

**TAGORE'S PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY :  
APROPOS VEDANTA AND BUDDHISM**

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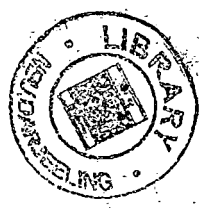
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## Preface

The question concerning Man and the Universe is very important in the history of philosophy. Actually 'man' occupies a unique position in the mind of the philosophers. In spite of differences in their metaphysical outlook the Indian systems have an internal unity. Perhaps before Protagoras Philosophers had no interest on Man and he was the first who turned the mind of philosophers to Man and he declared "Man is the measure of all things". But in India, 'Man' was highly discussed from the Vedic period and still now. As an Indian, Tagore was influenced by the *Upanisads*, Buddhism and other scripture. He developed the concept of Man from the Upanisad, Buddhism, Bauls, Folk and mystic saints like Lalan, Kabir etc.

In the present era man suffers from deficiency though he has sufficient divine potency within himself. Tagore has discussed about the nature of man. In this dissertation an effort will be made to discuss about the concept of 'Man' with special reference to Rabindranath Tagore. A critical discussion has been done through over the dissertation.

After some introductory remarks the second chapter deals with Tagore's Concept of Man in the Light of Vedānta and Upanisad.

Tagore as a metaphysical poet was influenced by Indian Scripture like, *Upanisads and Vedānta*. Especially he frequently and spontaneously recited hymns from the *Śvetaśvatara* and *Īśa Upanisads*. That was happened because of his father Maharshi Devendranath Tagore. This influence lasts long till his death. It was not because he<sup>w</sup> born in a hindu family but because the philosophy of those scripture shaped his own way

of life and reached him to the highest goal of human aspiration. Tagore's monism, his emphasis on the all-pervasive character of God, his assertion of the kinship between 'man and man' and between 'man and nature' all are taken from the *Upanisads*. He was also fully acquainted with the entire *Upanisadic* tradition and as such carried the stamp of some of the *vedantic* system in his thought. *Vaisnavism* sects of *vedanta*, made him to realise the necessity and importance of opening the ways of the heart for apprehending the one.

In chapter three Tagore's thought in the Light of Buddhism has been discussed. Buddhism also shaped Tagore's own metaphysical philosophy like the verses of *Upanisads*. Tagore said, "To me the verses of the *Upanisads* and the teachings of Buddha have ever been thing of the spirit. And therefore endowed with boundless vital growth as being instinct with individual meaning for me, as for others, and awaiting for their confirmation my own special testimony, which must have its value because of its individuality" (*Sādhanā* P. VIII). So, it is clear to us by his own words how he was influenced by Buddha.

Tagore's thought in the Light of *Baul*, Sufi Saints & Kabir is concentrated in chapter four. Tagore was impressed by *Baul* singers of Bengal, Kabir and other mystic Saints. The unsophisticated theology and the simple ways of the *Bauls* impressed Tagore very much. Besides the *Bauls*, the mystic Saints like Kabir and other saints always held special fascination for Tagore. Under those influence Tagore shaped his own religion – 'The religion of man' and created a lot of poems, songs, novels, painting etc. for us.

Tagore's concept of Man in the Light of education as a man making process. Tagore said about the complete man who belonged to the

surplusness. So to shape the personality and completeness of man making, he prescribed a system of education, which is totally different from the traditional system of education. He could realize that was not possible with-in the four wall of classroom. So, he introduced a special system of education and special way of teaching at his *Santiniketan*. Actually it was based on the classic ancient gurukula mixed with the modern Western scientific method with his own invented process. He thought in this way he could make 'the human being with ethics'. So, it can be said the man making process.

Man and Surplus in Man occupy a prominent place in Tagore's philosophy. To Tagore an individual realizes his own self more fully when he exceeds himself at large. A man has a feeling that he is <sup>the</sup> best represented in something that exceeds him. Human creativity is surplus in man because there alone takes place an incessant explosion of freedom. Man has a feeling that he is truly represented in something, which exceeds him. He is aware that he is not imperfect but incomplete.

Rabindranath had brought harmony between the Finite and the Infinite. To him such harmony remains within a man. An individual's ego wants to bind him in this worldly object while his soul longs for the Infinite, which is represented in the poem – *Dui Pakhi*. In an individual there is both *Viśva* (whole world) and *Viśesatva* (ego). Just as a string of the lyre remains in two poles a man while performing this worldly work is conjoined with the Infinite.

Rabindranath accepted good (*Śreya*) as moral value. Our life gains what is called *Śreya* in those of its aspects, which represent eternal humanity in knowledge, in sympathy, in deeds, in characters and creative works. When the 'surplus in man' is not revealed, he would not

be in a position, which exceeds him. Under this situation all will seem to be *Preya* (pleasant) to him, which is not at all desirable to Tagore.

Freedom, for Tagore, is a freedom from bondage created by alienation, which is essentially a freedom to. The action which is done out of need brings bondage while the action done from surplusness is called *Mukti* or salvation. He always wanted to have the taste of freedom amongst innumerable bondage but not through detachment in the sense of that which makes us away from the practical world. The so-called bondage may become the sources of unbound pleasure available in salvation.

In the concluding chapter an effort will be made to make A Critical and Conclusive remarks on Tagore's view. Though Rabindranath had drawn our attention to the unique concept of Man, many philosophical issues may be raised. What are the points of departure of Rabindranath from our ancient *Sāstras* need to be explored and examined. Is his philosophical thought related to our *Tāntrik* tradition? If the answer is in the positive, the specific points of his agreements and departure are also to be focussed.

## *Acknowledgement*

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Signature*

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# Chapter - I

## Introduction

### PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY: Apropos Vedānta and Buddhism

The recent decades in Europe as well as in India an interest in philosophical anthropology is being widely evinced. Dating back to Kant one notices that the question 'what is man?' is basic than such questions as 'what can I know?' or 'what I ought to do?' (Critique of Pure Reason, P. 830, "Method of Transcendentalism", Chapter II, Section 2. Kant raises the issue in Introduction to logic also). The basic character of the question 'what is man?' is due to the fact that the questions like 'what can I know?' or 'what I ought to do?' can be answered to by rephrasing them as 'what can I know as a man?' or 'what I ought to do as a man?'. The point is that the issue of philosophical anthropology appears to be inescapable.

However, the phrase 'philosophical anthropology' was introduced in one time and the task of the discipline outlined by Max Scheler. The problem is handled by Scheler in many of its aspects: the specific nature of human feelings, the relation of man to history, the possibility of human development. Philosophical anthropology, then, is a fundamental science of the essence and essential structure of man. It is the task of philosophical anthropology, say Scheler, to show how from the basic structure of human being all the specific creations and activities of man follow: Language, conscience, ideas of justice and injustice, state, the arts, religion, science and society. It will be readily appreciated by those acquainted with Tagore's thought that he has made a substantial contribution to these themes.

In talking about Tagore's contributions one should take into account the formative influences on his thought. At three places Tagore himself has given testimony to them. In a poem written in the last decade of his life, in *Janmadine No. 28*, he compares his life as having been nurtured by a river. In his arteries flow the gifts of varied mountain peaks, its fields have been shaped by many alluvial layers, mysterious vital juices from diverse sources have spread themselves in harvests upon harvests. From the east and the west networks of song-streams lull its sleep and wake. On this score, it has to be admitted that Tagore has been so transcreative a genius that it becomes well-nigh difficult to isolate as well as identify the so-called influences that may have went into the making of his thought. However, in *Sādhanā*, he spoke of the *Upanisads* and *Buddhism* as having left a lasting impression on his thought as "theories of the spirit" (*Sādhanā, Preface, VIII*), and he added that these were not, for him, to be "exhausted by any one system of logical interpretation", rather they were "instinct with individual meaning". In *The Religion of Man*, Tagore alluded to his discovery of *Vaisnava* poems and his coming to know the *Bauls* as having exerted a sea-change in the realm of ideas. In his presidential address to the Calcutta Session of Indian Philosophical Congress in 1926 he spoke about "the philosophy of our people", meaning thereby the grassroots undercurrent awareness of the spirit beyond the philosophical elite. Of course Tagore thought that the *Upanisadic* wisdom was lost between the schools of interpretation, but went sub-soil to rejuvenate and fertilize the native mind down through the ages.

On the testimony of what he says in the Preface of *Sādhanā*, it is worth one's while to investigate into the exact nature of the *Upanisadic* (*Vedantic*) heritage in Tagore, along with that of Buddhism. Our study in this context will be textual and hermeneutical. We propose to take into

account the corpus of Tagore's works both in Bengali and English as well. Overview of literature, work already done in the area.

The first philosophical work on Tagore was done by Radhakrishnan. This work has been pioneering endeavor. Radhakrishnan felt much of Tagore's pulse rightly but missed a lot, since he confined himself to the then available English works of Tagore, which were only a fragment of his vast amount of writings in Bengali. It goes to the credit of V.S. Narvane to have produced the first full-length study of Tagore's philosophical ideas based on Bengali sources, and showing his development from the early materialism and nihilism to the final avowal of the primacy of *ananda*. There is a classic study in Bengali by Sashibhusan Dasgupta on the *Upanisadic* linkage of Tagore, and it still remains to be bettered. There have also been significant papers on a similar theme by Bishnupada Bhattacharya and Abu Syeed Ayyub, dealing largely on the problem of evil. The most recent study on existential theme has been on the *Gītāñjali* by Jagannath Chakraborty, called *Astitva Viraha*. As regards the case of Buddhism there is only one full-length study by Dipak Kumar Barua. This deserves significant mention.

However, there are two research gaps: (a) Notwithstanding the *Upanisadic* linkage it has not been made clear how much Tagore follows or owes to the classical commentators. A close of Tagore's discourses, collected as *Santiniketan* can be used as a text for that purpose. For example, the very first verse of the *Íśa* as interpreted by Tagore departs widely from *Samkara's* interpretation and comes closely to Sri Aurobindo's way of understanding it and (b) Tagore's Bengali writings on Buddhism have been collected under the title *Buddhadeva*. There is also a translation of some of the pieces in English. The questions remain to be

decided whether Tagore followed *Hīnayāna* or *Mahayāna* version of Buddhism. Is Tagore's interpretation of *brahma-vihar* congruent with the teachings of the *Upanisads* as he claims it to be? How does Tagore understand the concept (or the state) or *nirvāna*? These are specific questions that are significant to be raised, discussed and finally evaluated.

One of the recurring nests of problems in philosophy is associated with the concept of man. Considering the problem many research works have been carried out on the concept of 'Man' in the East and also West. In Western philosophy J. Paul Sartre has discussed about humanism and it is an excellent concept. But by virtue of being an atheist God or Super power does not find any room in Sartrian Philosophy. So his 'man' always suffers from anxiety and overcomes this anxiety by way of taking shelter under 'bad faith'. In Greece Protagoras perhaps at first had discussed about 'man' and he had given some value to man. Before him the contemplation on the concept of man was neglected and the philosophers were engaged and interested to discuss about the universe.

India is a country of religion and ethics from the very beginning as per the historical account. Actually in this last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> Century we are so busy for our material gain that our spiritual side is totally neglected. But only one-fourth of an individual resides in this phenomenal world and three-fourth part i.e. spiritual side resides in noumena. Without the spiritual outlook it is impossible to define a human being. Man now a days has lost his values i.e. human values. There is no ethics of any kind of service, business and also politics. Individual gain is the only goal to them. Ethicless human being means man without spiritual value. Without spiritual development he can't be considered as a complete man. He always suffers from deficiency. What

he claims as his religion, actually is nothing but a collection of customs and culture. Religion is used here in a wrong sense. So it is necessary for us to clarify what should be the actual religion of man. If there is no common religion for all then this so-called religion will destroy the human race at all. The true humanism should be human religion, because it comes from the nature of man.

There are so many eminent personalities in Indian history. Among them Rabindranath is the pioneer who is philosopher on the one hand and poet on the other. Truly speaking, he is the multidimensional personality and also one of the few representatives of the universe to whom the future of the world belongs. He is<sup>born</sup> born of a family, which is reputed for its high culture, art, music, education and philosophy. When he was thirteen, he had started his literary career and had been continuing his creative activity for 67 years. The east will remember this singer of man as the torchbearer and west for his endless love and for his immortal work called *Gītāñjali* amongst the various creations. Basically he was a poet but his poetry was closely related with philosophy, which leads the reader to a region of insight beyond the boundaries of metre and music. Actually poet is the seeker of beauty while the aim of a philosopher is truth. There is no contrast between the 'Truth' and 'Beauty', because the two lead us to the same Supreme Reality. Rabindranath, in his presidential address to the Indian Philosophical Congress, said: "In India, philosophy ever sought alliance with poetry because its mission was to occupy the people's life and not merely the learned seclusion of scholarship".<sup>1</sup> With the help of various poems, prose, narratives, philosophical discourses and musical compositions Tagore expressed his mission. All are the metaphysical and artistic creations. He was born in a country where he got a classical religious tradition and culture. His family was a distinguished one for the culture and education. So he was influenced by the Vedic religion, *Gītā*,

*Upanisads* etc. as well as by his father Maharsi Debendranath Tagore. For this he sought the beauty and truth in every stage of his life through his creation. He did not believe in the traditional so called religion. To him Brahman is the Supreme authority and man is not totally different from Him. Potentially every individual possesses the super quality and he can reach the *Brahman* through spiritual exercise and love.

If any one can understand Rabindranath properly then, I believe, it will be easy for him to understand the essence of Indian culture, religion and man. To him there is no special religion for man, which does not come from his nature. The main source of religion is love by which it can easily bind the good and bad within a man. There is not a single being in this universe that is totally unfit for love. So Tagore's theory of religion can be considered as universal and his concept of man has received a global attention. He is the singer of man on the earth.

