

***The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore:
In the light of Buddhism***

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By

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Declaration

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I declare that the thesis entitled 'The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore: In the light of Buddhism' has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr. Raghunath Ghosh, Professor of Philosophy, University of North Bengal. No part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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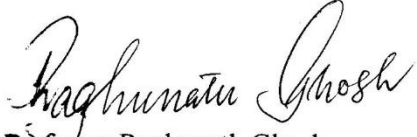
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Abstract

If we discuss the philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore and Buddhism deeply, we shall come across some similarities and dissimilarities. Tagore was influenced by the *Upaniṣads*, Buddhism and others scriptures. He developed his concept of philosophy from *Upaniṣad*, Buddhism, *Bāuls*, folk-singers and others mystic saints like Lalan, Kabir etc. In the present era I mainly discuss how Tagore develops his philosophy being influenced by Buddhism. Both Rabindranath and Buddha has admitted suffering (*duḥkha*) as a truth or reality of life. Rabindranath was influenced by Buddhism, because he realised the importance of prohibition or restriction in one's life.

An effort will be made to highlight the contribution of Tagore while interpreting some of the Buddhist texts like *Dhammapada*, *Sutanipata* etc. Tagore and Buddha have welcomed misery/ suffering in the form of death etc. due to their some positive value of purification. Suffering, if limited, can rectify an individual, but not always. Unlimited suffering makes a man crippled after closing all doors of improvement, which is not at all acceptable.

Rabindranath has found something 'extra' ('surplus' as coined by Tagore) in an ordinary man. To him a man is an 'unmeasured one' which has been described by him as *ManerMānuṣ* as discovered by the *Bāuls* etc. The theory of 'change' as found in Buddhism and Rabindranath is subject to logical scrutiny.

Tagore as a metaphysical poet was influenced by Indian Scriptures like *Upaniṣads* and *Vedānta*. Especially he frequently and spontaneously recited Buddhist hymns. This influence lasted long, till his death. It was not because he was born in a Hindu family but because the philosophy of those scriptures shaped his own way of life and helped him reach 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' are all taken from the *Upaniṣads*. He was also fully acquainted with the entire *Upaniṣadic* tradition and as such carried the stamp of some of the *Vedāntic* system in his thought. *Vaiṣṇavism*, a sect of *Vedānta*, made him realise the necessity and importance of opening the ways of the heart for apprehending the one.

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 Pākhi*'. In an individual there is both *Viśva* (whole world) and *Viśeṣatva* (ego). Just as a string of the lyre remains in two poles a man while performing his 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 taken out of need brings bondage while the action taken from the area of surplus is called *Mukti* or salvation.

Buddhism also shaped Tagore's own metaphysical philosophy like the verses of *Upaniṣads*. Tagore said, "To me the verses of the *Upaniṣads* and the teachings of the 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" So, it is clear to us by his own words how he was influenced by Buddha.

Tagore was impressed by *Bāul* singers of Bengal, Kabir and other mystic saints. The unsophisticated theology and the simple ways of the *Bāuls* impressed Tagore very much. Besides the *Bāuls*, the mystic Saints like Kabir and other saints always held special fascination for Tagore. Under these influences Tagore shaped his own religion – "*The Religion of man*" and composed a lot of poems, songs, novels, paintings etc. for us.

The points of departure of Rabindranath from our ancient *Śāstras* need to be explored and examined. Is his philosophical thought related to our religious tradition?

Tagore earnestly says, "My religion essentially is a poet's religion". But what is poet's religion? To whom he was worshipping? Only answer is *SatyaŚiva, Sundara*- the Truth, the Beauty and the Goodness. "Beauty is Truth, Truth is Beauty" this famous assertion of Keats has

come to a state of creative reality in Tagore's life, thought and literature. This is also he inherited from the *Upaniṣadic* seers.

Tagore's philosophy of religion and concept of man have a close affinity with the Buddhist idea of holy man (*Arhat*). He, who is always in worldly ties but free from all illusions is the real holy man. He says, "The real tragedy, however, does not lie in the risk of our material security but in the obscuration of man himself in the human world". The ultimate realization again expressed like this, "perpetual giving up is the truth of life, the consciousness of the infinite in us proves itself by our joy in giving ourselves. Out of our renunciation it is one with our life". This is the real Buddhist philosophy reflected in Poet's mind.

