fact. It is infinite, he calls it *mānavik*

bhūmā – and the apotheosis of freedom as the universal Man plays the role of a *deity* in an emergent type of evolution. The ideal reality of man is *spiritual*, since man does not take the apparent facts of existence as final. The infinity of perfection that man has in view is “an intense quality of harmony” (*Religion of man*, p.66). Hence no temporal limit can be set to realizing the ideal reality. It is to be accomplished in “timeless time” (*Sadhana*, p.161). Or to put it in another way, since the ideal reality is not a *fact*, it cannot be *had*, yet it cannot be denied that an idea of millennium inevitably comes to our mind. But Rabindranath does not speak of the millennium as at some fixed time in would-be history. On the contrary, he holds that “the continuous future is the domain of our millennium” (*Religion of Man*, p.121). It might appear that Rabindranath does not distinguish between individual dealienation and social alienation. But it is not true. In his various writings he seems to have been concerned with two sets of problems : (a) self-alienation as a fact of man’s spiritual life requires a resolution within the self as the cure; and (b) dealienation of the society and dealienation of individuals are closely connected : one cannot be carried out without the other or reduce to the other. It is possible to creat a social system that would enable and even stimulate the development of dealienated individuals, but it is impossible to organize a society that would automatically produce such individuals. A non-alienated individual, for him, is an individual who fulfills himself as a free and creative being of *praxis*, and free

creativity is not something that can be given as a gift or forced upon anyone from outside. An individual can become free only through his own activity. In his philosophical writings Rabindranath considers the problem of the first sort, while in his sociological and political writings, he deals with those of the second sort, with, of course, a predominance of the first sort of view.

II

Alienation manifests itself in various spheres of human activity resulting in various forms of alienation. We now propose to consider Rabindranath's views about the forms of alienation. But before we do so it is necessary to state the criterion by which the classifications are to be identified. We have already discussed in Part-I the basic criteria by which such classifications could be made. We assume the criteria here.

We have also seen that, for Rabindranath, an individual is real insofar as he is in consonance with the universe. Alienation and freedom, i.e., dealienation, are collateral with the categories of the individual and the Universe. This notion of alienation will be found at work in Rabindranath's view of the various types of social alienation, such as alienation of societies as a whole, the alienation of social groups, and the alienation of social institutions. These are, for him, instances of the alienation of man, and these classifications are according to the nature of alienation of self. In this context, for him, the concept of a self-alienated man is basic. He takes the alienation of an individual or a society as instances of a man

alienated from himself. Let us begin with Rabindranath's view of human history and civilization. By *history* he means temporal realization of the Universal Man. By *Universal Man* he does not mean another ontology than humanity. It is the harmony of individuals and its apotheosis. It connotes the unity of mankind on the basis of globally-concerted value-seeking and its progressive realization. It is the sum of historically created human possibilities. Rabindranath interprets the ideal of human reality in terms of the metaphysical concept of harmony, hence it is objective. This view of history is the history of ideals, which he distinguishes from the history of fact (*A Vision of India's History*, p.4). He thinks that civilization is a kind of mould that each nation makes for itself to shape its men and women according to its best ideal (*Sadhana*, p.13). The "spirit of civilization", he says, draws upon the surplus in man and "emancipates our consciousness from the illusory bond of the separateness of self" (*Religion of Man*, p.50). A country or a nation might alienate itself from the common human ideal, and in so doing would only impoverish itself, for "in the ideal life we meet all men and all times" (*Ibid*, p. 57). History is a teleological *dynamics* toward transcendence of the alienation of man.

Nationalism is a form of alienation. It spells an estrangement of the selves of a nation from the universal man, or the apotheosis of the principle of harmony, which is to be realized in consonance with other countries of the world. In its aggressive form it contradicts humanity. With Laski,

Rabindranath thought that a world of competing nation-states produces a civilisation incapable of survival. It is born of a mixture of hate, fear and insecurity. It leads to militarism and imperialism, both of which are opposed to internationalism, the world-community, or the *civitas maxima*. Rabindranath takes *society*, or a group marked by "we-feeling", to be the model of non-alienated living, and, consequently, speaks of *visva-Samaj* as the dealienated state of the alienation of nations. Nationalism and violent patriotism dethrone the unity of creation and make the world alien to us. The nation-state dissociates itself from the higher ideal of humanity. Nationalism, as a form of alienation between nations, hinders man's extension of sympathy across all barriers of caste and colour, and refuses to recognize the world as a place of common habitation (see Rabindranath's *Nationalism* and *Lectures in China*). Nationalism, for Rabindranath, is social alienation of institutions, effecting in the final analysis, alienation of man.