**Reference:**

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## Chapter - II

# Tagore's Concept of Man: In the Light of Vedanta & Upanisad

Tagore was deeply influenced by Indian classical cripture & epics i.e. Vedanta, *Upanisads* and *Ramayana and Mahabharata* too much and he became one of the successors of Indian rich culture and heritage. He was deeply impressed by *Upanisads*, which led him to shape his own religious views. He frequently and spontaneously used *Īśa* and *Svetasvatara* in his metaphysical writing. His monism, his emphasis on the all pervasive character of God, his assertion of the kinship between man and man and between man and nature – are all taken from the *Upanisads*. It reveals in his poems, songs, drama, essays, novels and even in paintings: When he was just eleven, he learned *Gāyatri mantra* at the ceremony of his *upanayana*. He writes in his Reminiscence. “One occasion my father came to invest the three of us with the sacred thread (Upanaya) with the help of *pandit Vedanta vagish* he had collected the old Vedic rites for the purpose. For days together we were taught to chant in correct accents the selections form upanishads arranged my father under the name of ‘*Brahma Dharma*’ seated in the prayer hall with Becharam Babu. Finally with shaven heads and gold rings in our ears. We three budding *Brahimins* went into a three days retreat in a portion of the third story.... After we had attained full *Brahminhood* I become very keen on repeating the *Gāyatri*. It is hardly a text the full meaning of which I could have grasped at that age. I well remember what efforts I made to extend the range of my consciousness with the help of the initial invocation of ‘earth’, firmament and heaven. How I felt or thought it is difficult to express clearly but this much is certain that to be clear about the meaning of words is not the most important function of human

understanding. The main object of the teaching is not to explain meanings but to knock at the door of my mind.....

So, as I was saying though at that age I could not realize the full meaning of the *Gāyatrī*, there was something in me which could do without a complete understanding. I am reminded of a day when, as I was seated on the cemented floor in a corner of our Classroom meditating on the text, my eyes were overflowed with tears. Why these tears rolled down I know not; and to a strict cross-questioner I would probably have given some explanation having nothing to do with *Gāyatrī*.

“The fact is of the matter is that what is going on inner recesses of the conciseness is not always known to the dweller on the surface”<sup>1</sup>  
Tagore realized there in the *Gāyatrī* hymns that there is a deep relation between the human soul and universe. He said in the ‘Religion’ in the easy ‘*Santiniketan*’. “We know or not, we are having a eternal relation with *Brahma*, in that relation when we revive our soul only then we realize *Brahma*”.<sup>2</sup>

The hymns of *Upanayana* or *Gāyatrī* says

*Om, Bhir Bhirvah svah*

The name of this part is called *Vyahrti* means collection form all around. It needs to make union all the three *Loka* (*Bhavaloka*, *Bhūloka*, *Svargaloka*) i.e. entire Universe should take with in the mind. It needs to realize that I am the global citizen, I do not reside in a particular country, state or village. The real *Arya* should once in a day come out from his home, stand under the sun, starts and make relation with the universe.



It is called transcendence, transcendence from the global world to the infinite universe.

*Tat Savitur Varenyam bhargo devasya dhīmahi*

We pray our homage to whom, who created this world the power of lord which is reflected in this universe.

*Dhiyo yo nah pracodayat*

We pray also to him who created as the rational being and with the help of his given rationality we pray to him. The inner world which is revelation of His rational power and the outside which is the reflection of his creativity. If we come to know that both of the worlds are created by the same omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent being then, we realize the deep relation with this single being to the variety of the universe. Only then we can come out from our selfishness and narrowness. In this way the *Gāyatri mantra* (hymns) makes a relation with the world to inner soul and inner limited soul to the great-unlimited soul. So the poet declared in his Habbart lecture - When I look back upon those days; it seems to me that unconsciously I followed the path of my Vedic ancestors.

In this way, Tagore was influenced by the *Upanisads* which led him to shape his own religious views. This influence was so basic that Tagore spontaneously and frequently used some of the upanisadic expressions like 'Íśa' and 'Svetasvatara' in almost his metaphysical writings. His monism emphasises on all the pervasive character of God. His assertion

of the kinship between man and man and between man and nature – are all based on the *Upanisads*.

The root of *Upanisads* are one –“*Ekam Sadvipra Vahudha Vadanti*”. It is the simple monism. It is said about Brahman- *Tattvamasi* or *soham*. *Tattva* is the last word of *upanisads*. ‘That’ or *Brahma* is called in *Upanisads Tattva*. He is the truth, alive and bliss, *Raso vai sah*, dualism is said in *Upanisad* but monism is its last word. Tagore realized *Upanisads* in the light of knowledge as well as love. When he speaks about *karma and bhakti*, it reveals its dualism and in wisdom or knowledge here *Brahma* reveals himself in monistic form. So, both is the path for us. We have to start with karma love and it leads up to wisdom.)

Further more he realized the inner culture of Indian civilization that there is a unity in diversity. Especially he realized this unity in the *Rikin* hymns. Poet was influenced deeply by these humns in his personal life and that is why these are reflected in his lifelong creation and also daily life. Practically he realized the power of union through one of the *Rikn* called *Gāyatrī*. Tagore said about the *Gāyatrī* that these hymns teach us the ultimate truth of the universe, the finite being and the infinite spiritual one, and they are united with each other.

Our country India accepts this hymns as a gist of all sacret religious criptures. Even when Tagore took help of the Vedic hymns at the *inauguration* ceremony of *Visvabhāratī*. Because to him these hymns have a power to make the human being united on a common platform, it gives the human being a common feeling. They could feel that they are not only individual being but also more than that.

He said – “On the inauguration day of Visvabharati we recites our ancestor’s Vedic hymns. These hymns that rishis call their entire follower that – “*Ayanth sarvathā svāhā*”<sup>3</sup> they told more that all people should get union just like the water from all sources come out and get union in a ocean.”

So, it is clear to us that Vedic humns influenced him at his childhood as well as the time when he decided to establish The Visva - bhārati. He <sup>worked</sup> through out his life only for the union of human being.

Tagore had established an intensive relation with the entire world by the influence of *Gāyatrī* hymns. He could remember that afterwards at the ceremony of *Upanayan* he got the training from his father:-

*Om*

*Bhambwah svah*

*Tat savitur varenyam*

*Bhargo devasya dhīmahi*

*Dhiyo yo nah prachodayāt*

It means (approximate translation) ‘Om! Glory to Savitri the excellent, the effulgence of the Divine, let us meditate upon it. May it inspire us with understanding what is *Gāyatrī*. To express my consciousness”<sup>4</sup> he remembered that incidence at the last stage of his life and he said – “This produced a sense of screen exaltation in me, the daily meditation upon the infinite being which unites in one stream of creation my mind and the outer world.”<sup>5</sup>

Usually the *Gāyatrī mantra* is given to a teenager of Brahmin origin during the *upanayana* ceremony. At that time the teenager becomes *dvija* or one of the twice-born. After the *upanayana* ceremony the *Dvija* is supposed to repeat the *mantra* every morning and evening and also on other important occasions. The origin of *Gāyatrī mantra* is from *Rīg-Veda* (III, 62:10). It is said that the syllables of this great *mantra* are the summation of all four vedas. The Visvāmitra states the twenty-four syllables of *Gāyatrī* are her twenty-four śaktis or powers. The mode of worship is according the form of *Śakti*. Even *Vaśiṣṭha*, who had bitter fights with Visvāmitra, praised stating that even full criminal and the mentally retarded can attain benefits from the power of *Gāyatrī mantra*.

Actually Tagore realized the *Gāyatrī* hymns has a power which unites and binds all the multi cultural and multi religious vast Indian people. He said in his lectures human religion and human truth that this Hymns (*Gāyatrī*) give me the realization that I and the universe are fused with one and have no difference at all *Bhūr bhuvahsvah* this universe, inner world & I, are His parts. Who is in the beginning and end, is the ultimate source of our consciousness ..... He connects me with the universe self through consciousness.

Tagore realized his God and he got a spiritual feeling time to time. He had not prescribed any way to reach the God. Suddenly he used to get a vision. One of the version he said in his *The Religion of man* –“when I was eighteen, a sudden spring breeze of religious experience for the first time came to my life and passed away leaving in my memory a direct message of spiritual reality. One day while I stood watching at early dawn. The sun sending its rays from behind the trees, I suddenly felt as if some ancient must had in a moment lifted from my sight, and the

morning light on the face of the world revealed an inner radiance of joy. The invisible screen of the common place was removed from all things and all men, and their ultimate significance was intensified in my mind".<sup>6</sup>

On that special day he wrote the poem '*Nirjharer Shapnabhanga*'. The spiritual world was not totally opened to him. Some times he felt the bliss of that partially opened world. And then the curtain was removed or veil totally and Tagore realized the real world and the inner truth of human life. He felt all the human being as himself even the porter and daily labourer when they were passing by the free school street, Tagore observed carefully their faces and structure of their bodies and he felt that all of them are passing by a tide of a ocean. They are the part of the ultimate truth, *the Brahman!*

There is little doubt that Tagore understood the essence of our life and existence through understanding of the *Upanisadic* ideas as exemplified in the world and the different parts of its creations. It can be said that Upanisadic idea of the presence of the divinity in man himself and in the things and beings of Nature *Raso Vai Sah* – that filled Tagore with the idea of wholeness or unity of creation. Tagore clearly said in his *Ātmaparicaya* that when he wrote *Prakritir Pratiśodh* in his early years he admitted that in believing in his world or in this society of human beings one could know the truth. In his play *Mālini* he pointed out that in apprehending the near from the distinct, the visible from the imaginative, one could perceive the religion whose object is to raise man above the self of the senses and his animal nature.

Tagore was fully acquainted with the entire Upanisadic tradition and as such carried the ideas of some of the Vedantic systems on his

thought like the *Advaitin*. He was impressed by the essential unity of everything. He gave value and importance to the *Suguna character* of the one like the *Viśistādvaita*. He tried to make a balance between the two. That is why, it is said that Tagore steers a middle course between Sankara and Ramanuja. He realized that there is no inconsistency in maintaining the essential unity of the one, along with the possibility of approaching it in the personalistic way. Overwhelmed by the ecstatic ways of the Vaisnava mystics. Tagore came to realize that the Advaitins way laid exclusive emphasis on the intellectual approach alone and neglected other kinds of approach not able that of love. Tagore realized the ultimate goal of *Vaisnavism* also is the realization of oneness. So, *Vaisnavism* helped him to realize the necessity and importance of opening the track of the heart for apprehending the one.

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## Chapter - III

### Tagore's Concept of Man:

#### In the Light of Buddhism

Before the birth of Rabindranath, Tagore's family was well known and few of them were influenced by Goutam Buddha. Rabindranath Tagore grownup in such kind of multi-cultured circumstances. But "*The Sanskrit Buddhist literature of Nepal*", by Rajendralal Mitra, made him more keen to Buddhadeva and Tagore wrote a lot of dramas, poems and stories on the basis of that book.

In 1914, Tagore visited Buddhagaya to pay his gratitude and Pranam toward Buddha and his attitudes toward Buddha was same as it was before. He visited Buddhagaya after 19 years of his first visit (1933) and declared "I come to pay my gratitude in an auspicious occasion of *Vaishakhee Purnima* to the man whom I consider the superior of all on this Earth".<sup>1</sup>

In his essay *Buddhadeva* Tagore said "if I were in the time when the Buddha was roaming with his physical appearance and purified the earth with the touch of his feet, then I would be very happy".<sup>2</sup>

From the above statements it is clear to us that how he was influenced by Buddha. Buddha was the only man in the cultural heritage of India, who influenced Tagore deeply.

Actually Tagore liked Buddha's ethical teaching and attitude towards His fellow. Their import is fundamentally practical. It will be clear if we follow the lines from the *Sutta Nipāta* -



*" If you know your own good  
And know where peace dwells  
Then this is the task:  
Lead a simple and frugal life  
Uncorrupted, capable and just,  
Be mild, speak soft, eradicate conceit,  
Keep appetites and sense calm.  
Be discrete and unassuming,  
Do not seek rewards,  
Do not have to be ashamed  
In the presence of the wise.  
May everything that lives be well!  
Weak or strong, large or small,  
Seen or unseen, here or else where.  
Present or to come, in height or depths.  
Have that mind for all the world,  
Get rid of lies and pride,  
A mother's mind for her baby,  
Her love, but now unbounded.  
Secure this mind of love,  
No enemies, no obstructions,  
Wherever or however you may be!  
It is sublime, this, it escapes birth and death,  
Losing lust and delusion,  
And living in the truth!"*



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Buddhās teaching is based on the simple and practical truth i.e. *Karmavada* or as we do, so we become.

Buddha believes on *Karma* and rebirth according to their *Karmaphala*. From Buddhist points of view their teachings are part of the *karmic* reduction of suffering and of reaching better rebirths or final enlightenment. In the present context, the search for common Buddhist conviction is an integral part of grasping *Mahāyāna Buddhist* ethics by those who lack the experience as available in Buddhists Literature. The quest for common Buddhist moral teaching is a small, but vital part of the humanistic quest for a minimal common denominator ethic of human survival and co-operation on this planet of swiftly depleting resources.

#### **COMMON BUDDHIST MORAL TEACHING:**

Buddha never preaches about the supernatural power or God who come and saved the sufferer human community, but he firmly believes on *paṭiccasamuppādatattva* or dependent origination. It is difficult to understand what is the exact nature of this dependence. The question as *Samyuttā Nikaya* has it with which the Buddha started before attaining Buddha-hood was this: in what miserable condition are the people! they are born, they decay, they die, pass away and are born again; and they are totally ignorant about this process.

Buddha had a quest in his mind that how they escape from this misery of decay and death. He came to know that the decay and death depending on what they come. It occurs only when there is birth (*Jāti*), so they depend on birth, what being there, is there birth, on what does birth depend? Then is occurred to him that birth could only be if there was

previous existence (*bhava*). But on what does this existence depend, or what being there is their *bhava*. Then it occurred to him that there could not be existence unless there were holding fast or *upādāna*. But on what did *upādāna* depend? It comes from desire (*Tanha*) on which *upādāna* depends. There must be *upādāna* if there is desire. But what being there can there be desire? To this question it occurred to him that there must be feeling (*vedanā*) in order that there may be desire. But on what does *vedanā* depend, or rather what must be there, that there may be the feeling? To this it occurred to him that there must be a sense-contact (*Sparśa*) in order that there may be feeling. If there should be no sense contact there would be no feeling. But on what does sense contact depend? It depends on consciousness. If there were no conscious there would be no *Namrūpa* or sense contact. That kind *Sankara* or conformation will continue if ignorance (*avijja*) is there. So to stop the cycle of dependence of existence (*Bhavacakra*) and suffering, individual should follow prescribed moral codes which will save himself as well as it's effect fall on the rest of the society. No religious activity, rituals, sacrifices are needed to reach the heaven. Human being can make their heaven here in this world. These morals are discussed in the following way:-

- (i) Ten Buddhist commandments.
- (ii) Virtues like liberality (giving *dāna*) and four unlimited virtues i.e. *brahmavihāras* of compassionate equanimity.
- (iii) Value emphasis such as caste equality; and lastly
- (iv) The fourth Noble Truth i.e. means for attaining enlightenment.