Rabindranath has taken pain (*duḥkha*) as a form of *ānanda* (bliss), and opposite to *sukha*. There is a general experience that *duḥkha* or suffering is opposite to *ānanda*, but actually it is not so. In suffering there is bliss or *ānanda* on account of which pathos (*karuṇarasa*) in literature is possible. Suffering is something which is relish able also.

Though Tagore was highly influenced by the Buddhistic thought and philosophy, it is found that he has not taken all theories into consideration. He was deeply moved by the moral aspect of Buddhism like honour to humanity, friendliness (*maitrī*), compassion (*karuṇā*), non-violence etc which are embedded mostly in Pali literature by *Hīnayāna* school of Buddhism. To the Buddhists the Eight-fold path (*aṣṭāṅgika-mārga*) is the correct path to know the right knowledge of reality, which ultimately leads to the control of sense-organs. If it is realized that each and every object is transitory or momentary, essenceless (*śūnya*), our mind, being

controlled, can reduce the thirst for enjoyment. An individual, being free from mental pollution, can achieve peace. That is why; Buddha himself is called an embodiment of peace and an aesthetic pleasure called *śāntarasa*. By virtue of being worthy of it he is called *śāntatmā* and *śānta-mānas*, which is admitted by Rabindranath in the following piece of poetry – “*Śānta he, mukta he, he anantapuṇyakaruṇāghana-dharaṇūtalakarakalankaśūnya*”.

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 philosophers. In spite of differences in their metaphysical outlook the Indian systems have an internal unity. Perhaps before Protagoras philosophers had no interest in Man and he discussed from the Vedic period till today. As an Indian, Tagore was influenced by the *Upaniṣads*, Buddhism and other scriptures. He developed his concept of philosophy from the *Upaniṣad*, Buddhism, *Bāuls*, folk-singers and mystic saints like Lalan, Kabir etc. In the present era we mainly discuss how Tagore developed his philosophy being influenced by Buddhism.

It is felt or experienced that man suffers from deficiency though he has sufficient divine potency within himself. In this dissertation an effort will be made to discuss the philosophy with special reference to Rabindranath Tagore. A critical discussion has been done throughout the dissertation.

After some introductory remarks the second chapter deals with Tagore's philosophy. Tagore as a metaphysical poet was influenced by Indian Scriptures like *Upaniṣads* and *Vedānta*. Especially he frequently and spontaneously recited Buddhist hymns. This influence lasted long, till his death. It was not because he was born in a Hindu family but because the philosophy of those scriptures shaped his own way of life and helped him reach 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' are all taken from the *Upaniṣads*. He was also fully acquainted with the entire *Upaniṣadic* tradition and as such carried

the stamp of some of the *Vedāntic* system in his thought. *Vaiṣṇavism*, a sect of *Vedānta*, made him realise the necessity and importance of opening the ways of the heart for apprehending the one.

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

In chapters three and four Tagore's thought in the light of Buddhism has been discussed. Buddhism also shaped Tagore's own metaphysical philosophy like the verses of *Upaniṣads*. Tagore said, "To me the verses of the *Upaniṣads* and the teachings of the 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 *Bāul*, Sufi, Saints and Kabir is concentrated upon in chapter four. Tagore was impressed by *Bāul* singers of Bengal, Kabir and other mystic saints. The unsophisticated theology and the simple ways of the *Bāuls* impressed Tagore very much. Besides the *Bāuls*, the mystic Saints like Kabir and other saints always held special fascination for Tagore. Under these influences Tagore shaped his own religion – "*The Religion of Man*" and created a lot of poems, songs, novels, paintings etc. for us.

Tagore's concept of Man is nourished in the light of education as a 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. 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.

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

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Chapter – I

Introduction

In recent decades in Europe as well as in India an interest in philosophical anthropology is being widely evinced. One notices that the question ‘what is man?’ is more basic than such questions as ‘what can I know?’ or ‘what ought I to do?’ 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 feeling, the relation of man to history, the possibility of human development. It will be readily appreciated by those acquainted with Tagore’s thought that he has made a substantial contribution to these themes. We have prefaced our study by saying that Rabindranath is principally a poet but his poetry is imbued with high philosophy. The question assails us: Can poetry be philosophy? Philosophy need not be the cold and hard speculations of logic. There was a time when philosophy was struggling hard to save herself from the clutches of logic. The worship of intellect was the only desired aim of philosophers. But today old intellect has made room for new and fresh institution. The watchword is no longer more logic but less logic. Once philosophy has taken refuge under spreading and expanding institution, the barrier between poetry and philosophy is dissolved. One flows on into the other and the aims of the two become more or less the same. Poetry aims at life and philosophy, divorced from life, becomes barren; but Rabindranath’s philosophy is based on the foundation of life. The eternal throbbing and pulsating life-force permeates the whole of his philosophy. Again poetry is the worship of Reality in its aspect of beauty while philosophy is the worship of the same Reality in its aspect of truth. Acharya Radhakrishnan said, “The poet worships God as the spirit of beauty, while the philosopher pays his homage to God as the ideal of truth. Philosophy is the temple of truth, while poetry is the shrine of beauty. The two are not opposed, as truth is beauty and beauty truth.”¹