Industrialism is alienation of social groups, i.e., between capitalists and workers. In another way, it brings about alienation of the self from nature and from fellow men. In this form of alienation the machine over-rides the man. It thrives, to quote the voice in Rabindranath's drama *Red Oleanders*, on "wrenching away" the hidden mystery of life. The King, in the drama, keeps himself apart, and it is only in his alienated state that he can "plunder the world's big treasure houses". In this drama Rabindranath seems to suggest all the four forms of alienation mentioned by Marx in his *Economic and philosophical*

Manuscripts : the alienation of man from the products of his own activity, from his productive activity itself, from his human essence and from other men. Abnormal congestion of wealth is a malady, which, Rabindranath thinks, can only be cured by the co-operative principle in economic life. For him, capitalism and industrialism coimply each other, and Rabindranath often speaks of them as *materialism* in the pejorative sense. Industrialism as alienation results in capitalism, which is isolated disproportion of wealth. It is adjudged by him as "barbarous". Its dealienation consists in evolving the spirit of cooperation. It is cooperation, which represents the highest truth of man. He says, "the Machine is good when it helps, but not so when it exploits life" (*Religion of Man*, p.164). In short, Rabindranath's protest against the alienation given rise to by industrialism and capitalism is due to the fact that it reduces the individual to a mere commodity, an appendage to a machine.

Communal conflicts is symptomatic of what Melvin Leeman classifies as social isolation or what Lewis Feuerbach calls the isolation of mass society. It results from a kind of alienation of social groups. For Rabindranath it is alienation from the harmony of the Universal. The spirit of exclusiveness makes men behave like detached beings and conflict with their neighbours. To transcend this particular form of alienation one must attain to a comprehensive view of life, or possess the vision of life's wholeness. As Rabindranath has put it, at every step we have to take account of those other than ourselves. We notice in his social writings a deep feeling of disturbance, as can be noticed

in Mill's *On Liberty*, for the subtle social coercions threatening to enslave the people.

Another variety of social alienation is exemplified by *religious intolerance*. Religious differences are, in fact, a common cause of the alienation of social groups. By *religion* Rabindranath understands a kind of possible spirituality – the religion of man. It is unorthodox in the sense that it does not lay exclusive emphasis on rituals and dogmas. Man, according to him, is essentially universal and anything that tends to separate one individual from another, or one group from another, tends in effect to deny the humanity of man and is as much anti-religious, unless, of course, religion is something totally divorced from the essential nature of man, viz., reason, morality and love. Every individual man is double-phased : he is an individual self and yet, in his heart of hearts, he is the Universal Man, or if we please, God. God works through – one may even say, lives through – these individual centres. There is no transcendent God separates from the individual souls. Love of God is love for every individual. The Universal Man, is nothing more than a functional ideal. If God is a person, He is ever dynamic, ever dissolving Himself as the inner spirit of all individuals. Religious difference or intolerance thus alienates man from the Universal Man, from his essence. Religious alienation seeks protection behind rigid formalism and systems of orthodoxy and it often cuts the very roots of religious aspiration, which Rabindranath defines as an intense desire to enter into a relationship with the Universal Life. Religious intolerance

alienates one from sharing and appreciating the rich variety of religious experiences. Religious intolerance violates the *dharma* of man.

The *caste system* is another form of social alienation of groups and depicts how the individual loses out completely against social pressures that arrest his development and rob him of a meaningful organic connection with the world. It thrives under the patronage of religion and is socio-religious in nature. The alienation of caste is based on *accidental* properties of man and violently ignores man's essence. The caste system alienates man from having a common meeting ground for endeavouring to realize the ideal of the Universal Man. Rabindranath's drama *Chandalika* depicts the story of transcending this particular alienation of men in society.