Ten Buddhist commandments: This ethical emphasis conquers with Winston King's belief that from the *Teravadins Buddhist* point of view, including that of its monastic elite, the five Buddhist precepts "may

be inwardized into attitudes and further extended by more positive ethical qualities....”<sup>4</sup> like the Hindu, Islam and Buddhist unlimited virtues of compassionate equanimity. In Buddhism, not only man, even the neglected animals also get a prestigious position. It is reflected in the *Jatak tales* where Buddha took birth again and again in the form of deer, peacock, cow etc. and with the virtue of ten commandments or divine rules (i.e. *Dana, Śīla, Karma, Niskarma, Prajñā, Virya, Satya, Adhiṣṭhāna, Maitrī, Upekṣā*), he liberated himself.

*The Theravadins* believed that the five precepts were externally binding on everyone. But only the saint could really observe them.<sup>5</sup>

Other five precepts are covetousness, slander, wrong views, hatred or insult, and idle talking. All those group of *Silas* are called *daśa-śīla* (ten precepts) from humanist, social and activist view points all of these norms may seem self-centered or negative unless they are surveyed in the wider context of Buddhist virtues and values.

### **Virtues:**

Beside those precepts, there are other virtues in Buddhism. These virtues or qualities are considered as crucial for the path to better rebirths or enlightenment. These are presenting or liberality (*dāna-śīla*; sharing without clinging) and the four unlimited virtues (*brahmavihāras*) of *maitrī* or benevolence, *karunā* or compassion, *muditā* or sympathetic joy.

### **Value emphasis:**

Values exist in both the *Teravadin Buddhism* and *Mahāyāna Buddhism* and five offences are judged especially grave. They prohibit killing one's mother, father an *Arhat*, a *Buddha*, or harming the

community of monks. In addition to the virtues of compassionate equanimity, therefore, one begins to discern a more concretely expressed Buddhistic ethos of non-injury (*ahimsā*). In humanistic terms and at a glance, therefore, common Buddhist morality does not seem to offer moral precepts, virtues or value emphasis inferior to other religious and human traditions.

### **The four Noble Truth:**

The last factor in the fourfold Noble Truth, which concerns the means for attaining enlightenment is the practice of the eightfold path which involves qualities of correct seeing, and entails correct doing. These are:-

- (i) faith (*samyag dr̥ṣṭi*)
- (ii) right resolve (*Sankalpa*)
- (iii) right speech (*vāk*)
- (iv) right action (*Karmānta*)
- (v) right living (*ājīva*)
- (vi) right effort (*vyāyāma*)
- (vii) right thought (*smṛti*) and
- (viii) right concentration (*Samādhi*)

Correct behaviors or 'Śīla' for both laity and monks (the *sangha*) prohibit killing, stealing, lying, adultery and the use of intoxicants. These precepts are contained already in Hindu, Islam and other religious ethics. We have to collect those Śīla in our practical life and exercise them in our daily life. These are the means to our Salvation or *Nirvāna*. It helps us to build our character. Character or *Caritra* is a means, which help us to reach our end or goal. Śīlas are assets of our journey.

Buddha has generated a variety of codes for ethical conduct. These codes are not only a commandment but these are accepted as training principles. The most common formulation of a Buddhist ethical code is the list of five precepts, which are followed by the Buddhists.

- (i) I undertake not to kill.
- (ii) I undertake not to take what has not been given.
- (iii) I undertake not to engage in sexual misconduct.
- (iv) I undertake not to lie.
- (v) I undertake to avoid intoxicants.

These precepts are intended as a support to our spiritual training and also a way of helping people to transform every dimension of their daily lives, their body, speech and mind. These can be expressed in the positive way.

*"With deeds of loving kindness, I purify my body.*

*With open-handed generosity, I purify my body.*

*With stillness, simplicity and contentment, I purify my body.*

*With truthful communication, I purify my speech*

*With mind fullness, clear and radiant, I purify my mind"<sup>6</sup>*

We transcend ourselves by practicing those precepts and in this way kindness, generosity, contentment, honesty and clarity purify our mind as well as our body.

The basic question of philosophical anthropology which, was raised before i.e. what I ought to do as a man? Has a great appeal to Buddha as well as Rabindranath Tagore.

In the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* it is said -“First he will diligently foster the thought that his fellow creatures are the same as himself. All have the same sorrows, the same joys, as I and I must guard them like myself. I will cease to live as self and take as myself my fellow-creatures. We love our hands and other limbs a member of the body then why not love other living beings as members of the universe? By constant use man comes to imagine that his body, which has no self-being is a ‘Self’, then why should he not conceive his ‘self’ to lie in his fellows also?... Then, as you would guard yourself against suffering and sorrow, so exercise the spirit of help fullness and tenderness to the world”.<sup>7</sup>

The question, if I am only for myself, what I am? And not now, when? Influenced Buddhadeva and Rabindranath Tagore .So, they were not satisfied with themselves. It forces them to go forward and do some thing for the total human being.

In the *Ātmaparichya* Tagore said about the human religion, “It is the religion that concealed in his mind to create himself. It is the inherent life forces that create the living being of the animal kingdom. The animal need not know anything about this life force. But man has another entity, which is bigger than his sentient being i.e. his humanism. This creative force with in his life is his religion”.<sup>8</sup>

Tagore himself worked untiringly spent a lot of money to relieve the distress due to food and famine, poverty, ill health and want of education in his own villages of Bengal. He also brought the message of the global brotherhood to the world’s citizen.

Buddha gave emphasis on human power and potency, which lies within him. “Buddha did not beg help and kindness from the heaven but he raised it out from the inner world of human being”.<sup>9</sup>

In this way with the help of love, respect and devotion, Buddhadeva established the inward wisdom, power and generosity of human being and gave him a special status.

Tagore's philosophy was developed from his poetic expression, which grew out of his genuine concern for the wellbeing of humanity. He clearly stated that his main subject was the idea of humanity of our God, or the divinity of man.

Tagore said that if we want to know religion, we have to go through our lives and observe them through our lives. Buddhism at first gave the special status of human being and saw the man as a being bigger than he is. In the dance drama *Candālikā* Rabindranath had emphatically shown that an ordinary lady's transformation from untouchable position to a honored one. *Candālikā* by virtue of her accidental birth in the family of a *Candāla* (lower cast) was neglected by each and every person belonging to the so-called upper caste, even by the hawkers of bangles and seller of curd. She was untouchable to other social members. Her much neglected nature was apparent, because it was imposed by the society and hence it was not her real character. She has got back her real character or realized her own character, when a Buddhist monk had accepted her hospitality by way of drinking water offered by her. The monk did not treat her as untouchable, but has offered her the honour of humanity (manaver samman). It is rightly pointed out by the Buddhist monk that she is after all a human being and the blood of a human being is flowing through her veins. Hence she should not censure herself as belonging to the race of *Candāla*. (*"Tini bale gelen āmāy nijere nindā karo űa, mānaver vamśa tomār mānaver rakta tomārnađie"*). The property of beng *Candāla* is an imposed one having no actual reality and hence there does not arise any question of untouchability. If *Candālatva* were



imposed on the dense cloud spread over the sky in the month of *Śrāvana*, would it be treated as *Candāla* and its water be impure? (*“śrāvaner kālo ye megh tāre yadinam dāo Candāla, to bale ki jāt ghucive tār, aśuci have kei tar jal”*). In other words, we cannot call the black cloud *Candāla*. Even if it is called, it is an extraneous factor, which is to be imposed on it. Hence it can never be ascribed as *Candāla* and for this reason its water can never be impure. This honour of humanity conferred on *Candālikā* is a transformation from artificiality to naturality. The descriptions like *Candāla* etc are given by the social beings in a particular situation, but they have no reality. On account of this these are called *aharya* or imposed properties, which are artificial. As soon as there is transformation, it is towards the state of naturality, which is describes as a new birth. It is achieved by her through confer of the honour to her by quenching thirst of the monk (*“ e natun janma nutun janma nutun janma āmār āmāke dīlen sahasā mānusera trsnā metāno sammān”*) She was in the realm of falsity, which is demolished through the arrival of truth (*“bhanglo e janmer mithyā”*). Rabindranath has taken the word *“Candāla* as someone who does not devote his life for welfare of the mass (*Vahujanahitāya*). Such person having no desire for doing public welfare, *maitri*, *karuna* etc are available even the family of the so-called Brahmins. As the *Candālikā* has performed a moral work by way of providing water to a thirsty Buddhist monk, she cannot be said as *Candala* (*“Dvijer vamśe Candāl kata acche āmi nai candali”*). Each and every person has got mud or dust in her heart and it is essential to remove this by transformation to the heavenly region, which is metaphorised as pure as flower, *Candālikā* has transformed to this stage and she thinks herself fortunate. Just as a flower is auspicious as it is used in the service of the God, *Candālikā* also thinks herself pious as her birth is utilized in the service of a thirsty human being. (*Phul bale dhanya āmi dhanya ami matir pare, devatā ogo tomār sevā āmār ghare’*,

'*Dhūlir dhanke karo svargīya*', '*nāi dhūli mor antare*'). This state of *Candālikā* is her real nature. This is true about all women and men who are neglected in our society due to some artificial character imposed on them. The transformed stage is the natural one, which has to be achieved by the human being. Man could able broke out this natural boundaries with the embodied appearance of wisdom and kindness. Buddha got salvation or *nirvāna* but remained in this world just for show the light of wisdom to the sufferers.

Buddhism had maintioned the three tier system like:-

- (i) Buddha
- (ii) Dharma, and
- (iii) *Sangha*

Here Buddha means devotion, *Dharma* means wisdom and *Sangha* means *Karma*. These three doctrines give the completeness in Buddhism.

This three-tier system is also found in Tagore's ideology. He did not agree with the renunciation in action. He gave more emphasis on action. It can be seen in his *Gitāñjali*, poem no. XI.

"..... Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut' Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stone. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil".<sup>10</sup>

We can see touch of wisdom every where in his creation. Tagore did not believe the society where man is neglected and religious rituals and *mantras* make the human life more complicated. His drama 'Achalayatana' and novel 'Gora' make us clear that *Jñāna Yoga* or wisdom plays an important role in salvation.

Not only action and wisdom but also devotion to God or super natural soul helps us to get salvation. It reveals in his Drama 'Candālikā' and all the poems of 'Naivedya'. All the three doctrines reveal in the poem 'Mukti'

*"... Meditation by blocking all avenue is not my path.*

*Thy blissful joy rests amidst*

*The lust of my life will go up with flames of salvation*

*My love will flow as devotion to thee*

*The joys and pleasures of sight, fragrance and melody".<sup>11</sup>*

Tagore says in the *Gītāñjali* the same thing in other way

*Where thou art in union with the multitude*

*I shall seek union with thee*

*Neither in the forest not in solitude*

*Nor inside my own mind*

*But where thou art the beloved of every body*

*Thou are my beloved too.<sup>12</sup>*

Tagore could find out the harmony of *Jñāna*, *karma* and *devotion*. So far as the *Hīnayāna* Buddhism concerned prayer and devotion are absent in it. On the other hand devotion, hymns and wisdom are found

every where in *Mahāyāna* sect of Buddhism. The only aim of Buddhism is to practise those teaching in personal life. Love does not come from nothingness and with love all relations get its completeness.

Like all other positive mental states, the clarity of mind which Buddhist ethic enjoys can be consciously cultivated. One of the most direct means of doing so is through the practice of meditation.

Buddhism is not against joy and pleasure. But it suggests that the dulled state of intoxication is actually unpleasant and we only choose to enter into it because it seems to offer some temporary respite from the pain of ordinary existence. Instead of trying to just blot out of pain of our daily lives, Buddhism suggests that we can consciously cultivate states, which are not painful. A clear mind, aesthetic appreciation, the love of nature, mediation, kindness and friendship all these bring about skillful mental states in dependence on which ever-greater joy arises.

Like Buddha, Tagore also gives a spiritualistic interpretation of human religion. Religion involves a sense of humanness in it. It is an expression of essential and inner aspect of man. Tagore says "if it is the human aspect of this truth which all great personalities have made their own in their lives and have offered to their fellow beings in the name of various religions".<sup>13</sup> It is clear that religion implies the acceptance of spirituality. "Tagore remarks that religion is the spiritual truth".<sup>14</sup> So, spirituality is the core of religion. Human's religion, according to Tagore, essentially makes him aware of a communication which is beyond the physical universe. This leads him to have faith in spiritual order.

Spirituality plays an important role in the philosophy of Buddha. He himself always went on his wondering with a close companion. Most

of the time he was accompanied by his cousin cum friend Ānanda. One-day a dialogue was opened on spirituality.

***Ānanda:***

“Lord I’ve been thinking, you know, spiritual friendship is at least half of the spiritual life.

***The Buddha replied:***

Say not so Ananda, say not so, spiritual friendship is the whole of the spiritual life”.<sup>15</sup>

This is the way in which the Buddhist tradition has preserved the teaching for the last two and a half thousand years. Teachers have passed on their knowledge and experience to their disciples in an unbroken chain of spiritual friendship, which reaches back to the Buddha himself. Without those friendships it would not be possible for the vast majority of us to tread the path of enlightenment. ‘Virtual’ spiritual friendships are indispensable.

Spiritual friendship gives one a context for self-transcendence, an opportunity to put another’s needs beyond one’s own. It is all very well to insist that our sense is ultimately illusory and that therefore we should care no more for ourselves than for others, but it is very much harder to put this into practice. In the case of spiritual friendship however, one can come to feel so strongly for one’s friends that one naturally wants to put their needs about one’s own. We should cultivate spiritual friendships with one another. This is no easy matter and is not something, which can simply be left to chance and the working of Buddhist goodwill. Gone about in that short of way, one or two people might find themselves sufficiently drawn to one another to begin to forge stronger links between one another, but most will find that their relationships with one another

stay at a more or less superficial friendly level. For most people, spiritual friendships need to be consciously cultivated. Like all things, spiritual friendships come about only in dependence upon the right condition.