It will not be dogmatic to assert at the very outset that Rabindranath has drunk ancient Indian lore to the useful part. His mind is an eastern product and he champions the cause of oriental literature and philosophy. In his writings nowhere has he expressed his indebtedness to Greek or European philosophy. On the other hand, in various places, he has mentioned how deeply the *Upaniṣad*, Buddhism and *Vaiṣṇava* lore have affected the formation of his mind. Rabindranath grew up in an atmosphere pulsating with the truths of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Vedānta*.

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, 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 gone into the making of his thought. However, in *Sādhanā*, he spoke of the *Upaniṣads* and Buddhism as having left a lasting impression on his thought as "theories of the spirit", and he added that these were not for him, to be "exhausted by anyone system of logical interpretation," rather they were "instinct with individual meaning." In the '*Religion of Man*' Tagore alluded to his discovery of *Vaiṣṇava* poems and his coming to know the *Bāuls* 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 under

current awareness of the spirit beyond the philosophical elite. Of course Tagore thought that the *Upaniṣadic* 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 *Upaniṣadic (Vedāntic)* 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.

The first philosophical work on Tagore was done by Radhakrishnan. This work has been pioneering endeavour. 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 in Bengali sources, and showing his development from the early materialism and nihilism to the final avowal of the primacy of *ānanda*. There is a classic study in Bengali by Sashibhusan Dasgupta on the *Upaniṣadic* 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 book is entitled: '*Astitva-Viraha*' by Sri Jaganath Chakraborty is the result of the recent study on existential theme as embedded in the *Gītāñjali*. As regards the case of Buddhism there is only one full length study by Dipak Kumar Barua. This deserves a significant mention.

All his philosophical discourses in *Śantiniketan*, *Dharma*, *Sādhanā*, Creative Unity, *Sañcaya*, *Mānuṣer Dharma*, Man, the Religion of Man and Personality are deeply influenced by the *Upaniṣadic* teaching. The Religion of Man, Man and *Mānuṣer Dharma* he has mingled other truths with those of the *Upaniṣads* but in *Śantiniketan*, *Dharma* and the rest, he is a frank champion of the *Upaniṣads*. In the preface of *Sādhanā* Rabindranath himself confesses: “The writer has been brought up in a family where texts of the *Upaniṣads* are used in daily worship; and he has had before him the example of his father who lived his long life in the closest communion with God while not neglecting his duties to the world or allowing his keen interest in all human affairs to suffer any abatement”². Again, somewhat later he observes: “To me the verses of the *Upaniṣads* and the teaching of Buddha have ever been things of the spirit and therefore endowed with boundless vital growth”³.

In the present work the following problems can be raised:

First, an effort will be made to highlight the contribution of Tagore while interpreting some of the Buddhist texts like *Dhammapada*, *Suttanipata* etc. In some of the essays Rabindranath has given his own observations on Buddhists philosophical position. Sometimes the Buddhist position seems to be clearer in Tagore’s interpretation which is really an original contribution of Tagore to the development and understanding of Buddhism. An effort will be made to point out these points.

Secondly, Tagore and Buddha have welcomed misery/ suffering in the form of death etc. due to their some positive value of purification. Does it really purify? If an individual is burnt with the fire of sorrow during his own life, can he do anything positive in his life? Suffering, if

limited, can rectify an individual, but not always. Unlimited suffering makes a man crippled after closing all doors of improvement, which is not at all acceptable.

Thirdly, Rabindranath has found something 'extra' (Surplus' as coined by Tagore) in an ordinary man. To him a man is an 'unmeasured one' which has been described by him as *Maner mānuṣ* as admitted by the *Bāuls* etc. An effort will be made to explore whether such notion available in *Sahajiyā* cult is found in Buddhism or not.

