

## Chapter - VIII

### Śreya and Preya

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 'Bhūmā' or universal man. It is said in the 'Manusher 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<sup>1</sup>

The first is called *Preya* and the second is called *Śreya*. This two terms are translated in the *Rabindra Darshan*<sup>2</sup> 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 fulfil the wordly desire. It limits the human nature and a man becomes egocentric and selfish. Tagore also said in his 'Manuser Dharma' that if one accepts the first, he loses his own human religion. The Upanisad said it as degradation from himself. On the other hand, if any one accepts the second nature i.e. 'value' (*Śhreya*) 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 longly last and give us the unworldly pleasure. We do such kinds of work only for revealing the self, which resides every 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 innerside 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 some thing and this inspiration comes from his artistic creative activity. This kind of activity is totally differing from the object of desire. There are some differences between the two kinds of activity, which come from our nature.

- (1) The objects of desire are created for sensual satisfaction and they give the wordly pleasure. But the value does not satisfy our sense and it gives the spiritual pleasure.
- (2) The creative or artistic activity does not fulfil the worldly purposes but spiritual and it is not imitation or sublated of pre-work but totally creative and unique. It lasts long and it has a capacity to satisfy all. It's pleasure does not stop after few time. These kinds of predication cannot be applied to the object of desire. It is totally limited by our worldly desire.
- (3) Both of them have separate appeal to us. To get the object of desire our mind becomes restless until we get it. On the other hand, at the time of getting the value object our mind remains quite. We cannot identify the time when we get it, because, it is not the so-called worldly object, but it is abstract and spiritual. It bears the unity and wholeness. When we express ourself among all, then we get it but if we remain with ourself we lose.

According to Rabindranath, the devotion to value or *Śreya sādhanā* helps us to realise the essence or self of human being. It can be said *dharmasādhaña*. We have eagerness within us to realise oneself. All kinds of values are created from this eagerness. We know the nature of essence or self revealed something because this self is not attributeless, non-particular and existent entity. These characteristics of self are admitted in *Advaita Vedanta*. Human self is luminous in nature and hence it reveals itself in *Śreya caitanya*. The nature of human religion is to reveal him. Tagore says: '~~creative unity~~' that "to realize that to live as a man is great, requiring profound philosophy for its ideal, poetry for its expression heroism in its conduct".<sup>3</sup> It indicates that man creates his value (*Śreya*) for expressing his essence or self. For this his religion and created value (*Śreya*) reveal them as 'Good', 'Beauty' and 'Truth'. In this context we can say that what is called 'Transcendental Unity of consciousness' by Kant. The same thing is described as personality by Tagore. He said "What I mean by personality is a self-conscious principal of transcendental unity within man which comprehends all the details of facts that are individually in his knowledge and feeling, wish and will and work".<sup>4</sup> Tagore also said that 'man has another life which is greater than his bodily life and it is called humanism. The creative essence of this humanism called his religion..... This religion is the only inner truth of a man'.<sup>5</sup>

Man makes a harmony among all diversity and plurality with the help of his inner creative power. If we have no such inner essence without knowledge, we cannot reach the ultimate goal and we will then be limited by ourselves. "For this man tries his best to spread his essence to the worldly expression and he finds himself from the external object. It is called his universal expression. One pole of a man is his universal. These make him perfect and here is his pleasure".<sup>6</sup>

The Universalization of man in Tagore's philosophy comes from the surplus in man and this surplusness can be explained by *tatsthalasaṇa*. He says in his poem – *Hetha nai hetha nai anaya khāne*. It neither exists here nor there, but elsewhere. It does not exhaust only by creation a single thing. It has a capacity to create through his all life and expresses himself through different expression. This self-revealing activity helps to make a harmony among the phenomenal expression. So *Śreyadarśana* of Tagore is nothing but the phenomenological expression.