Edward Thomson, Tagore's first Western interpreter, introduces the collection of spiritual love song where relation between the divine and finite reveals. Among them one is given below:

*God of the silent soul*

*awake, alone,*

*Today I will open a door*

*and be known.*

*Whom do I seek all day*

*in the swift outside,*

*I will learn the holy word.*

*of eventide.*

*I light the lamp of my life*

*with your life's light*

*O priest, in quiet I will make*

*my gift tonight*

*Where the cosmos has taught*

*a world to pray*

*I too of that radiance*

*will hold a ray.*

In *Sadhāna*, Tagore says how much he is influenced by *Upanisad* as well as the great teacher Buddha. "To me the verses of the *Upanisads* and the teaching of Buddha have ever been things of the spirit, and

therefore endowed with boundless vital growth; and I have used them, both in my own life and in my preaching, as being instinct with individual meaning for me, as for others and awaiting for their confirmation, my own special testimony, which must have its value because of its individuality".<sup>16</sup>

The magnetic character for the personality of Lord Buddha had its own towards its positive and negative prescriptions. There were many other influences too, which in their own ways determined the nature of Tagore's religious philosophy. But the main thing about Tagore's ways of thinking is that he moulds and shapes all the sources from where he was influence and he creates them in accordance with his own realisation and visions.

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## Chapter - IV

# Influence of Baul, Sufi Saints and Kabir on Tagore's Philosophical Anthropology

*Listen, O brother man,*

*The truth of man is the highest of truths;*

*There is no other truth above it.*

(*‘Sunaha mānush bhai sabar upare mānush satya tahār upare nai’* – Chandidas)

(Rabindranath Tagore, the humanistic philosopher, and the mystic poet was influenced a lot by the unsophisticated philosophical sects of Bengal i.e. *Baul*. *Bauls* don't believe in on any particular forms of religion and they never use to go to any Church, temple and Masque. It is better to call them the self-learned person who is wandering for *maner manush* or the man of the heart. They form a way of life without any complicated religious bindings. They believe in man alone which is metaphorically expressed as - '*Achin pakhi*' or 'self'. )

Tagore was well acquainted with the *Baul* sects in his childhood. Every year there has been a fair at Bolpur and *Baul* sects use to gather to sing the *Baul Sangeet* (one kind of song composed by **Lalon Phakir**). Those *Baul* songs influenced him. Tagore was the first person who had collected folk songs and had drawn the attention of educated society to the folk songs and it's literary and cultural value.

*Bauls* are the lower in status from the both Hindu and the Muslim communities of Bengal. Economically and socially they belong to the

poorest sections. They had their basic outlook anchored in the *Ujaansadhana* or *Ulta-sadhana*. It evlosizes the philosophy of the reverse path and this is the fundamental tenet of all the `sahajiyā' traditions in Bengal and else where. They like to proceed to an opposite direction from that where is followed by the general people. They avoid all kinds of formal & institutional religion in which the natural pity of the soul is over shadowed by the useless paraphernalia or ritualism and ceremony on the one hand and pedantry and hypocrisy on the other. That is why the *Bauls* and other *sahajias* call their parth *ultasadhana* (i.e. the reverse path). They use to say that their process is a kind of spiritual advance as because it the method of movement against the current i.e. *ujaan-sadhana*. It can be understood by their own composed song.

*Reverse are the modes and manners*

*of the man who is a real lover*

*of the true emotional life'.*

The main purpose of the *Bauls* for their *Ulta-Sadhana* or reverse journey is to return to one's own self which is *Sahaja* or inborn in nature. It is one of the path like other atheistic philosophy. (i.e Sankarachariya, Ramanuja etc.) It is the path which is not so complicated and artificial but the easiest path of self-realisation. This reverse journey of the *Bauls* for self-realisation is *Sahija* (easy) not because the path is easy to travel but because it is the most natural part to reach the ultimate reality.

Unsophisticated theology of *Bauls* and the simple ways for self-reñisation of the *Baul* had impressed Tagore very much. He was against the socalled traditional institutional religion. Tagore had described how, he was attracted to one of the basic philosophical features of the *Baul*

songs. While he was stumbling upon the formal constraints of the monotheistic Brahmo Church, he wrote in his *'The Religion of Man'* - I came to discover that in my conduct I was not strictly loyal to my religion, but only to the religious institution. After a long struggle with the feeling that I was using a mask to hide the living face of truth. I gave up my connection with our church. About this time one day I got a chance to hear a song from a beggar belonging to the baul sect of Bengal. What struck me in this simple song was a religious expression that was neither grossly concrete full of crude details, nor metaphysical in its rarified transcendentalism. At the same time it was alive with an emotional sincerity. It spoke of an intense yearning of the heart for the divine who is in man and not in the temple or scriptures, in images and symbols. The worshipper addresses his song to man, the ideal, and says:

*Temple and mosques obstruct the path,  
and I fail to hear thy call or to move,  
when the clerics and priests angrily crowd round me.*

He did not follow any tradition of ceremony, but only believed in love. According to him, love is the magic stone that transmutes by its touch greed into sacrifice. He said:-

*'For the sake of this love  
Heaven longs to become earth  
And God to become man'*

Man possesses all the quality and most important thing that he is alive. Man amongst all the animal can raise his head and has the authority to say *'sōham'* i.e. I and my father are one. There is union between you and me. All the man in any caste, region and sect

possesses this quality to say 'sōham'. Tagore recognised the same thing from the Baul's song, which are represented in an unsophisticated way. Kshitimohan Sen collected most of the *Baul's* songs and one of the songs which changed the mind and made more thoughtfull is:-

*Jibe Jibe chairya dekhi*

*Sabi ye tar abatar*

*O tui nutan lila kee dekhabi*

*Jar nitya lila chamatkar*

The English rendering of the song is as follows:

*Seeing the God's creature*

*All are his prophets*

*You get nothing to show*

*As because always he is showing*

The human beings are showing his proficiency through his daily works. People are showing it in the form of wisdom, love and sacrifice. Tagore himself realized this in his childhood and he expressed these through his 'prabhat sangeet' and 'prabhat utsab'. One of those are given below:

*My heart opens to day*

*All the world come and meet on my heart and hug me.*

All the human beings which reside on the earth comes to me and enjoy themselves. This is the wave of the heart of all human beings. They are having love devotion and affection within themselves. *Bauls* realize

and express their feeling in a easiest way which makes Tagore more curious.

The chief philosophical theme in *Bauls* are the man which are called '*Maner Manush*' or the Man of the heart. The same philosophy of life can be noticed in the other sects, like *Vaishnava*, *Sufi* and *Kabir's* school. The *Baul* conception of man of the heart brings in the question of its similarity or dissimilarity with *Vaishnava* conception of love. The *Vaishnava* formulation is based on a principle of duality, theological, but not metaphysical. Theologically the *Vaishnavas* have conceived a kind of duality between God and the individual and this principle of duality invites the question of *Saguna-bhakti*. It culminates in the concept of passionate love. In the metaphysical point of view the relation between God and man is incomprehensible – a relation of dualism in non-dualism. But the *Bauls* have a non-dualistic approach between them.

The *Bauls* have criticised the view of the *Vaishnava* followers. They use to raise the question in the following manner;-had these *Vaishnavas* proper understanding of the duality they would have known it in a better way than that *Candidas*, *Vidyapati* and others were good *Vaishnava* poets, simply because they had glimpses of '*Sahaja ideas*'. But are their followers competent to understand their messages? They took the idea of *Radha* from us, but have dragged her down to the level of their low desires. Devoid of the realisation of the simple, their minds obsessed with the complexities of their literature fail to do justice to the wealth they have inherited. At best they make an attempt at simplicity and naturalness in their songs and festivals, but in their lives, their temples their religious observation, they are unable to get free of the shackles of their scripture. They have made a jumble of love and desire, the working of the spirit and the want of the senses. Once the *Bauls* were asked by

the *Vaishnavas* as to whether they are aware of the different kinds of love as classified in the *Vaishnava* scriptures. *Baul* answered them by singing a song:

*'A goldsmith, I think, has come*

*into the flower garden.*

*He would appraise the lotus*

*By rubbing it on his touchstone!*

*Oh the fun, what a pity!'*<sup>2</sup>

But *Bauls* have a soft corner toward *Chandidas* and his philosophy of man. Tagore mentioned in his '*The Religion of Man*' that *Chandidas* reached the mountain in the philosophy and literature. It also always brings a positive feeling in the *Bauls*' mind and they song out.

*Listen, O brother man,*

*The truth of man is the highest truths*

*There is no other truth above it.*<sup>3</sup>

The *Baul's* '*maner manush*' or 'the man of the heart' gets transformed into '*Jiban devata*' of Tagore. God in his philosophy has been humanised. Tagore did this without being anthropomorphic in the undesirable sense. He does not mean humanisation in the sense of God. It also means that it is the God in man.

(In 'The Religion of Man' Tagore says that –

*For the sake of this love*

*Heaven longs to become earth*

*And gods to become man.*<sup>4</sup>

*Jivan-devata*, to Tagore is the God as immanent in man. That can be compared with the Vedantic doctrine of 'Tat Tvam Asi'(i.e. I and you are identical.) 'Thou' as '*Jivan-Devata*' is identical with 'Tat' as God. It is not a complete and unqualified identify, because '*Jivan-Devata*' is 'God in man'. It is like the panentheism in Greek philosophy. But in Greek theism every thing is in God and man has no separate room. In Tagore's theism, God comes down to this world from the heaven and resides in the human heart.) There is no inconsistency in this relation of identity in difference, because it is possible to comprehend such a relation even in ordinary experience as for example in the experience of love. Tagore said- "in love, at one of its poses you find the personal, and at the other the impersonal. At one you have the positive assertion – there I am; at the other the equally strong denial – I am not. Without this ego what is love? And again with only this ego, how can love possible?<sup>5</sup> He added more "In love all contradictions of existence merge themselves and are lost. Only in love is unity and duality not at variance. Love must be one or two at the same time".<sup>6</sup>

(So, it is better to say that '*Jivan-Devata*' is God in man. The *Devtas* or gods always find completeness in the human ideal form. Tagore said more "I felt sure that some being who comprehended me and my worlds was seeking his best expression in all my experiences".<sup>7</sup>

Prof. D.S. Sarma remarks that, "This being (*Jivan Devata*) is not exactly God, but rather his own higher self not the universal consciousness, but a special centre of that consciousness.

In this context prof. B.G. Ray regards '*Jivan Devata* as a *Viśva Devatā* the universal deity".<sup>8</sup>

In the '*Brihadāran yaka Upanisad* the relation between man and the deity or God are cleared by this hymns:

*Attha yōnyam devatam upaste*

*Anyōsan anyōham asmī*

*Na Sa Veda, yathō pasurevōmsa devānām .*

In *Rachanavali*(collection of his writing) Tagore said the man who worshiped the external God and thought the dual existence of them can be compared with a beast, by keeping his deity outside of him. He condemned himself by his own God. The Baul expresses the Upanisadic thoughts in a very easy and natural way by the songs- *Moner manush moner majhe koro anwesan.* (Find out your own God with-in your self.)

**Sufi and Kabir's influence:** Besides the *Bauls* the poet was influenced by the mystic Sufi and Kabir's song also. Tagore perhaps heard the songs of Sufi from his father Maharshi Debendranath Tagore and his father's friend Sri Kantha Singh.

Maharshi Debendranath at the time of spiritual exercise recited from the collection of Sufi poets *Dewan Hafez* in a very loud voice. Debendranath got inspiration during his journey on the hill or on the way to Simla. So it is natural that Tagore was deeply influenced by the



Sufi theism. The Sufism was enriched by accepting the other modern unorthodox religious views and combining them with the Islam. They never neglected any particular view but the main thing of their philosophy of life was unlimited love. Here knowledge and love come together and emerges as a new religion. The main thing of the sufism is to realize the soul at first and then together a sound knowledge of the individual (subject). Through this way the propagaters of Sufism gathered knowledge of single supreme authority. So, it is a kind of monism and non-qualified (i.e. Advaita) monistic theism. The Sufistic overview in this regard can be located in Aliraja's Sufi text '*Jñāna-Sagar*'. There it is said that God in his absoluteness could relise his love and a second or dual was required as the beloved. The absolute, therefore, created a dual out of its ownself. The '*Jñāna-Sagar*' upholds that the universe had its origin in love, and the chaos was systematised into the cosmos through the bondage of love. Man is the microcosm in which all the attribute of the absolute are united. Man thus synthesizes two aspects of existence within his nature.

In *Sufism*, two aspects of man are called '*Nasut*', which is his human personality and the '*lahut*' which is his divine personality. In the *Upanisad* the some thing is ascribed as the '*Jivātman*', the human soul and the '*paramāUman*' the Divine soul. But while the *Upanisads* speak of the love between the Divine personality and the human personality. The whole emphasis of the *Sufi* is on love. Here the *Sufis* come closer to the *Baul*'s conception of the man of the heart. So, the Sufis and *Bauls* find a happy blending of the finite and infinite being. The *Bauls* express their view rightly with the help of their famous song.

*'Khanchar bhitar achin pakhi kemne ashe jai'*

How does this unknown bird or *Achin Pakhi* come into the cage and then fly away?

It may otherwise be explained as follows. How our 'man of the heart' metaphorised as unknown bird is perceived to be playing the eternal game of self-manifestation and returning once more to itself.