Lastly, the theory of 'change' as found in Buddhism and Rabindranath is subject to logical scrutiny. For Buddhism this theory is not uncalled for, because the theory of momentariness is one of the presuppositions of Buddhist philosophy. But how Rabindranath will justify the permanent self as found in the *Upaniṣad* and related issues like permanent value etc. Normally Rabindranath is taken as an interpreter of the *Upaniṣad* and believer of achieving some sort permanent type of bliss as evidenced from his poems – '*Jagateānandayajñe āmār nimantraṇa*' ; *Tāi tomār ānanda āmār par*' etc. There may be debate whether his interpretation is similar to that of Saṃkara or Ramanuja or something of mixed type, but it is true that his philosophy is grounded on basic features of the *Upaniṣads*. To him the presupposition of momentariness as possible by the Buddhists who do not believe in *Vedās* or *Upaniṣads* has hardly any room. However, his gratitude to Buddha is confined to certain aspects like respect to humanity, moral values, and methods of eradication pains from our life.

No research work covering the above mentioned problems has been done so far. Some works have been done in a fragmented way. Professor R. Ghosh has worked on Rabindranath

and Buddhism, from the gender perspectives in his book – “Facets of Feminism”. These philosophical problems, if not solved, may create some conceptual haziness, which is not proper. Hence, this work is proposed to be undertaken.

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 Sartrean 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 20th 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. Ethicsless human being means man without spiritual value. Without spiritual development he cannot 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 was 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 region of insight beyond the boundaries of metre and music. Actually poet is the seeker of beauty 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”⁴. 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*, *Upaniṣads* etc. as well as by his

father Maharsi Debedranath 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 anyone 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.

Like many other philosophers Rabindranath in and through his numerous writings aimed at the clarification and solution of a single question – what is the exact relation between the finite and the Infinite? This broad problem has been the query of eternity and all through the ages, seers have been attempting at answers. In the '*Jīvanmṛti*' the poet writes. "Seems me, there is only one grand tune of all my compositions and if may adequately be styled as the union of the Infinite with the finite in finiteness"⁵.

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- 3.Ibid.
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Chapter – II

Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Harmony between finite and Infinite:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Chapter - III

Rabindranath & Buddhist Thought

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

In 1914, Tagore visited Buddhagayā to pay his gratitude and *pranam* toward Buddha and his attitudes toward Buddha were 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 *Vaiśākhi pūrṇimā* to the man whom I consider the superior of all on this Earth"¹.

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"².

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 likes Buddha's ethical teaching and attitude towards his fellow. Their important 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, and 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 elsewhere.
Present or to come, in height or depths.
Have that mind for the entire 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,
Where ever or however you may be!
It is sublime, this, it escapes birth and death,
Losing lust and delusion,
And living in the truth. ”³*

Buddha's teaching is based on the simple and practical truth i.e. *Karmavādā* 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 *patityasamupādatattva* or dependent origination. It is difficult to understand what the exact nature of this dependence is.

Tagore eyes Buddhism from a different perspective. His vision and persuasion for Buddhism has a distinct backdrop of devoted erudition practice. It is known to everyone that he is gifted with an enviable and unparalleled family background of cultivation in different disciplines amidst a galaxy of intellectual giants. In fact, he has his lesson on the *Upaniṣads* from his father who had an exceptional and incomparable depth of vision in different religious scriptures. Again, with Abanindranath and Jyotirindranath, both well verse in art and music of

the East and the West, he has his crystallization in religious and spiritual vision in artistic and aesthetic dimensions well distilled in the great religious and spiritual thoughts of the Eastern and the Western visionaries. To be very categorical, Tagore finds a wonderful aroma of harmony in different religious and spiritual thoughts of Buddhism and the Upanisads. No doubt, in his own creative and critical contributions right from the very early stage of his life, Buddhism in particular has its deep and lasting impression.

With the inception of Viśva-Bhāratī in July 1919, Tagore feels the need of making a fusion of religious and spiritual ideas of different religious and spiritual thoughts and experiments of the world in his own institution. A great Buddhist scholar from Sri Lanka Dharmadhar Rajguru Mahasthavir is the first to come to Śāntiniketan to teach the philosophy of Buddhism. It is interesting to note in this connection how the students and teachers of different sections of Viśva-Bhāratī have found in him a serene spirit of wisdom and scholarship which has greatly influenced them to delve deep into the branches of Buddhist studies.

What prompts Tagore to cultivate and disseminate the philosophy of Buddhism at Viśva-Bhāratī is to involve the young learners in the school section in learning the life and philosophy of Buddha. In this respect, the teachers of Śāntiniketan always play a very crucial and important role in introducing the fundamentals of Buddhism to their little learners in a lucid, thrilling and lively manner. As a teacher par excellence, he has invited eminent teachers of our country like Pandit Vidhusekhar Shastri, Kshitimohan Sen, Nityanandabinod Goswami, to name a few, to familiarize these learners with the essentials of Buddhism through stories and anecdotes, poems and dramas.