In the Tagorian philosophy we can see that the aesthetics sense comes from his concept of value or *Śreya*. Man recognizes his essence through his creative activity. To express himself consciousness of value or '*Śreya*' – helped him. A beautiful expression or a charming face or anything when it exceeds itself and gets an essence, which is out of his needs and belongs to the area of surplus then it becomes true. It can be said in another way that when the external entity adds themselves with the individual man's self then it becomes the inseparable part of his self. The human being realizes the other self as his self. This expression is called revelation and what is called aesthetic is related with the revelation of this self. The artistic creation comes from the aesthetic sense of humanity and aesthetic sense includes his artistic activity. So it is not external.

To Satyendranath Roy the revelation as found in Tagore's aesthetic is not to bring inner self to outside but to harmonise the both. It is not desirable to change the shape, but to extend oneself through it and to realise truth through this extension, which is alone true and great wealth. Hence it is said that revelation is a kind of wealth. The western world 'expression' does not bear the same import. Revelation lies in the attainment of self-realisation through the medium of multiple shapes.<sup>7</sup>

Rabindranath gave the aim of humanism like this - "My mind will be converted with the knowledge of the Universe - it is the aim of humanism. It means that a person will be a man if he gets this universe as knowledge, power and bliss".<sup>8</sup> Because "the perfect combination is the beauty with God, like the ideal couple of Vishnu and Laxmi".<sup>9</sup>

Such kind of application of good and beauty can be seen in the western philosophy. Moore in his '*Principia Ethica*' said "two different predicates of value, 'good' and 'beautiful' which are nevertheless so related to one another that what even is beautiful is also good".<sup>10</sup> Whitehead said, "Apart from Beauty, Truth is neither good nor bad".<sup>11</sup> To Rabindranath, Beauty is to be taken as good of someone is attracted towards is without considering its empirical usefulness. For, beauty finds its source in the realm of 'surplus', which is not connected with an individual's empirical necessity.

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".<sup>12</sup> Good 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 selfishlessness. Man can be said animal and man both because man is defined as a rational animal. So sometimes he behaves like a beast. But he is said man for his humanistic approach. So far his humanistic approach good plays an important role. It is a kind of transcendence, transcendence within himself, his material nature towards the spiritual part.

Plato discussed in his philosophy about beauty, good, love, justice etc. and he said these belong to the ideal state and our phenomenal world is the reflection of ideal world. So these value entities really does not reside here. The shadow of the God, beauty, loves and justice is felt here. Evert W.Hall expresses in his '*What is value?*' – "The Universality and immutability of properties is taken either to be valuable or simply to constitute value itself. That a property is not restricted in space and time and does not share the vicissitudes of fortune that fall to the lot of particulars exemplifying it seemed to Plato to establish the superlative value of properties. Properties reside in a higher realm than particulars".<sup>13</sup>

Plato puts all the values of man in the ideal state so they are detached with life. He does not accept values within the circle of philosophy. Indian philosopher realized that philosophy will be baseless if it is not based on and for life. Indian mind made philosophy with life. Hiriyanna wrote in his '*Art Experience*' that "Indian philosophy was thus more than a way of thought, it was a way of life; and whoever entered upon it's study was expected to aim at more than an intellectual assimilation of its truths and try to bring his everyday life into conformity with them".<sup>14</sup>

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".<sup>15</sup>

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., (i) Objective

(ii) Subjective and (iii) 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 songs like – (i) 'After beholding a rose I say – beautiful and it has turned into the same'.<sup>15</sup>

(ii) 'I have created you with the help of beauty of my mind'.<sup>16</sup>

(iii) 'Flower does not exist in the garden, but in one's inner mind'.<sup>17</sup>

But these are taken from his poetic creation. In this context we quote from Sri Satyendranath Roy – 'We have to remember that poem and theorisation are not same. In the court of theorisation 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'.<sup>19</sup>

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 less 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".<sup>20</sup>

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, for this he did not accept such a thing, which indicates only one. For this philosophy is not subjective or objective but the combination of both. Aesthetic consciousness is a consciousness of bliss arising from the union of object and subject. For this Hiriyanna says- Like ethics, aesthetics is dependent upon philosophy and like ethics, it aims chiefly at influencing life".<sup>21</sup>



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