It is compared with the Sufi song:

*The bird of my heart is a holy bird,*

*The ninth heaven is its dwelling*

How Tagore was influenced by the Sufism can be evidenced from a letter which he had written to a devoted Hindu lady on 20<sup>th</sup> Asar (Bengali 3<sup>rd</sup> month), 1317 *Bangabda*. The letter runs as follows:

'If you read the devotion for love in Sufism then you can see that how sophisticatingly they blend love with wisdom. Their love does not come from nothingness. That is very realistic and intimate. They did not mix up any fictitious garbage with their theory'.<sup>9</sup>

**Influenced by Kabir, the mystic Saint:** Kabir, the fifteenth-century mystic saint, is one of the few poets who believed in the religion of love. He is the child of 'Allah and of Ram' as he called himself. He achieved a synthesis of Hindu and Muslim elite and freely used symbols from both religions in his poetry. Tagore, the saint of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, was influenced by Kabir's mystic poems and songs and he himself translated so many poems in English. Kabir had enriched himself from the surrounding and contemporary religious views and it is one of the outstanding characteristics of Kabir's genius that he fused all the views in one. We can see a wide range of mystical emotion as present in all his poems. From the loftiest abstraction the most otherworldly passion for

the finite to the most infinite and personal realization of God, expressed in homely metaphors and religious symbols drawn in differently from Hindu and Muhammedan belief it is impossible to say of the author of the poems that he was Brahmin or Sufi, Vedantin or Vaishnava. He sings:

*"Mo ko kahan dhunna bande*

*O servant, where does thou seek me?*

*Lo! I am beside thee.*

*I am neither in temple nor in mosque:*

*I am neither in Kaba nor in Kailash:*

*Neither am I in rites and ceremonies nor in yoga and renunciation.*

*If thou art a true seeker, thou shalt at once see me:*

*Thou shalt me in a moment of time*

Kabir said, O sadhu! God is the breath of all breaths."<sup>10</sup>

Tagore said more on Kabir's poem in his 'The Religion of Man'.

*"I close not my eyes stop not my ears nor forment my body.*

*But every path I then traverse*

*Becomes a path of pilgrimage*

*And whatever work! Engage in becomes service;*

*This simple consumption is the best.<sup>11</sup>*

In his *Geetanjali* Tagore said the same thing

*“Leave this changing and singing and telling of beads!*

*Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple?*

*With doors all shut?*

*Open thine eyes and see thy*

*God is not before thee!”<sup>1,2</sup>*

Therefore the whole apparatus of piety, Hindu and Muslim alike all the religious places, temples, mosque, Churches, idol, holy water are nothing but the external symbols. These are the empediment to our unity and making love with each other.

Kabir said- ‘*Tirath men to sab pani hai*’ there is nothing but water at the auspicious holy bathing places; and I know that they are useless as I have bathed in them.

The images are all lifeless they cannot speak. I know for I have cried aloud to them.

The *Purāna* and the *Koran* are mere words; lifting up the curtain, I have seen. Kabir gives utterance to the words of experience; and he knows very well that all other things are untrue.

How easily Kabir expressed his view like the *Bauls* and *Sufi* saints.

He said Brahma never be found in abstractions. He is the one love who pervades the world, discerned in this fullness only by the eyes of

love; and those who know him thus share, though they never tell the joyous and ineffable secret of the universe. The soul's union with him is a love union, a mutual inhabitation. This dualistic relation which, all-mystical religion expresses not a self-emergence, which leave no room for personality. The eternal distinction, the mysterious union in separation of God and the Soul, is a necessary doctrine of all same mysticism. Besides the *Bauls* Kabir and Sufist the other mystic saints like Dadu, Rabidas, Nanak etc. always had similar thinking. Under influence of those mistic saints, Tagore introduced his own conception of religion, the elements of mysticism and simplicity.

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## Chapter - V

### Tagore's Concept of Education:

#### The Man Making Process

Tagore was not satisfied with the contemporary education system. Education that was implemented by the British Rulers in India was mainly directed towards administrative usefulness, which was indeed a shortsighted policy. It was implemented just for producing a cadre of pupil with western culture who could oil the administrative machinery of the Britishers. They just wanted to produce the clerks, official technical person, who can just serve them. Systematic thinking of education was not available in their educational curriculum. Before then in the Muslim dynasty there was no scientific education system. Sultans and Mughals were only interested with the religious education system and wanted to produce lot of *Moulobies* and *Mullas* (Islamic religious teacher).

So, they did not establish any modern educational institutions. Before then there were not also any systematic educational institutions. Education was the luxury of the Princes and it was mainly given in the *tols* and *ashrams*. It was totally *Guru Kendric*. So, Tagore was the first Indian who wanted to introduce a totally scientific system of education, which can make a real human being. He was the humanist and he wanted to uplift the human values and cultures through proper education curriculum. Tagore was dead opposed to the prevailing system of education. The agonies of which he had gone through during his school days. He hated bookish learning, by root, and creative education became his ideal, which he tried to fulfil through his life. He wanted a system of education, not hired from the western country but which had

deep roots in the Indian soil and its glorious culture. At the same time its face should be onwards to the future which can help to earn the knowledge from the different countries where science, technology and medicine have a special position. So, with the mixture of both the ancient cultures as well as modern developed western knowledge with values can give a generation of modern India. He identifies himself with all that was noblest and the best in tradition of the country, "synthesizing widely varying ideals and ideas, not only by means of individual feats of system making, but by holding and melting all the elements in the crucible of direct personal realization."<sup>1</sup> For this he wanted to link up education with the life of pupil. His future plans of linking education with life and having base of country education are more than evident from this fact. The poet's ideas on education were derived mainly from his own experience and the philosophy of life. He professed, therefore he sought to work out a system that would give due consideration to the inherent tendencies and potentialities of the child by devising activities that would gradually shape his personality. For him imagination aesthetic sense and emotion had equally important in the development of the child personality. In this context Sunil Chandra Sharkar remarks, "raised the imagination, the aesthetic sense and higher emotion to a position all most equal to that of reason. They, while operating in the spheres of poetry, music and art are almost important means of discovering reality as reason...."<sup>2</sup>

Tagore had his own line of thought when he was dealing with the child nature and its evolution. A think of human soul as being unique in every individual and that it follows its own path in the total development of the individual. At the same time he stated that it was one dimension within the totality of its being where it is absolutely identical with all other soul and with all soul, the universal person. Tagore advocated perfection of soul but also said that it was dramatic and thus susceptible



to change and continuously self-creative. The role of education to provide this changes cannot be neglected. Tagore accepted that one universal person also is responsible for variations in different individuals, which have a different ways of expression of different pupil. All this should be channeled through suitable education to enhance and give the best in every individual. The poet's educational philosophy sprang directly from the philosophy of life he professed and made it his life's mission to be carried out through his own model institution named *Shantiniketan*. His aim of prevailing education were only to develop intellectual and to some extent the physical aspects of child's personality. In such a fashioned way that it can treat the living soul in a sophisticated way and take out their potentiality. Tagore described this process with a few words when he said, we adorned the cage but the parrot within lay starving. He added that education should cultivate the power of acquiring through independent effort and develop the ability to learn directly from nature and life. What was important was not the storage of knowledge gained from books but the ability to use what is learned, develop constant curiosity within the child. For Tagore education is the process of development of whole man not merely intellectual development of the individual. It also emphasizes the physical, moral and spiritual aspect of human personality.

Tagore's special education was to develop the inner self and this can achieve in proper spirit. The innate faculties of the child in this way will find their natural flow and there would be harmony in the development of personality. Tagore was essentially a spiritualist and hence gave stress on moral and spiritual aspects of education. To fulfil the above criteria Tagore developed a suitable education curriculum for his educational plan. He pleaded for the education of the emotion on the same level and that of reason he had realized that the emotion plays an important role in the human life, especially in the younger mind. So,

emotions were educationally potent in the development of the total personality of the individual. So, children should be properly guided to nourish the emotion under a proper guidance. For this Tagore prescribed to develop individual emotion and nourishment the tender mind in a special way by including special subjects like music, art, dancing and craft in his education curriculum. He emphasized modern science, technology and medical science to fulfil his curriculum. Young patron can learn the Indian ancient values and culture with the mixture of modern technology so that they can compete in the modern society with rest of India. He welcomed the budding surge of the scientific thought and exhorted his countrymen to except this fact. However he was not prepared to look at science merely as a tool but it is the part of their life, which can help them in their livelihood but in the modern world science is used just for the destruction of the human society. Tagore realized by his several visits to the European country that they had technologically developed much and earned money by using the scientific knowledge as tools. He also saw in his lifetime that science was used during the First and Second World War for the destruction of human civilization. That was possible because the lack of moralities and negligence of their ancient values. So, he was well conscious at the time of preparing the educational curricula for his model institution *Shantineketana*.

Tagore's viewed that Indian students should realize the Indian culture are an inseparable part of the cultural heritage of the whole humanity. But to grasp the reality, the children must be made aware first of their own culture. So, the function of education should be the transmission of the age-old spiritual edition of our land to enable them to achieve greater height in future. Tagore's own educational system had its implication in the field of natural education. For him education should take the children nearer to nature and being a spiritualist, Tagore added, in close proximity to God. The soul limited in its boundary cannot enter

the divine realm. God wants a royal reception. Hence expansion of the self through communion with nature is essential for spiritual upliftment and revelation of divinity. His educational philosophy was based on three cardinal principles: Freedom and joy for the children in creative self-expression and active communion of man and nature. Children enjoy absolute and unrestricted freedom in the mind, nature and reality. The process of acquisition of knowledge thus becomes a joyful one in contrast with what is being done in regular schools. This process gears up their spirit of curiosity and a feeling of joy to discover them. He advocated wholeness of life and education and states education is a permanent adventure of life.... It is not like a painful, hospital treatment for querying them of the congenital malady of their ignorance. But is a function of the health, the natural expression of their mind vitality. Tagore also said that an education divorced from the streams of life and confined within the four walls of the class room becomes artificial and lost its value. Education leads from freedom from ignorance, and ignorance is one of the root causes of our poverty. Tagore felt that education life cannot be separated from the economic life of pupil. He also fulfils this aim in his *Shantiniketan* to reconstruct the educational curricula. So, for this he introduced crafts in his curricula, which leads to different life activities. According to him, "educational institution, in order to obtain their fulfilment of truth must have close association with economical life.....".<sup>3</sup> Children education is not only the training of intellectual power. Tagore dreamt that education of the whole human being besides his intellect, like children emotion and senses. Because it plays a considerable role in the formation of his total personality. For this he included some forms of crafts for every child. In this way children's mind and sense will be stimulated through this various activities. He also did not neglect the significant part of art to improve the emotion of children. So, *Kalābhawan* or the School of Fine Arts and Crafts was introduced for the well development of the child. Tagore's scheme of education included

dancing and drama also. He was conscious that the language of sound and movement is as effective as spoken and written language. The poet regarded this the highest means of self-expression. In this context we can quote from his words, “however great a scholar may be if he has not educated his words, his body, he has to leave a life of depends on other and in many ways like an incomplete man. There is a close and inseparable connection between the faculties of mind and body... hand work, music and arts are the spontaneous overflow of our deep nature and spiritual significance”.<sup>4</sup> True education, for Tagore, should develop the power of thought and the power of imagination and the instinct of curiosity of the child if he has to discharge successfully the duties of life in future. In this context Eleanor Roosevelt says, “there is a wonderful world ,why? That children, all children ask, when they stop using it, the reason to often is that no one bothered to answer them, no one fostered and cultivated the child’s innate sense of the adventure of life.”<sup>5</sup>

According to Tagore, education based on three sources i.e. nature, life and teacher. Among them nature can be considered as the generous donor but the sensitivity of the child and its respective power are to be enkindled by independent and creative thinking and this hard job belongs to the teacher. Tagore said, - “teachers play the role like a perpetually burning flame emanating light and knowledge. Even for such teacher and intros sphere of freedom and joy for the children is essential pre-requisite if teaching has to have some impact tender mind. In such an environment our reasoning faculty are to nourished in order to allow our mind its freedom in the world of truth, our imagination for which belongs to arts and our sympathy for the world of human reationship”<sup>6</sup>. Tagore wanted to introduce education system, which was related with the truth and life. So, he prepared a curriculum that would help the student to improve their faculties of mind and improve their knowledge. Nature is a source of inspiration and revolution for the child, it teaches

him for the first lesson of freedom and gives his immense delight and enables him to find his own solution to the problem he faces. Doctor Maris Montessory says, "the child who has never learnt to act alone to direct to his own action, to govern his own will, grows into an adult which easily laid an must always learn upon others".<sup>7</sup> Bertrant Russel in this aspect says, "no man is fit to educate unless he fills as pupil and end himself, with his own right and his own personality not merely a jigsaw puzzle or a soldier in a regiment or a citizen in a state."<sup>8</sup> Russel also gives a prominent place to the cultivation of mind over his other aim with an example of ancient Greece. He writes, "Athenian concentrated on the former, the separtants on the later. The sqartants own, but Athenian's are remembered."<sup>9</sup> The educational scheme which was practiced by Tagore emphasized both these aspects but he added one more dimension to his philosophy of education where education is an instrument of creating the desired type of social order. He agreed to the fact that the present system of education was unsatisfactory and meaningless because it does not take the basic element that education had intimate relationship with the social milieu. Education which does not consider this aspect is to be termed as incomplete. Tagore also considered that in education the most important factor is an atmosphere of creativity in which the intellectual exploration should have full scope, so the teaching should be, like overflow water of spring of culture, spontaneous and inevidable."<sup>10</sup>