Tagore himself has his own creative contributions, specially designed for and oriented to cater to the needs of fostering Buddhism amongst the students of Śāntiniketan. To be very justified to his mission of dissemination of studies in Buddhism, he has invited illustrious scholars to discuss the salient features of Buddhism which would crystallize the minds of students and sensitive them in the realization of life in its proper perspectives. That he has paid ample attention to the deeper and the more intricate areas of philosophy of Buddhism has its living testimony at Chīnā-Bhavana at Viśva-Bhāratī, where scholars from Japan, Korea, China, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan in particular have their regular and disciplined congregation in the intensive study of Buddhism. Towards the year 1934 onwards Tagore has his vision of Buddhist studies further intensified with the welcome of two celebrated thinkers in Tibetan and Chinese Buddhism, Dr. V. Gokhale and Pandit N. Aiyaswamy Shastri, who were closely associated with the cultivation of Buddhist philosophy at Chīnā-Bhavana at visiting professors.

What are the areas in the philosophy of Buddhism that have prompted Tagore to be primarily interested? What are specific components inherent in Buddhism, which he always wanted to be specifically and very intensively exercised and nurtured in day to day course of studies at different levels of educational endeavour at Viśva-Bhāratī? What vigorous steps are undertaken to cultivate Buddhism right from the early stage of school education? What are the diverse programmes of activities, scholastic or otherwise, which enrich everyone to be more devoted to the study of Buddhism in a comparative and critical manner?

To be prepared to answer the questions as above, one does not necessitate to harp on this fact that in Viśva-Bhāratī the study of Buddhism dates from her genesis when the spirit of individuality has been revered in the Buddhistic philosophy of universality and *vice versa*. This endearing spirit of Buddhism caressed and cultivated in thought and action at every stage of learning and teaching here always stimulates the spirit of self-denial and self-sacrifice to be exercised anew and afresh in order to be continually justified to the great saying : ‘Be ye a lamp unto this universe’⁴.

The harmonious blending of the *Upaniṣad* and the Buddhist Philosophy as Tagore time and again introduces in the different programmes of academic activity in Viśva-Bhāratī deserves special attention. The spirit of self-denial that he wants to introduce among the students and the teachers of Viśva-Bhāratī in course of cultivation of the great *Upaniṣadic* saying *Tena Tyaktena Bhuñajāhāh*, Ma Gṛdhah-thou shall gain by giving away, thou shall not covet-has its resonance of the great saying of Buddha in connection with self-denial. This is a preparation of a true learner who is always in the quest of true wisdom. Tagore’s concern in wisdom if this kind where the spirit of self-dedication and self-denial so prominently stressed by Buddha finds freedom of efflorescence. And so, when he speaks of emancipation of the soul from all greed and selfishness, he cares for the nursling and sustenance of the Buddhist philosophy of *Dharma* where the liberation of the self and the soul from all narrowness is the primary end-in-view of our life.

Elucidating the Buddhist philosophy of the self in terms of self-denial and freedom as Buddha disseminates in his philosophy of *Dharma*, Tagore characteristically remarks:

We can look at our self in its two different aspects- the self, which displays itself, and the self which transcends itself and thereby reveals its own meaning. To display itself, it tries to be big, to stand upon the pedestal of its accumulations, and to retain everything to itself. To reveal itself it gives up everything it has, thus becoming perfect like a flower that has blossomed out from the bud, pouring from the chalice of beauty all its sweetness.

The lamp contains its oil, which it holds securely in its close grasp and guards from the least loss. Thus it is separate from all other objects around it and is miserly. But when lighted it finds its meaning at once; its relation with all things far and near is established, and it freely sacrifices its fund of oil to feed the flame⁵.

Tagore makes a further inroad to inner consciousness by highlighting the importance of the study of Buddhism specially in *Viśva-Bhāratī* in course of pursuing the spirit of emancipation. He pays sincerest attention and respect to the path of emancipation as Buddha proclaims in his philosophy of *Nirvāṇa*. He wants to bring forth the spirit of love in its best efflorescence of promise and perfection. Drawing our attention to the revelation of freedom in terms of love of the highest kind as Buddha's *Nirvāṇa* teaches us, he emphatically asserts:

The lamp must give us its oil to the light and thus set free the purpose it has in its hoarding. This is emancipation. The path Buddha pointed out was not merely the practice of self-abnegation, but the widening of love. And therein lies the true meaning of Buddha's teaching.