Two other forms of social alienation were noticed by Rabindranath in modern India, which have by now assumed alarming proportions. Another modern Indian thinker to draw attention to this form of alienation was Gandhiji. The alienation of the city from the village is an alienation of social groups accentuating both alienation from nature and alienation from fellow men. Gandhiji stressed the economic aspect of this alienation. He remarked : "The cities with their insolent might are a constant menace to the life and liberty of the villagers". He identified, what he called the "city-civilization" with greed, violence and industrialism (*Selections from Gandhi*, pp. 129-30). The city is, for Gandhiji, based on economic injustice and exploitation of the masses. The village represents the essence of India's economy and

he thought "that if the village perishes India will perish too" (*Ibid*, p. 71). He proposed a "rurally organized India". This was for Gandhiji a moral question since he believed, "Rural economy ... eschews exploitation altogether, and exploitation is the essence of violence". For Gandhiji, the alienation of the city from the village presented itself as an economic symbolism of a moral theory. Rabindranath looked upon this alienation, not only as an economic one, but also as loaded with cultural significance. It has come to mean a loss of the image of identity for the people of modern India, since the continuity of the *native* culture is snapped, resulting in a cultural confusion between tradition and modernity. Parallel to this is the alienation at the level of education. The alienation of the middle and upper classes from the masses is not merely of degree but of kind. The former constitute the privileged minority of the literate. The literate and the masses live as it were in two different worlds. This alienation, resulting from the dislocation of the country's resources, leaves the greater part of our possibilities buried and unused. This form of alienation can be transcended by imaginative planning and reorganization of the education system. The modern Indian is a demoralised person. He would regain his freedom only if he could be given his ancestral anchorage and support, and thereby be restored to his authentic existence. It is well known that Rabindranath was a pioneer like Gandhiji in rural reconstruction and educational experiment. Both of them worked for creating a basically non-alienated society according to their respective concepts of man. Rabindranath dared to entertain even such a revolutionary concept as that "economic

cooperation should be made the basis of our University". He said, "our centre of culture should not only be the centre of the intellectual life of India, but the centre of her economic life also" (*Creative Unity*, p.200).

III

As a crisis of personal life, self-alienation requires a revolution within the self as the cure. For Rabindranath, this revolution consists in a change of consciousness. As an artist and a philosopher of Beauty, he makes a remarkable use of the concept of self-alienation. We are reminded of Rilke, when Rabindranath says that in art we transcend our insular, alienated existence. His famous essay on *Meghadūt* ends in an elaboration of the concept of alienation of man. Alluding to Mathew Arnold's poem *Isolation* he remarks that every individual is alienated and longs to transcend it through love. The desire to transcend alienation is basic to human existence, since man's essence consists in the transcendence of limits. The alienated lover feels himself reduced to non-existence. The feeling of alienation in love is not necessarily interpreted in physical terms. It can make its appearance in the state of union and in that of separation as well. Love is a creative mode of living and it requires the lovers to be out on an unending love-tryst. As Rabindranath conceives love as creative existence, the only way of transcending the alienation is by metamorphosing the personal agony into a creative act. By living creatively, the lover wins union at every moment. It is a dynamic conception of

love and rescues itself from degenerating into passive sentimentality. In a poem from the *Purabi* we find the lover in alienation, thrown into "a boundless emptiness", he finds his world one vast arid waste. A weariness of spirit stretched from sky. It is robbed of every hope of peace and filled with a wordless grief which is worse than death. Yet, the lover proclaims,

*"the void is not empty
it is white with the heat
on an aching heart.
All alone
out of this fire
I fashion my world of dreams
in radiant songs."*

The alienated lover suffers as an individual, his sorrow is incommunicable, his grief is unsharable, the facts of his life are *individually* his. But he can create only by transcending his unsharable solitude. The aesthetic transformation of his personal agony becomes universal in import and sharable by all. In making it sharable by all, the lover transcends his alienation.

Often in his poems of love Rabindranath speaks of alienation from the beloved and of the accompanying feeling

of nostalgia for the pre-alienated state of existence. Many of his love poems are pictures from memory. But there also alienation, for Rabindranath, is a point of intense and timeless awareness of the self, which initiates new sensitivities and awareness, and results in bringing the lover deeply in touch with his own existence and in touch with others in a fundamental sense. Alienation is creative love, rather than separating the individual, expands the individual's wholeness, sensitivity and humanity. It enables the person to realize human ties and awareness hitherto unknown. In the spiritual and creative experience, there is no other way but the lonely way. All it requires is the right to emerge in genuine form.