True education of man is a product of interacting between inner nature and the nature outside. When there is connection between the two men, education attends some sort of connection between their culture and inner human nature. In this way the students can grow their life, health, strength and the power of mind, which are indispensable for discharging his social duties. His system of education can develop the personality – intellectual, spiritual, physical and emotional are to be

developed in childhood in order to enable him to grow up into a mature person. Otherwise he will always remain a child having no self-expression and joy of creativity and no stimulus is received for developing thinking power. In this context Tagore said, "if I want my son to grow up into a man, I should see that he grows up like a man right from his childhood. He should be told not to rely entirely on memory, and be given plenty of opportunity to think for himself and use its imagination... childhood and adolescence are the moments when the stimulus of literature is essential for the growth of man."<sup>11</sup> The major difficulties of our modern education was that we are not educated to know ourselves. We are deprived to knowing things, which are Indian and form inseparable parts of social and cultural fabric of our country. He was against the borrowed knowledge of the West which is not of any help for individual development. In this context we can quote from Tagore, "that educational institutions in our country are India's alms, bowl of knowledge, they lower our intellectual self respect, they encourage us to make a foolish display of decoration, comprising borrowed feathers... the result is that we can produce but do not produce. They're trained but not develop individuality... The morphia of obedience is being administered on so liberal a sale that we cannot on living the university hostel recover individuality and free thinkings"<sup>12</sup>. So the delicate mission, which had fallen on the shoulders of Tagore, was, therefore, to reform entirely, the system of education artificially transplanted by the British on the Indian soil so that the new system devised through his genius should take him roots in the Indian soil, Indian culture and atmosphere and countries aesthetic and economic condition and he tried to combine them in his educational curriculum. First of all we have to see whatever the educational system we adopt for our country it should be in tune with our natural and cultural circumstances. If some elements of foreign system are suitable for assimilation in our system and if we are sure that such grafting will

invigorate our education, we should not hesitate, for their acquisition on the country. If we try to introduce them in our system only because of their being foreign or because it has produced fantastic result in foreign soil, there is very reason which discards them. Just we have adopted ourselves to our natural surroundings in respect of food, clothing etc. Regarding this Tagore said, "we have as far as possible, made our food and clothing unburden some, our climate has taught us do so. We require the openings in walls more than the walls themselves. Light and air have more to do with our cloths then the weaver's loom ... all these natural advantages have moulded our life to a particular shape, which I can not believe. It will be profitable to ignore in the case of our education".<sup>13</sup> An integrated personality can be achieved only when there is a balance development of all the faculties and the main task of education is to give formation of such personality. A society can progress only when the majority of the members have achieved harmony in their personal life. If we want our children to be complete human beings, the seeds for that stage should be firmly sowed, watered and nourished in the early childhood. Whatever effort we make later to recover the lost ground are nothing but fruitless. Tagore's conscience of an artist didn't recognize a separation between art and life. His greatest strength is in the belief in the life. The love for beauty and colour, which Tagore entertained, was rather inborn in his native being. In fact, he was born in a world in which urban development has just triumphed over the green life in ancient village community. However he himself wonders that despite his upbringing in a city atmosphere he was constantly hunted by the nostalgic faces of an exiled life. He remarked that..., "even a few coconut palms growing on the border of his vast compound, same to him likes some war captives from an older army of invaders of the earth and they appeared to speak to him of the eternal companionship, which the great brotherhood of the trees have ever offered to man."<sup>14</sup> According to him Indian education is not only qualitatively merge but also barren,

since it is meant for administrative that Tagore admired to Soviet system of education which according to him had revolutionized the life's of poor people. In a letter he wrote, "here I find education has become vital, because the boundary of school does not separate it from daily life. They do not teach in order to prepare pupils for examination or to produce scholars but to make all-round man. Then he deplored referring to the boys of his school. How often we have tried of our boys into discussion but found that they had no question to ask...."<sup>15</sup> It is exactly this attitude that hurts Tagore. In the total development of our school children, satisfaction of instinctive curiosity has no plays in our school system as well as in the home environment system. It was, therefore, the endeavor of Tagore too creative such positive and mind nourishing surroundings for his children to enable them to enjoy their freedom and develop their natural faculties.

### ***Spiritual Education***

Question may arise: What was Tagore's actual religious status? He became atheist at his old age or he had strong faith in God. This kind of question was raised. The metaphysical world where he belonged to was so vast that ordinary people like us cannot evaluate it. In Indian philosophy theism (*āstika*) and atheism (*nāstika*) are measured not in the traditional way. An individual who believes in the *Veda* is called theist and one who does not is called atheist. So, in Indian philosophy not only Cārvāka but also Buddha and Mahavīra also belong to the atheist group. Tagore firmly believed in the *Veda* and *Upanisad*. So, he can be said to be theist, but he didnot having any faith on traditional so-called gods and goddess. There was no doubt about the poet's religious belief. God revealed to him in so many forms like the worldly object. The earth became meeting place of God and living being. Here the time had lost its dimension and the past and the future merge into one eternal superior authority. And in this way the poet's religious feeling crossed its



limitation and became 'the religion of man'. Man naturally wants to know the infinite and it helps him- "to train his attitude and behaviors towards the infinite in its human aspects" (*The Religion of Man, Rabindranath Tagore*). He does not belong to any religious sect and for this it became easy to him to criticize the so-called religious groups. He realized that religion was a special kind of feeling, self-realization and so called orthodox system of any religious group stands as a wall in between man and his God. So, Tagore again and again criticizes the Hindu rituals. Tagore's religious feeling became truth in *Pareshbabu* and *Anandmoye* in his novel *Gorā*. We can also see in the *Hobib Khan* in Tagore's *Musalmanir gappo*. It is seen also in Tagore's real life that he had a relation with his friend Andrews. Andrews could not understand what was his religious attitude. Would he keep any relation with Christian religion or not? Then how Tagore made him understand and relieve him can be seen in Andrews biography - "Tagore met his needs with the insight and patience of genuine friendship. Faithfully he reminded him that human love, when not disinterested, must be shunned at any cost; he saw the tendency for his friend to slip into the vagueness and laxity which two years earlier he had so strongly condemned, and he urged him to return to his God, and to cling fast to the priceless heritage of his Christian devotional life". (*Charles Freer Andrews*, [1971]: Benarasidas Chaturbedi, Marjothic Sykes, pg. 107).

So, it is clear that Tagore was not in favor of any religion. He was not also against of any religious group, but he was against the religious group, which was not in favour of the growth of human personality. Actually religion should keep human consciousness alive. For this he called the atheism the 'atheistic religion'. He said: -

*Nastik seo jai Vidhatar bar.*

*Dharmikatar kore na arambar*

*Shraddha korea jale buddhir alo*

*Shashtra manena, mane manusher bhalo*

That is,

*Atheist who are also getting the bliss of God,*

*are not showing their fake religious faith*

*They used to lit the light of knowledge*

*They do not believe in God*

*But have a vast faith on the goodness of the humanity.*

Tagore was associated with the pupil who believed strictly on religious scripture but it is difficult to say how he was influenced by the atheist and created the character like *Jathamahasai* in *Chaturanga* and *Abhik* in *Rabibar*. How man crosses his limitation and belongs to his surplusness without believing in God is evidenced from the characters of *Abhik* and *Jathamahasai*. Tagore was blamed for his atheism and he answered in this way – The real God is roaming out side the temple. They spread their hands for begging on the road. Though I am blamed as a atheist ! What is the use of those rituals which are offered to the Gods in the religious temple by neglecting the needy, hungry poor people?... I love to those needy people and I pay my gratitude to them. I do not have any faith on those imaginary deities. (12 April, 1931 *Chitipatra* [collection of letter])

The positive side of Tagore's atheism reached to its highest value when atheist *Jagamohan* invited the *Muslims* poor people and needy untouchable cobblers at his home. His brother *Harimohan* opposed it and then *Jagamohan* answered that – "they are my *Gods* and I must offer my bhog (sacred food offered to God) to them, please donot oppose me... they are my *Gods* because they can eat food which are offered to them". Tagore wrote the drama *Rabibar* when he was 80. He was too much matured himself and created a character like *Abhik* in *Rabibar*. He is the representative of non-believer of gods and in the story Tagore's voice comes out in *Abhik's* mouth. In our country people are quarreling with themselves for their own religion. They claim that their religions are superior to other. Here *Abhik* says, "in that country, where people are quarreling for the superiority of their religion, there the Nobel task of me like atheist is to make a bridge among all religions" (*Rabibar*, Rabindranath Tagore). Tagore's religious viewpoint will be more clear from his statement in his letters – Where people are cheated in the name of deity, then I can not control myself. When I visited Gaya, there I saw a landlady offered a lot of gold and money to the Panda – those gold coins were forcibly collected form the poor citizen of her reigns.... The negligence of man to his own fellow cannot be seen in other country because the deity takes the lion's share from the poor people (*Chitipatra*, 14 June 1931). The so-called religion makes him so dissatisfied that he addressed himself as atheist and created a character like *Abhik* in *Rabibar*. Atheist here is not used in a negative way or it is not slang. The people, who are doing business with religion, use atheist in a negative sense for hurting the people. So, they donot have any idea that man may have ethics detached from religion. But Tagore strongly believed that atheists are more ethical than religious people. It is evidenced in the dialogues between *Abhik* and *Vibha* in *Rabibar*.

**Vibha:** Please wait and look after my Jewellery, I am coming

**Abhik:** But who will control my greed?

**Vibha:** Why? Your atheism!

Tagore is said to be the true maker of universal man. He tried to develop a child into a universal man. So, personality development takes an important part in his education system. For this he prescribed spiritual education along with emotional and physical. Truly speaking spiritual education takes a vital role to develop a child. For him religion cannot be imparted in the form of lesson in the classroom. It is not a commodity that can be rationed in fixed weekly period in fixed doses as a subject of school curriculum. To him religions are the way of life to us. It is actual means, which help us to reach our goals. It makes ensure us to get a close relation with the infinite. So, it can be said that it is the center of gravity of our life and can be developed by the daily practice from our childhood. Truth of spiritual life not in the artificial necessities but the simple livelihood surrounded by fullness of leisure, by ample space and pure air and profound peace of nature, where man lives with a perfect faith in the internal life before them. Tagore's religious life was all pervading. It is not based on any partial feeling and parochialism. It was truly a religion to be practiced by man to make himself happy and the world better place to living. To him religious education is not teaching of some rules and dogmas. So, in his own school he felt that his students could enjoy and realize their reunion of delight in the midst of nature. It is enough for them. He makes sure that religious education is not an external imposition but an internal development and it definitely leads us to sublimity of thought. Tagore experienced such a situation when he wrote... "when I was 18 a sudden breeze of religious experience comes in my life for the first time and passes away, living a message of spiritual reality... the poem I wrote on the first day was called the *Nirjharer Sapnabhanga* (awakening of the waterfall)." <sup>16</sup> He described his religion as

the religion of man and advocated that God manifested himself in man in the sense that it was through human activity he realized himself in the universe. The evaluation of the universe is a co-operative activity in which man is not only a recipient but also a donor. Tagore was of the opinion that religion can never be taught in a prescribed lesson. He believed that a person, who has undertaken a profession of teaching about God and good to others, merely confuses and does not guide the aspirants of truth. Religion to him as to us is to be lived and not taught.

We have to remember that Tagore is dead against moral institution as imparted by teachers in schools. For him, it is a pure waste of time and effort. He said - "it is futile and it is disagreeable and I cannot think anything that does more harm to society. It is not moral institution that is needed for building up a boy's mind and character but friendly guidance and congenial environment."<sup>17</sup> Tagore believed in universal religion, which is taught or practiced. It is rather the idea of universal religion that is propagated. In his *Shantiniketan* there is no moral and religious education as a separate curriculum. Since, Tagore believed that this two cannot be part of school syllabus but the whole *Shantiniketan* curriculum was so devised that one could imbibe this values naturally in an atmosphere of freedom. Even the very conception of discipline has a special connotation here.

Discipline here means the attitude of discipline. It stands for good behavior irrespective for other orderliness, modesty, cleanliness- all this benefits a student and without which a life of serious study is impossible and this can lead a student to an ideal man.

Critics may think that Tagore was an atheist because there was no place of God in his religious philosophy but he was not in favour of godless system of education. Even so, he admired the Russians for their

achievements and raising their living standard in period of hardly two decades. In his address in Moscow he expressed to his feelings – “I have been able to realize that your ideal education is very much similar to that of mine, that the people are living a complete life through which their minds are prepared to receive education in his full richness and not merely horde of isolated facts of scientific instruction and information...”.<sup>18</sup> It is said before that Tagore’s idea of education is a part of life and something realistic and also concrete. With such high ideas Tagore never compromise him with the budding Russian system of education. His mind was clear on this point and wanted to uplift the tender mind and to bring repulsive uniformity in their thinking. It was his desire that children were to be allowed to lead a life of their own amidst utmost freedom to develop a variety of interest and to participate in a lot of activities which could stimulate their faculties and strengthen the development of their own self into a complete person. Tagore was an optimist, and hence he was confident that India will have a better future and the country will be progressive through the light of education where will reach every corner of the country. In his farewell address he expressed such hope.. “I dream of the time when it will be possible for the ancient land of Aryan civilization also to enjoy great boon of education and equal opportunities for all pupil”.<sup>19</sup>

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## **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'<sup>1</sup> which gradually raised the co-ordination and harmony of human life. Tagore called this interrelationship a "creative principle of unity".<sup>2</sup>

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"<sup>3</sup>, 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"<sup>4</sup> 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".<sup>5</sup> 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".

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## Chapter - VII

### The Finite and the Infinite

There is an intimate relation between the finite and the infinite in the classical Indian Philosophy and religion. If we deeply think about the finite and infinite then we cannot say that it is a kind of relationship because relationship implies duality or more but the *Upanishadic* thinkers said there is only one *Brahman* but not many. This type of realisation is possible after salvation; so in this practical daily life we should search for the harmony between the finite and the infinite. Like other philosophers Rabindranath had tried to find out the exact relation between the finite and the infinite. He expressed this relation through his artistic creation. In the *Jivansmrti* the poet said : "Messems there is only one grand tune of all my compositions and it may adequately be styled as the union of the Infinite with the finite in finiteness".<sup>1</sup> 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 Samkara 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 *Visistāvadist* or a follower of Vaisnavism. But the poet himself has admitted that he believes in an organic relation of the Absolute with the 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 Upanishads, he wrote in the vein of absolutism but in fact he believed in concrete

idealism. But this theory is not grounded on strong logic, for the Upanishads may be explained in both ways.

To explain the relation of the external world with the individual the poet sings: "My heart is open and the entire universe follows into it".<sup>2</sup>

In the *Gītā* he got a glimpse of the real, and wished for *Jivan Devata*. 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 *Kaṇikā*, *Kathā*, *Kāhinī* and *Kṣanikā*. *Nivedya* talks of love for human being and all Infinite beings. We can notice that poet's mind is calm and secured in *Gītāñjali*, *Utsarga*, *Gītālī* and *Gītimālya*. 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".<sup>3</sup> 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".<sup>4</sup> In the *Sadhana* 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".<sup>5</sup>

Samkara has said the same thing – "I shall become Brahman for I am He".<sup>6</sup> 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.’