When we find the state of *Nirvāṇa* preached by Buddha is through love, then we know for certain that *Nirvāṇa* is the highest culmination of love. For love is an end up to itself.

Everything else raises the question ‘Why?’ in our mind, and we require a reason for it. But when we say, ‘I love’, then there is no room for the ‘Why?’ it is the final answer in itself⁶.

The message of love and peace that Buddha has highlighted in his philosophy has been one of the fundamental ends-in-view of Tagore’s philosophy of man. In *Viśva-Bhāratī* his main concern is to study the minds of man in its perfect symphony of love and peace in every action and contemplation amidst a serene and calm atmosphere of Nature. What he actually wants to emphasize in course of every programme of activity in *Viśva-Bhāratī* is to make a perfect fusion of love and peace for the realization of self in the contentment of happiness in self-denial and self-sacrifice. It is interesting to refer to the great spirit of austerity and simplicity of leading one’s life in devotion to ascent and excellence on which Tagore has always emphasized in *Viśva-Bhāratī* for all the students and teachers who all the time have their sincerest endeavor to realize the philosophy of Buddha in doing away with materialistic richness and affluence. That the real grandeur of life can be had only from a broadened vision and widened outlook of life is the invaluable lesson that Tagore wants to be ardently learnt from the philosophy of Buddhism, and, for this end-in-view, he gives priority to the education for sympathy rather than that kind of education that is dull and drab, lifeless and materialistic.

Admittedly, Tagore’s thoughts and experiments of Buddhism in *Viśva-Bhāratī* find their incomparable and unparalleled strategies in observing and enjoying the vast, unending and open blue firmament in the silent and lonely noon, the star studded or moonlight evening, the dark mysterious night or the misty dawn with an elegant promise of the bright red sunrise. It is undeniably a quest for emancipation of the self in boundless joy and freedom of the mind and the

heart. This quest for the great 'I' in order to be liberated from the 'I' in course of natural and abiding communion with the universe in and through continual and tireless strivings for purposeful, meaningful and living education in Viśva-Bhāratī has its emulating and enviable significance and legacy and even now in perfect tune with the essence of Buddhism.

Among the multi-pronged avenues on studies in the philosophy of Buddhism in Viśva-Bhāratī, what is really very noteworthy is that side by side with cultivation of Jainism, Islam, Christianity and other religious philosophies, he introduces a new line of approach to harmonizing and appreciating the unique feature of Buddhism in order to foster and accelerate the nobler visions and higher prospects of life. This is why till now in Viśva-Bhāratī studies on Buddhism have become a part and parcel of education of the highest and the most serene manner that always endears naturalness, spontaneity, humility, simplicity, creativity and critical consciousness. A new cathedral of awareness in the philosophy of values as Buddhism preaches, always pulsates the teachers and the students of Viśva-Bhāratī to embrace Buddhism not as a matter of theoretical study alone but essentially as a very way of life, a living and thrilling adventure towards excellence and ascent of man.

For the true achievement of the mind, Tagore introduces studies in Buddhism in that catholicity of vision, which finds its best synthesis in the endless quest for truth. Like Buddha, he accelerates a new vision of truth, which envisions joy as the fountain of all creation. His mission for making Viśva-Bhāratī a serene centre for pursuit of joy as freedom of mind which in *Upaniṣad* has been highlighted as '*Ānandādhyeva khalvimāni bhūtānījayante*' has undeniably its fine tuning in Buddhism as well.

Tagore's pointers to the philosophy of religion as Buddhism enshrines, have their diverse dimensions in the pursuit and advancement of erudition and edification in Viśva-Bhāratī with the same thirst for truth as Buddha has preached the evolutionary and transcendental spirit of the philosophy of religion and values. In fact, he makes *karuṇā* or what in Buddhism is christened as compassion an essential component of truth to be exercised in fusion with all educational programmes of activities with devotion and dedication. The various co-curricular activities like functions and festivals all throughout the year encapsulating dramas, dance, songs, fine arts, games and sports in which every learner spontaneously participates amply prove how the quest for finer values and nobler sensibilities is directed towards fullness in consonance with the serene spirit of Buddhism. It may not be inappropriate to refer in this connection to the fact that Tagore himself has written a remarkable number of dance-dramas, stories, poems etc. where there are fine bleedings of the philosophy of Buddhism and the broader visions of ascent and excellence.