Alienation from nature is a constant note in Rabindranath's nature poetry. In one of his letters he writes about his alienation from mother earth and the resultant nostalgia. Commenting he said, on another occasion, that the feeling of nostalgia expressed in the letter is not a mere poetic sentiment but a truth of life. He felt and spoke about the reverberations of Nature in his own life. Nature, for him, was not an objective dead material expanse, but an organic whole, the epitome of Existence and Harmony. Feeling this way, he was very much an Indian philosopher. His overall feeling towards Nature is that of union, being at constant communion with her. Rabindranath was conscious of the Eastern and Western attitude to Nature and at many times spoke about it. We have discussed it in connection with the Indian ways of thinking and the Indian

concept of man in II.II. In the west, the alienation from nature has a Greek and Christian root. '*Man is the world*' is a typically western phrase. The word *prakṛti* in Sanskrit, means both nature and the essential principle. Rabindranath quotes from the *Upanisad, Sarvam eva visanti* – they enter into all things – as expressing man's communion with Nature, the union of man with "the grand life that permeates the universe". He says, "our consciousness of the world, merely as the sum-total of things that exist, and as governed by laws, is imperfect. But it is perfect when our consciousness realises all things as spiritually one with it, and therefore capable of giving us joy" (*Creative Unity*, p. 49).

Art, for Rabindranath, enhances our sense of existence. It is much like the experience of love. Love gives evidence of someone who is outside us but who intensely exists, and by his sheer *reality* stimulates the sense of our own existence. Similarly, art is the expression of the truth of Man. It is a spiritual creativity, by which the *I am* in the artist realizes his own extension. Art reminds us that "with the truth of our expression we grow in truth". Expression is an aesthetic phenomenon indicative of the extension of consciousness. In art the individual fulfills himself as a *free* and creative being of *praxis*, through his own activity. Art is a means of dealienation. Rabindranath defines art as *sāhitya* or communication. Creation and aesthetic enjoyment has something *human* about it; the transcendence of alienation is a demand of the spirit and it is real for both the artist and his audience, they communicate with

each other. He contends that art is born out of an urge to transcend alienation and it is done by discovering the accent of communication. Art reveals the universal Man, the "surplus in Man", and it seeks its outlet in the creation of art. It is the expression of *personality*, which seeks "to make the whole world our own". Again, since for Rabindranath existence is creative, art emerges on the philosophic plane of existence, and, for him, the planes of utility and beauty or philosophy are distinct. Alienation is confined to the plane of utility. The artist can unite himself with others, objects or men, through a surplus of his emotions. The aesthetic emotion is a form of knowledge, because truth is harmony, which art reveals. Hence it is possible to transcend alienation in the plane of utility by "feeling with" or *anubhuti*. "The joy of unity within ourselves, seeking expression, becomes creative; whereas our desire for the fulfilment of our needs is constructive". *Anubhuti* or "sympathy carries in it an eternal reality (it) tells us that (the) creative imagination is a common truth both in us and in the heart of existence". Reality, he points out, "gives the touch of companionship". Rabindranath thinks that "All our knowledge of things is knowing them in their relation to the Universe, in that relation which is truth"; it is more so in aesthetic apprehension. "Beauty is no phantasy, it has the overlasting meaning of reality". Hence Art liberates us from alienation, because art is, for him, spiritual harmony. To quote Rilke,

*Singing is being.....
A voice mounts passionately to the closed mouth...*

True song demands a different kind of breathing.

(From *Sonnets to Orpheus*, translated by Selden Rodman)

We shall take up the thread of the aesthetic argument a little later again in comparing Rabindranath's views with Hegel's notion of *creative alienation*. Here we have given only the bare essence of Rabindranath's theory of art as a means of dealienation.

One cannot have the sort of alienation from God in Rabindranath as typified by Job in the *Old Testament*. The reasons are twofold : (a) the Christian idea of creatureliness is hardly encouraged in the Indian religious life. The Protestant idea about the human situation, initiated by Luther and philosophised upon by Kierkegaard, is unfamiliar to the Indian mind, which conceives the relation of man with God in terms of *svagata bheda* or internal differentiation. No Indian poet ever felt himself as a sinner and hence, alienated from God. The idea of the sinful nature of man has been repellent even to the Indian theologians; (b) Rabindranath's idea of God leaves no room for any such form of alienation. Moreover, he conceives religion as love, and thus if any alienation from God is to be found in his work, it can only be of the nature of alienation in love. In his devotional poems the human soul is sung of as alienated from God. It is a mutual alienation, and so both man and God long for reunion.

The religious situation is portrayed as a love-play, between separated lovers. In one of his songs Rabindranath sings of building a bridge of songs across the alienation between the human

soul and God. He draws upon the wealth of imagery of the *Vaisnava* poetry of Bengal and in redefining the divine in terms of humanity he employs the model of human love, its alienation and transcendence by an aesthetic apprehension. For him, the "realisation of the Infinite" is no other than a "realisation of Beauty", which again, is the same thing as "realisation in love". Rabindranath is an *aesthetic Sadhaka*.