

Chapter - VI

Man and Surplus in Man

Man, this three lettered word, is not heavy to hear but it is very difficult of define this term. All the attempts, which were and are made to define it, are nothing but descriptions. An effort has been made not to define but to express the human being. Always we are surrounded by so many persons but all of them cannot be considered as 'man'. Most of them suffer from deficiency. To be a man he should maintain a minimum standard. If there is no surplus within him, he becomes an ordinary person. The most acceptable and perhaps suitable definition of a man is – "man is a rational animal". Rationality made an ape a man. But if this distinguishing characteristic 'rationality' does not exist in a man then he will become an animal. Here 'animal' is not used in a neglected sense, because animals have some basic characteristics in their own society by which they never make harm of others belonging to the same group.

In Tagorian philosophy the concept of man has occupied an important role. Tagore's view concerning the possibility of knowledge is based upon his anthropology that man is not enough unto himself, he realizes his own self more fully when he succeeds in relating himself to the world at large. The degree and depth of relationship is a measure of man's humanity which is making the world his own. Man has feeling that he is best represented in something that exceeds him.

Tagore classified the total human life into different groups. When he reached the final stage then he will be a complete 'man'. The basis of Tagore's concept of man rests upon these facts that man evolves from lower forms of life to the highest expression of it. An individual advances

from the level of merely physical man to personal man and, finally, draws upon the surplus within him. Relationship is transformed in the various levels of his evolution. In this way a man advances due to extension of his relational life. In each stage of his life he is constructed by a 'Complex interrelationship'¹ which gradually raised the co-ordination and harmony of human life. Tagore called this interrelationship a "creative principle of unity".²

Physical man is constituted through different kinds of relationship to things. Primary interests of a man in this stage lies on the material common things and quantity and facts. The transcendentation of human knowledge at this level is limited by efficiency, necessity and utility and as a specialist he loses perspective and vision for further growth. Physical man becomes a personal man when he extends himself towards quantity, which is measurable. Personal man in Tagore's philosophy advances from the quantity to quality, from facts to truth, from necessity to choice, from utility to self-expression. According to Tagore, personal man extends his relationship because it fulfils his personality. In this relationship man contributes to his own evolution which consists in the qualitative development of inner life. The significance of this point in Tagore's anthropology is that man can transcend the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of himself. He is not ready to remain within himself because he came to know that he is not an ordinary man but he has the potency. Though he is finite, he possesses an infinity of relationship within the world of his aspirations and limitless and he then tries to transcend limitations by way of extending his personal relationship to the world.

It is very important for a man to attain his ideal realisation in a subtle body outside the physical. He misses himself when isolated, he finds his own large and truer self in his wide human relationship. His

multicellular body is born and it dies; his multipersonal humanity is eternal. All men have an inner faculty, which helps him to find out relationship with the supreme self. This faculty is our luminous imagination, which offers us a vision of wholeness.

Surplus in man

(Tagore's ontology of human creativity is surplus in man. This is the speculative theory, which is in man. This can be said a creativity of man. Tagore did not tell us from where it comes but it is proved by our experience that human creativity originates in the surplus in him. It is possible only when man becomes self-expressive. Man is creative being because he has the surplus of possibilities and aspirations. He has a huge potency within him and if he tries his best he can make himself what he likes. So surplus in man is a separate kind of human existence. It is totally free from the pressure of biological impulses.)

To Rabindranath Tagore, "surplus is a man's creative will. Man is creative because there takes place an incessant explosion of freedom"³, at the core of his essential being. A man who has surplus becomes self-expressive. In this stage a man experiences and expresses a transcendence of his own limitations through an ever-expanding development of relationship. (A man with surplus can transform everything with which he has any concern into the human.) This "transformation of facts into human imagery"⁴ is a human achievement, and it becomes possible by personal man in possession of the surplus in him. So we can say that the surplus in man is a principle of creative unity and it is functioning by modulatively man's relationship to the world. For Tagore, the dimensions of conscious are many structured and of these, the surplus in man promises the richest metamorphoses of which man is capable. (It is clear to us that idea of 'surplus in man' is

Tagore's unique contribution to both philosophy of art and philosophy of man also.)