### ***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, ~~religion~~ 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 realise 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 *Vrātya* 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 *Upanisads*, were to him matters relating to the spirit of man. Tagore's extensive use of the Upanisadic 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".<sup>7</sup> The contradiction prevails so long that it is not known to us as a part of the Infinite, the embodiment of love. Before the realisation 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 '*Satyadr̥ṣṭi*' 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 *R̥ig and Atharvaveda*, which speak about the Divine origination of the *Brāhmana*, *Kṣatriya* etc. It is also said that the whole world is a Divine sacrifice. Here each and every natural phenomenon serves the Divine purpose.<sup>8</sup> 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 realise this truth, “*Satyadr̥ṣṭi*” through the eye of the Divine is essential.<sup>9</sup> The same idea has been expressed in a *mantra* of the *Brhadāranyakopaniṣad* which runs as follows: “*Cakṣuṣaṣcaksuriti*”.<sup>10</sup> Tagore’s experience of the presence of the Divine in natural objects is reflected in different songs and poems<sup>11</sup> 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<sup>12</sup>, which is supported in the *Īsopaniṣad*.<sup>13</sup>

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 Pākhī*’ 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’<sup>14</sup>. A constant fight is also going on between soul and ego. This is beautifully represented in these lines – “*Dujane Keha Kare Bojhūte nahi pare, bujhate nare apanaya. Dujane eka eka jhapatī mare pakha katāre kahe kache*

*aya*".<sup>15</sup> The metaphor of birds might have been borrowed by Tagore from the *Rgveda* where it is stated that there are two birds: One busy in tasting palatable fruits while another witnessing it.<sup>16</sup> 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".<sup>17</sup> 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 Vātā rtāyate Madhu Kṣaranti Sindhavah*" etc. comes<sup>18</sup> and it seems that they are two birds existing together in a friendly manner due to having bliss.<sup>19</sup> 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*'.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup> 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 realisation of the Infinite, the ego, the finite and the Infinite remain together. One will be meaningful if the other exists and every thing will be meaningless if we deny others. So, both are essential for the existence of the both.<sup>22</sup> For establishing this harmony soul remains as a bridge between them, which

will find support in the *Upaniṣadic Mantra*: 'Atha sa ātmā' etc.<sup>23</sup> To Rabindranath this stage of harmony can be said the actual liberation. The importance of the soul can be realised 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 like his wife, house, property etc. So leaving this earthly objects amounts to leave God.'<sup>24</sup> In the poem 'Svarga hate Bidai' emphasises 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 a 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 worldly enjoyment.<sup>25</sup> 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.

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.<sup>26</sup> 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 realise *Śāntam śivam Advaitam*. The realisation 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 *Sivam*. And like this from *Sivam 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 *Santa* is not realised, 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 *Upanishadic 'Abhih'*. The word '*śānti*' is related to '*śānta*', who remains in all powers. If power is overpowered through peace or fearlessness, the *Śāntam* or embodiment of peace can be realised everywhere.<sup>27</sup> If we can control the power through peace, we become 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 realised 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.<sup>28</sup> 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 realisation of the *Advaitam* yet the realisation of *Śāntam* and *Śivam* are equally important in order to reach this stage without paying any attention to the *Śāntam* *Śivam* we can not realise 'Advaita' and it leads us to the land of unsuccess. 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.

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## 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 ~~and~~ "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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## Chapter - IX

### Mukti or Freedom (Salvation)

The question concerning freedom of man is prominent one in the contemporary Indian tradition. The answer is sought in various terms e.g. freedom through rational self-realization (K.C. Bhattacharya), freedom through a de-schooling of reason and consciousness (Krishna Murti), freedom through a creative participation in the world amidst the fellow beings (Tagore) etc. 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*, *Nirvāna*, *Amṛta*, *Apavarga*, *Moksa*, *Apunarāvṛtti*, *Sārūpa-Prāpti*, *Brahma-prāpti* etc. But Tagorian concept of *Mukti* is unique in character. In the hand of Tagore it acquires a special value. 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 licence, the soul ceases to be free”.<sup>1</sup>

In the Vedic philosophy *Ātmā* or soul is equivalent to '*Brahman*' and realization of the soul which resides in the individual man is called salvation. The Vedic seers could realize this, so they advised to the fellow to search for the Ultimate Reality not in the phenomena but with himself. Realizing individual is to realize the *Brahman* and it is called *Moksa*. We hear the echo of the *Upanisad* in Tagore's words: “Salvation is to look into the matter though timely after ignoring the bondage of selfishness, ego etc., to act timely what we are doing to remain timely where we are in where we are staying”.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>or</sup> 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 terms 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 fulfilment 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.

Man is composed of two aspects - finite and infinite. As long as man is concerned with the finite aspect, he is not free but as long as he is concerned with the infinite aspect, he becomes free. The finite aspect of man is his individual aspect, whereas his infinite aspect consists in the universal in him. Every individual has his own peculiarities, which he can never share with anybody else. On account of these peculiarities he is different from other individuals. This constitutes his individual character. But over and above these he has a character, which he shares with all and by dint of which he is one with all. This constitutes his universal aspect. According to Tagore, in every human being truth abides in its universal form, and alongside with it has also its individual aspect. The infinite nature of Man is revealed in his capacity to go beyond his individual bondage and limitations, man has that capacity within himself.

to go. The contradiction between these two selves of man is described by Tagore as that between *Choto ami* (limited self) and *Boro ami* (universal self).

A philosophical explication of Tagore's concept of man and freedom, therefore, has to be grounded on the ontological principle of 'Surplus' and man's conscious realization of its various forms of activity.

Tagore reflected extensively and deeply on the meaning of man in distinctive dimensions and the disclosure of the meaning in relation to nature, work, art and the other humans. His play '*Raktakarabi*', for example, portrays the alienation of man from other human beings, nature, and work, and an emancipation from the alienated being of man through an upheaval brought about by '*Ranjan*', - the hero of the play.

While freedom, for Tagore, is a freedom from this kind of bondage created by alienation, freedom is essentially a freedom to. It is stated especially in his *Manuser Dharma* that 'I' does not refer to 'ego'. Freedom, in fact, is the dissociation from the ego-sense. Tagore says the punishment we suffer in solitary confinement consists in the obstruction to the relationship between the world of reality and the real in ourselves, causing the latter to become indistinct in a haze of inactive imagination.

Hence Tagore's concept of freedom can be envisaged only by looking at his holistic approach to man with man and in unity with the rest of the reality. One of the major dimensions in terms of which Tagore's concept of man is explicated is freedom. While the concept of freedom is to be understood in a holistic manner as inclusive of both "freedom from" and "freedom to", it needs elaboration with reference to man's (1) physical action in the context of evolutionary process, (2) his moral action, and (3) his creative and imaginative adventures.

- (i) From the time of the emergence of the first living cell to the first appearance of man, evolution has been on the physical level. It was a mechanical process of cells multiplying themselves by aggregation, adjustment and co-ordination. When man appears on the earth, the course of evolution takes a turn from determination to freedom. Tagore refuses to accept any deterministic and causal account of evolution so far as the significance to humanity is concerned. He believes that this change from determinism to freedom in the evolutionary process with the emergence of man is because of a speciality in man – the ‘surplus’ in him, which is the capacity of going beyond oneself. To him man is not satisfied with what he is in his nature limitations; he irresistably feels something beyond the evident fact of himself, which only could give him worth.

The change in the physical make-up of man also facilitates it. Unlike the animals man stands erect, his hands too are free to manipulate and do all sorts of things which cannot be imagined with regard to animals. His physical constitution and ability to stand erect on two legs gives his eyes a privileged position; they occupy a height and man’s vision becomes far-reaching. Thus man’s physical actions are indicative of his ‘surplus’, his freedom to.

- (ii) Since man has a mental freedom i.e. the capability to think, to imagine, to judge etc. He manifests his surplus also in taking decisions and choosing to act in a certain way which is not conditioned by the ‘desirable’. Tagore makes a distinction between ‘*Śreyā*’ and ‘*Preya*’. Since man has the capacity to go beyond his immediate impulses, inclinations and desires, he is capable of performing actions, which have a moral worth and related to his ‘freedom’. When a good work of an individual comes from his

intrinsic goodness, it has a moral worth according to Tagore. His position is like that of Kant who maintained that good will, in its moral sense, is good without qualification, and must be dissociated from its results, and individual's inclinations and desires.

- (iii) Morality, for Tagore, is not meant to suppress the creative spirit of man. Nor is it to take a puritan approach to human living. On the contrary, it is an expression of man's freedom "Goodness is the freedom of ourself in the world of man". Man is as creative in his moral decisions as he is in his artistic creations and enjoyment. In this context Tagore made a distinction between 'construction' and 'creation'. While 'construction' has a utilitarian connotation, the concept of creation is indicative of man's freedom and urge to go beyond the immediate necessities of this world.

Tagore's view of human freedom can be called 'magical' in the sense that it is counter-factual. It signifies man's transcendence from his self-enclosed being to a unity of his being with the rest of world, from the world of facts and information to a world of expressions and forms, from 'having' to 'being'.

According to *Upanisad* there are three conditions to be free i.e. Knowledge, Love and action or *Karma*. The *Advaitins* emphasised on knowledge. This Knowledge is the true knowledge of *Brahman*, i.e. self. M. Hiriyanna says in his 'Outline of Indian philosophy' that, "Such Knowledge (Knowledge of Brahman) is the sole means of liberation. Neither moral perfection nor religious acts are required as direct side to it. The cultivation of the will and the purification of the affections are of course necessary, but they are only aids to *Jñāna* (right knowledge), not to *moksa*".



Like the same tone of the *Vedantins*, Tagore admitted that to realize the real nature of self is *Mukti* or salvation. But he said that to realize the self it needed the three-condition like-knowledge, love and action. Knowledge does not help us to lead the real nature of Brahman but it helps us to know Him. Love alone takes us to Him. Without action that love will not find its meaning.

Tagore have already been accepted us a humanistic philosopher and his religion is not the traditional so called religion, but human religion which comes spontaneously from his nature. Does he accept the traditional concept of *moksa* in Indian philosophy? To answer this question we have to know the nature of reality and the means for its realisation.

Knowledge is highly necessary to understand the ultimate reality. Here we have to notice that the knowledge of reality and realization of it are two different affairs and hence, they should be distinguished from each other. Now a question may arise how do we know the reality? Is it by intellect or intuition? Tagore has preferred intuition as a means but not intellect. The truth or ultimate reality is always revealed to him in a flash of intuition, but to express them he takes recourse to intellect. In *Santiniketan* he wrote: "*Brahman* can not be known by debates. It is to be known only through *Anandam*".<sup>3</sup> In the *Sādhanā* he said – "Intellectual knowledge is partial because our intellect which is an instrument is only a part of us. It can give us information about things which can be divided and analysed and whose properties can be classified part by part. But Brahman is perfect and knowledge, which is partial, can never be the knowledge of Him. So Brahman can be known by joy, by love. For joy is knowledge in its completeness, it is known by our whole being. Intellect sets us apart from the things to be known, but love knows its object by

fusion. Such knowledge is immediate and admits no doubt".<sup>4</sup> When and how the truth reveals to him, he writes in his *Jivan Smrti*: "One morning, I stood on the balcony of Calcutta residence and looked at the gardens of trees and I looked on. Suddenly I felt as if a veil was removed from my eyes. I saw an ineffable beauty. I felt an inexplicable joy within the depths of my own being and I found the whole universe soaked in it. My discontent and disappointment vanished instantaneously and a universal light flooded my entire being. That very day, I wrote the poem, *Nirjharer Swaphabhang*".<sup>5</sup>

*Aje a prabhate rabin kar*

*Kemone poshelo praner par*

*Ore Aj kee gan geyechhe rakhi*

*Aseche rabin kar.*

Not only his essays but also his poem, songs and music, the poet realized the truth by immediate process. In this context again in *Jivan-Smrti* he wrote: "Music begins where words end. Music reigns supreme in the region of the inexplicable. Music tells us what words cannot tell".<sup>6</sup> Tagore refers music intuition through his all artistic creation and prefers music-intuition. "Music is the purest form of art, and therefore the most direct expression of beauty, with a form and spirit which is one and simple, and least encumbered with anything extraneous. We seem to feel that the manifestation of the Infinite in the finite forms of creation is music itself-silent and visible".<sup>7</sup>

The poet was seeking his God through his songs. In the *Gitanjali* most of the songs are devoted to the feet of his Almighty: "Ever in my life have I sought thee with my songs. It was they who led me from door to

door and with them have I felt about me, searching and touching my world”.

Tagore said through his songs in another place at the end of his life –

*“But now when in the evening light*

*I see the blue line of the shore,*

*I know my songs are the boat that*

*has brought me to the harbour across*

*The wild sea”.*<sup>9</sup>

But now the second issue is how to realize the Infinite? Tagore said the Infinite can be realized through love alone. We have already seen in the “*Lover’s Gift and Crossing*” that the relation between man and God is the relation of love. In the *Gitāñjali* the poet sings –

*“Thou settest a barrier in thine own being and then*

*Callest they severed self in myriad notes. This they*

*Self-separation has taken body in me”.*<sup>10</sup>

Now question may be raised – Is the poet’s love of Infinite only a feeling? Does *Karma* or action play any role to realize the Infinite being? Tagore says his process is not only inactive feeling. Action or *Karma* plays an important role in Tagore’s philosophy of salvation or *Mukti*. His *Mukti Tattva* (theory of Salvation) is totally different from the traditional speculative Theory. In our day to day life we see action is the course of bondage. It may be questioned how it is possible to be free from the attachment of worldly affair. Tagore gave a simple solution in his ‘*Karma*’:

“There may be two kinds of action. One comes from want and the other from availability i.e. surplusness. The first is from need and the second is from pleasure. The action which is done out of need is called bondage and the action which is done from availability or surplusness is not called bondage and it is called *Mukti* or Salvation”.<sup>11</sup> Again in his *Tyaga* he said “Be free to be a *Kartā* or worker. For this ‘*Gītā*’ advocates the ‘*Karmayoga*’ where we have done some action which is from renunciation. If we do something from detachment then we have a right on that action. Otherwise we will be attached with that action and be a part of it ..... To do something we have to leave all kinds of selfishness”.<sup>12</sup> In his philosophy *Vyarāgya* or renunciation is not accepted. The traditional meaning of this term is actionless of interested type.

He did not accept the traditional meaning of *Vyaragya*. In the *Naivedya* he says –

*“I do not believe in salvation which comes through the Path of detachment. I would like to have the taste of Freedom amongst innumerable bondages. To close the doors of sense organs for attaining this is not desirable to me.”*<sup>12</sup>

In this context we notice that Tagore and Sartre believe the freedom in the same sense. Both declare that freedom spreads through all our life and action. Sartre said –

“For I declare that freedom, in respect of concrete circumstances, can hate no other and aim but it self”.<sup>14</sup> Tagore said, ‘the action of single ‘me’ is bondage, and action of all is freedom”.<sup>15</sup> Though Sartre had a

different ideology but he also said the same words in his 'The Problem of Method' in this way: "And in thus willing freedom, we discover that it depends entirely upon the freedom of others and the freedom depends upon our own".