Studies on Buddhism in Viśva-Bhāratī is always solemnized with the most invaluable words of Tagore.

O gives of thyself! At the vision of thee as joy let our souls flame up to thee as the fire, flow on to thee as the river, and permeate thy being as the fragrance of the flower. Give us strength to love fully, our life in joys and sorrows, in its gains and losses, in its rise and fall. Let us have strength enough fully to see and hear thy universe and to work with full vigor therein. Let us fully live the life thou hast given us, let us bravely take and bravely give. This is our prayer to thee. Let us once for all dislodge from our minds the feeble fancy that would make out thy joy to be a thing apart from action thin, formless and unsustained.⁷

Why not prepare ourselves afresh and anew with the Tagorean words of prayer as above in order to explore and expand the ever-vibrant philosophy of Buddhism?

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 it 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. But on what does sense contact depend? It depends on consciousness. If there were no consciousness there would be no *Nāmrūpa* or sense contact. That kind *Saṁskāra* or conformation will continue if ignorance (*avidyā*) 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 its 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 *Theravādins Buddhist* point of view, including that of its monastic elite, the five Buddhist precepts "may be internalized into attitudes and further extended by more positive ethical qualities"⁸ 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 Jātaka tales where Buddha took birth again and again in the form of deer, peacock, cow etc. and with the virtue of ten commandants or divine rules (i.e. *Dāna, Śīla, Karma, Niskarma, Prajñā, Virya, Satya, Adhithāna, Maitrī, Upekṣa*), he liberated himself.

The *Theravādins* believed that the five precepts were externally binding on everyone. But only the saint could really observe them.

Other five precepts are covetousness, slander, wrong views, hatred or insult, and idle talking. All those group of *Śīlas* are called *dasa-śīla* (ten precepts) from humanist, social and activist viewpoints 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 maître or benevolence, *karuṇā* or compassion, *mūditā* or sympathetic joy.

Value emphasis:

Values exist in both the *Theravādin 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 (*ahiṃsa*). 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 Truths:

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

There are:

- i) Faith (*samyag dṛṣṭi*)

- 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 Śīlas in our practical life and exercise them in our daily life. These are the means to our Salvation or *Nirvāṇa*. 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 a 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”⁹

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 Raindranath Tagore.

In the *Bodhicaryavatara* it is said “First he will diligently foster the thought this 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”¹⁰.

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 something for the total human being.

In the *Ātmaparicaya* 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 within his life is his religion”¹¹.

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”¹².

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 caste) 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, 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 (*mānaver 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 to the race of *Candāla*. ("Tini bale gelen amay nijere nindā karo nā, mānaver vamsa tomār mānaver raktatomārnadie"). The property of being *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 *Śravana*, would it be treated as *Candāla* and its water be impure? ("Śravaner kālo ye megh tāre yadinam dāo Candāla, to bale ki jātghucive tār, asuci have kei tār 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 *Candālika* 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 dilensahasā mānusera tṛṣṇā metāno samman’*) She was in the realm of falsity, which is demolished through the arrival of truth (*“bhānglo e jammer mithya”*). Rabindranath has taken the word *Candāla* as someone who does not devote his life for welfare of the mass (*Vahujanahitaya*). Such person having no desire for doing public welfare, *maître, karūṇā* etc are available even the family of the so-called Brahmins. As the *Candālika* has performed a moral work by way of providing water to a thirsty Buddhist monk, she cannot be said as *Candāla* (*‘Dvijer vamse Candāl kata ācche āmi nai candāli’*). 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, *Candālika* 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, *Candālika* also thinks herself pious as her birth is utilized in the service of a thirsty human being. (*Phul bale dhanya āmi dhanya āmi mātir pare, devatā ogo tomār sevāāmārghare’, Dhulīr dhānke karo svargiya’, ‘nāi dhulī mor antare’*). This state of *Candālika* 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 *nirvāṇa* but remained in this world just for show the light of wisdom to the sufferers.

Buddhism had maintained 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 *Gītāñjali*, 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 path maker is braking 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”¹³.

We can see touch of wisdom everywhere 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 ‘*Achalāyatana*’ and novel ‘*Gorā*’ make us clear that *JñānaYoga* 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* ‘*Candālika*’ 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”.*¹⁴

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.*¹⁵

Tagore could find out the harmony of *Jñāna*, *karma* and devotion. So far as the *Hinayāna Buddhism* concerned prayer and devotion are absent in it. On the other hand devotion, hymns and wisdom are found everywhere in *Mahāyāna* sect of Buddhism. The only aim of Buddhism is

to practice 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, meditation, 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”¹⁶. It is clear that religion implies the acceptance of spirituality. “Tagore remarks that religion is the spiritual truth”¹⁷. 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.