In the Tagore's concept of 'Surplus in man' we can easily find out a philosophical kinship. We can see in the Plato's, Ion Apology and Meno that the faculty in man cannot be reduced to rule and measure and same thing is seen in the ontology of Tagorian Creation. It is called the inspiration, imagination or even aspiration in the words of Phaedrus (246f). "The soul which has seen most of truth shall come to the birth as a philosopher, or atheist of some musical and loving nature".

It is clear that the most imaginative rich philosophy could be poetic. The imaginative ontology of the Surplus in man parallels with Kant's aesthetic and teleological dimensions of the human subject. Man is said a unified speculative – moral aesthetic entity.

The member of our society is increasing rapidly day to day and this society is capable of manipulating its members. But day will come when we cannot control our society, because quantity or number of the members of society will cross its limits and at the same time quality of man decreases. Furthermore desire of human being will never be satisfied because there is a common theory- 'the more you have, the more you want'. Here we can say following the *Gītā* "Kāma (desire) is never satisfied by the enjoyment of the desired object".⁵ The Buddha's ultimate advice was that 'as long as you feel the fire of desire it goes on increasing and hence the ultimate goal should be the extinction of desire'. The same advice had been given by the prophet Hazrat Mahammad – 'Don't take unnecessary thing and distribute the excess to the poor'. So we can say that we should curb down our desire and the prevailing consumerism so as to lesson our discontent.

The crisis of our society in the modern age is in fact “identity crises”. Now we have lost the faith in the ideals, meanings and a belief in some way or other, that there is something beyond ordinary life, some higher meaning that is the centre of human life. We have lost the faith on ourselves and also lost our ideals. In this place materialistic society comes into being. We are also agreed to accept the good thing, which has been brought by our modern science. Albert Einstein once said in a conversation with Rabindranath Tagore – “there are two different conceptions about nature, (i) The whole world as a unity dependent on humanity, (ii) the world as a reality independent of the human factor”. Einstein called the first a purely human conception of the universe and the second is what is presupposed by science. Rabindranath agreed with the first theory that the whole world as a unity dependent on humanity – “Looking at a rose I have told- ‘beautiful’ and it has been turned into beautiful” (*golaper dike cheye bollam sundar sundar holo se*). To Rabindranath in this mental stage man overcomes his deficiency with his surplus.

Man can be considered as a self-interpreting creature and he grows and changes through his re-interpretation and reunderstanding of himself. For living as a perfect being in this human society he needs some values, virtues and ideals. All these are the integral part of human being . Rabindranath Tagore called these things as “Surplus in Man”. He said, “However crude all this may be, it proves that man has feeling that he is truly represented in something which exceeds himself. He is aware that he is not imperfect, but incomplete. He knows that in himself some meaning has yet to be realized. This surplusness makes up for the incompleteness in man, the personal man is to be contrasted with this surplus in man. Man always thinks for his personal happiness and prosperity and fulfilling his needs and he never thought for the other. But this is the animality. In this way a society cannot develop. There are

a few people in the society who are not satisfied of their own interest but they want to exceed this phenomenal desire.

We can say in this context about the ontology of 'Surplus of man'. For this our society needs the perfect education. Education will give them the consciousness and responsibility for himself as well as others. Traditionally we, the Indians, have got the Vedic culture and religion. We can see that a person cannot get *mukti* or liberation until wrong knowledge is removed from him. When right knowledge comes then all kinds of dualism do not exist with him and he loves every one like his own self. Achieving the liberation an individual needs proper education, love and *Bhakti*. So without the surplus in man a man never reaches his goal. The traditional religious person try to establish the humanism as their religion and it is religion without having any broader attitude. To establish a broader religion, the ontology of surplus has to be utilised. So the Surplus in man should be called the "ontology of hope".

Reference:

1. Tagore, Rabindranath: *The Religion of Man* (Eng. Version), Unwin Books, London, 1970, P. 9.
2. Ibid.
3. Tagore, Rabindranath: *On Art & Aesthetics*, Ed. By P. Neogy, Orient Longmans, New Delhi, 1961, P. 49.
4. Tagore, Rabindranath: *The Religion of Man (pg - 83)* (Eng. Version), Unwin Books, London, 1970, P. 9.
5. Radhakrishnan, S: *Srimadbhagavadgītā*, Translated into Bengali by Sri Subhendu Kumar, P. 141 and 'Man', 2nd, 98.