We have noticed that love and action play an important role to realize the Brahman or self. Now the question is: does knowledge play any role to be free or realize the *Brahman*? In this context it can be said that he does not accept knowledge as an only process like *Advaita Vedānta*. To him harmony is the main thing and no other theories will be the only path to be free. So, love, *Karma* (action) and knowledge are the means of attaining Salvation.

In the *Sāmānjasya* Tagore said –

"His *Brahman* is not of his own, not of the wise, not of the devotee, but his *Brahman* is of the whole world. Hence it is essential to remember Him, to realise Him, and to surrender ourself to Him through one's sincerity, action etc. We can associate ourselves with Brahman with the help of the excellence of the humanity. It is our *Sādhanā* to associate ourselves to Him and to associate Him with us. It is necessary to realize Him with our body, mind and soul and to strengthen our body, mind and soul through His realisation. It is our noble duty to follow the path of harmony, Harmony brings as perfection which is desired by the sages".<sup>16</sup>

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## Chapter - X

### **A Critical and conclusive remarks on Tagore's view**

A question may be raised what is the special contribution of Rabindranath Tagore in the philosophy of religion. Let us look at his contribution in this field:

1. Tagore has stated that after the realisation of Brahman, the external world will not be *Vādhita* or contradicted, because to him it is not product of *Māyā*. In this standpoint he has no faith on *Śankara's Advaitism*. External world or phenomena are as true as the Divine, as all are the reflection on Him. All are real as the *Brahman* and they should not be ignored. After the realisation of the *Brahman* the external world should be true and real. There is a similarity between Ramanuja and Tagore on this point. In this system it is stated clearly that an individual, though the part of the Divine, can not be infinite or *Māyātīta*. Even after the stage of liberation the relation between a man and the Divine is that between worshiper and worshipped. But Tagore has a different view and his view stands between the main thesis of *Śankara* and Ramanuja. He, though conscious of his ego, thinks himself as infinite as the Divine. In the same individual there is *Viśva* i.e. whole world and *Veśesatva* or ego. In other words, a person who is doing this-worldly works is at the same time related to the Divine. Tagore does not believe in liberation in the sense of *Kaivalya* (isolation), but he speaks about liberation existing in innumerable bondages. So to him, liberation lies in between finite and Infinite. At this stage an individual looks towards as the manifestation of the Infinite and the Infinite as the manifestation of the finite, which is the

1. real picture of harmony. Tagore has clearly expressed that God intentionally takes the form of the finite out of love. This theory of liberation is really an addition and it deviates from the traditional theories of liberation.
2. Tagore has added an another theory with Indian traditional philosophy. He has shown that a man has got universal manhood in him. In other words we can say that he has given the name of the Divine as universal man which is new in Indian Tradition. In his philosophy a highest honour is given to mankind. To him liberation means the connection of the individual man to the Universal man. If we explain this point then it should be clear to us that an individual extends himself towards the universal man. So the Divine does not reside in the external world but it dwells with in himself, in the heart of individual man.
3. The main objective of Tagore's philosophy of religion is harmony. To point out this Tagore beautifully explained that the necessity of harmony and the means of harmonising in mankind. In the *Sādhanā* he has said that enjoyment is restricted in order to check one-pointed leaning. Here it can be pointed out that there are many prohibitive injunctions in our *Śāstras*. All of them should be maintained, otherwise one would get demerit according to *Śruti*. Tagore also said that these would be helpful in building one's personality. For being balanced, one should do something as well as should not do something. It is called the balanced work. Due to the loss of balance a man will have one-sided development and harmony is not possible to them. Tagore was the first thinker who gave more emphasis on harmony among the finite and Infinite with his surplus value. It is excellent contribution in Indian Philosophy and religion.

Let us try to highlight the place of Tagore in the history of contemporary Indian philosophy. In the previous chapter it is pointed out



that basically Tagore was a poet and his philosophy cannot be compared with the so-called philosophy. Because, the tendency of our academic philosophy is to show that it runs on the highway of reasoning and in everywhere-logical thinking plays an important role.

But our poet-philosopher had no schooling of philosophy. His life, activity, artistic creation and everywhere we see the touch of philosophy. He had realised the truth directly. He realised the Beauty and expressed it's sense directly. For him, the immortal and the eternal is attained, in the quality of man's experience, whether in love, love of nature or man, in longing for God or Truth when the limits within which man lives are suddenly overcome. At such moments the finite becomes the Infinite and time is turned into the timeless. Tagore expressed one of such experiences in his Reminiscences, - suddenly I came to a rhythmic sentence, 'water falls, the leaves move' (jal pare pātā nare). All at once I come to a world wherein I recovered my full meaning. My mind touched the creative realm of expression, the rhythmic picture of the tremulous leaves beaten by the rain opened before my mind the word which does not merely carry information but a harmony with my own being. The unmeaning fragments lost their individual isolation and my own being. I felt sure that some being who comprehended me and my world is seeking its best expression in all my experiences, uniting them into an ever-widening individuality which is a spiritual work of art.

The philosophical characteristics of this poet-philosopher can be described as intuitionist. Because the Ultimate Reality revealed to him immediately. There is no media, which helps to take him to the Reality. In Indian philosophy, we see, there are nine schools of philosophy. Among them three are *nāstika* and six are *āstika*. They accept *pramāna* as a means of knowledge. In the western philosophy, there are also few ways by which they realize the object. Like this the poet-philosopher accepted a few ways to know the external object. Here his philosophy can

be characterized as a subjective-objectivism. Because it was discussed in the previous chapter that his view may not be considered as a subjective. He realized the truth as a unity and it depends solely on the mind of a subject.

In the case of external object it can be said subjective-objectivism. But it is difficult to understand which process was used as a means to realize the Ultimate Reality. Perhaps in this case he was an intuitionist. Surely he realized the Ultimate Reality by intuition as evidenced from his writing.

To him *Brahman* is nothing but the self of man. *Brahman* resides in the human body. He does not reside in the so-called Heaven and it is needless to worship His image in the 'Decorated Temple'. To him love for the human is *Mukti* or salvation. It means to realize the ultimate reality within a man's inner world. So, the process of Intuition can know it.

If intuition is accepted as the process to realize the truth then it can be said that his process is a subjective one, because, the Ultimate Reality will not be revealed to all in the same way. It should vary from person to person. How is the Universal Knowledge possible? On the other hand, the mental structure of each and every person is not same. There are some persons in our society who are busy with their *Preya* or worldly pleasure. To them Ultimate Reality will never be revealed as His original nature.

So, what is the path for them to realize the Reality? Tagore did not give any process to the common people.

Furthermore 'intuition' will never be the process for all. It is personal and it helps an individual to realize *Brahman* or *Bhūmā*. But

how can this 'intuition' be attained? The question remains unanswered. For Rabindranath the boundless was so enchanting precisely. Because it was found to be expressing itself within the bound, even in his own being, and his God was a God who lives not some where in heaven, but in the mystery of his own being, in its joys and sorrows and specially in its urge to go beyond all limits. So, the language, which expresses his love of God, is not solely different from the language of human love or from that of man's self-expression. For this Tagore said – You have made me endless, such is thy divine sport. Or that is why thy joy in me is no full. For this reason you have come down to me. O! then, Lord of all heavens, where thy love if I were not, Thou hast taken me as thy partner of all this wealth. In my heart there is the endless play of thy dilight .

This union between finite and Infinite is easily possible to Tagore through his poems, which are the expression of his immediate feeling of the Reality. As a poet he looks at the world as a composite whole charged with human participation, an abiding within and a communion with it. Tagore said in his *Sāhitya* that –

*When we experience anything aesthetically, we do not experience only that subject. A good poem confers dignity on land, sea and sky, on the whole of the existence<sup>1</sup>*

Tagore said a human being is not merely a member of species, but a person. Hence the relation that man holds with the world is personal. The personal man extends himself over the world through his surplus power. He said –

*I exist, and everything else exists. There is this Union of the two in my existence. If I do not feel Anything beyond my own self, I do not feel myself.<sup>2</sup>*

So, to Tagore, truth of this kind of awareness rests on the union of subject and object. This truth comes out when the relation between man and his world is established.

Tagore has accepted that each and every man has got 'surplus' in him on account of which he always longs for something which, is not in this world. If such 'surplus' power exists, why is it not manifested all the time and to all?

The attitude for attaining renunciation is found if there is the fulfilment of this-worldly needs. Hence initial biological needs are first and foremost for a man. If there is such fulfilment, he will try to have something, which is not in this world. Hence, biological needs cannot be neglected, which is not explicitly mentioned in Tagore's philosophy.

Secondly, it is not clear to us what may be the means for the attainment of such power. It is true that 'surplus' power is hidden in man but how can this power be manifested? Why do we not always feel the existence of it? There must be some factors through which a man can long for other-worldly object. What are these factors? Can this 'surplus' power be equated to *Angusthāparimānāatman* as described to *Kāthopānised* or *Kūlakundalinī Śakti* as found in *yoga*? For the realisation or manifestation of it certain means are given in the *Upanisads* and *yoga*. For Tagore what is the means awakening this 'Surplus'? These problems come up if we seriously ponder over the concept.

In our country we have the tradition that through the process of *yoga* man can transcend the utmost bounds of his humanity and find himself in a pure state of consciousness of the undivided unity with the Highest.

For Tagore, man has two aspects, i.e. animal man and Universal man. Tagore has given much emphasis on this spiritual aspect of man called universal man, which is described by Sri Aurobindo as super man.

Tagore's contribution in the field of philosophy lies in the fact that he defines truth as human, beauty as human and goodness as human. Above all, to him reality is human reality. Of course this is highest dignity given to mankind. Such interpretation is not explicitly found in Indian philosophical system.

Tagore's *Sādhanā* for the manifestation of the universal man is of different types. Apart from the practice of detachment etc. Tagore has pointed out to the personal suffering, miseries etc. that are taken as *Sadhana* for human perfection. These are some of the contributions of Tagore.

If Tagore's view were thoroughly reviewed, one would wonder about the path of self-realisation. Sometimes it seems that Rabindranath was in favour of devotion (*Bhakti*). When we go through his devotional songs like prayer to God to provide him opportunity to have proper love and devotion to him, it seems that he is a *bhaktivādin*. It is prayer to Lord that when the doors of our hearts are closed, he is requested to get into my room after breaking the doors without going back, (*Yadi e amara hrdaya duyara vandha rahe go kabhu, dvara bhenge probhu eso mora prane phiriya yeyo na kabhu*). In this poetry we can see a great devotion to Lord, which points to his philosophical learning to *Bhaktivāda*. This is evidenced from his various compositions.

In some of his writing it is found that as if he was leaning towards *Jñāna*. When he speaks of *Ānanda*, he has identified it within *Jñāna*. To

him the whole world is covered with *Ānanda* (cp. “Jagat jude udar sure ananda gan baje, “Jagate anandayane amar nimantrana” etc.) One can realise this bliss if he has proper knowledge of the reality. This *Ānanda* can only be reached if some one has proper awareness regarding His existence everywhere (“Rayeccho tumi e Katha Kabe Jivan majhe Sahaja habe”). In this cases he has shown his philosophical inclination to *Jñāna* like an Advaitin.

Moreover, his main thesis on humanity is centred around the concept of ‘surplus’ existing in each and every individual. He can realise his Infinite power existing in him through his creation in the field of literature and activities, which transcend his narrow desire. In this context *Karma* has done as a means of self-realisation.

Though there is a chance of being confused regarding the path of self-realisation, the philosophy of Tagore has given due importance of the integral views where there is the combination of *Jñāna*, *bhakti* and *Karma*. None of these are less important in his philosophy.

*Rabindranath has taken suffering in one's life as a rectifier, but not as hindrance of obtaining something.*

*His prayer to Lord is always to provide him power of ending such suffering, but not to protect him from it.*

*This type of outlook is very novel in Indian tradition.*

*He has described the cruelty of God as His blessing.*

*Suffering as the means through which some one is*

*Rectified as Gold is rectified through fire.*

A man is the abode of the Infinite as observed by Tagore. In our *Śruti* also men are described as the sons of the Immortal (*amrter putra*). Hence a Individual has got the potentialities of Infinite power. For the manifestation of this power there is the necessity of suffering as observed by Tagore. Rabindranath believes that suffering has got a prominent role in promoting in one's infinite power. Being purified with the fire of suffering a man remains in his own essence (*Svarūpa*) which provides him with infinite power. To be victorious over suffering should be the main objective of an individual. That is why, Rabindranath is of the opinion that whatever is given to him in the form of pain by the cruel hearted Lord is always acceptable to him. Moreover, he frequently demanded suffering, so that his other inherent power are manifested through the method of purification (*Ei Karechho bhalo nithura he, emni kare hrdaye more tivpa dahana jvalo*). The suffering in a man can open the door of Infinite.

The existence of suffering in a man's life makes him balanced. If there is no pain in one's life, one would not feel necessity to work sincerely. If it is so, it may be asked why a man free from suffering would not perform his duty sincerely. In reply, it may be said that a person having no suffering may perform his duty very carefully out of his own accord, but not due to fear from suffering. But a person suffering from miseries would become more sincere due to fear of getting more suffering. It is true that where there is the cause of fear there we become more conscious. The suffering, which makes a man perfect by way of removing his one-pointed learning, has got a positive role in life. Considering this Rabindranath said that - "the fundamental thing for the performance of high austerity in the whole world is to curb the enjoyment and to curtail the desire of happiness. We should proceed in such a way so that we do not learn towards a negative side in which there is too much burden. In other words, the minimisation and

limitation of enjoyment helps us to maintain harmony so that we are not torn towards a negative side after being over burdened. This limitation has got a prominent role in beautification. Ugliness lies there where there is no limitation or restriction or suffering. Where there is harmony, there is beauty and hence an individual maintaining harmony is always associated with the well being.”<sup>3</sup>

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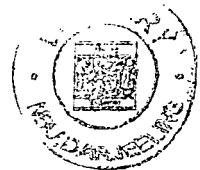
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