A 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 Mahavira also belong to the atheist group. Tagore firmly believed in the Veda and *Upaniṣad*. So, he can be said to be theist, but he did not have 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"¹⁸. 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 groups 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 Pareshbābu and Ānandmoye in his novel *Gorā*. We can also see in the Hobib Khan in Tagore's *Musalmānir 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”¹⁹.

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

Nāstik seapāi Vidhātār bar.

Dharmikatar kore nāārambar.

Śraddhākoreā jwale buddhīr ālo

*Śāstra mānenā, mane mānuṣer bhālo.*²⁰

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 *Jyethāmahasāi* and *Caturanga* and *Abhik* in *Rabibār*. How man crosses his limitation and belongs to his surplusness without believing in God is evidenced form the characters of

Abhikand *Jyethāmahasāi*. 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 deities²¹.

The positive side of Tagore's atheism reached to its highest value when atheist Jagamohan invited 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 do not oppose me ... they are my Gods because they can eat food which are offered to them”²². 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 religious are superior to other. Here Abhik says, “in that country, where people are quarreling for the superiority of there the noble task of me like atheist is to make a bridge among all religions”²³. 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 cannot control myself. When I visited *Gayā*, there I saw a landlady offered a lot of gold and money to the *Pāndā* – those gold coins were forcibly collected from 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”²⁴. The so-called religion makes him so dissatisfied that he address himself as atheist and created a character like Abhik in *Rabibār*. 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 do not have any idea that man may have ethics detached from religion. But Tagore strongly believed that atheist are more ethical than religious people. It is evidenced in the dialogues between Abhik and Vibha in *Rabibār*.

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 does 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 surround 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 Swapnabhanga* (awakening of the waterfall)”²⁵. 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”²⁶. Tagore believed in universal religion, which is taught or practiced. It is rather the idea of universal religion that is propagated. In his Śāntiniketan 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 Śāntiniketan 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 order 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 idea 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..."²⁷. 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"²⁸.

Spirituality plays an important role in the philosophy of Buddha. He himself always went on his wandering 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 Ānanda, say not so, spiritual friendship is the whole of the spiritual life”.

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 quite I will make

My gift tonight

Where the cosmos has taught

A world to pray

I too of that radiance

*Will hold a ray.*²⁹

In *Sādhanā*, Tagore says how much he is influenced by *Upaniṣad* as well as the great teacher Buddha. “To me the verses of the *Upaniṣads* 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”³⁰.

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 realization and visions.

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Chapter- IV

A comparative study between Philosophy

Of

Rabindranath and Buddhism

If the Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore and Buddhism are deeply compared, we shall come across some similarities as well as dissimilarities between them. So far as the former is concerned, both Rabindranath and Buddha had admitted 'suffering' (*duḥkha*) as a truth or reality of life. Both of them admit the death or suffering is not an impediment of our progress, rather it is taken as an instrumental to the success. That is why; suffering has been taken as a Noble Truth by Buddha, which is capable of being eradicated. There is a causal chain in suffering, causes of it, possibility of its removal and its final eradication through some means. To Rabindranath the suffering makes a man purified. Being purified with the fire of suffering an individual achieves his own essence (*svarūpa*).

Rabindranath appreciates Buddhism because of its moral practice (*Śīla*) which restricts mankind to do whatever he likes. Being influenced by Buddhism Rabindranath had realized the importance of prohibition or restriction in one's life. In Buddhism the humanity is eulogized in a threadbare manner, which is represented by Rabindranath in his *Candālikā*. A woman named *Candālikā* belonging to lower caste was treated as untouchable by others. She was ultimately given recognition as a human being by a Buddhist monk, Ānanda. It has been taken as a kind of rebirth (*natun janma*) by *Candālikā*— one birth from mother's womb and another through recognition as a human being. In this way, Rabindranath has admitted the importance of Buddhism in his life and philosophy by virtue of the fact that it gives a human being a new life.

Rabindranath's interpretation of the Buddhist concept of *Brahmavihāra* is unique and novel. To him the term 'Brahma' as occurred in *Brahmavihāra* signifies 'love unlimited' i.e.

Bṛhat. If an individual attains this situation, he will have a sense of friendliness (*mettabhāvana*) can rejoice other sorrow by sharing it as reflected in Rajarshi. To think about the wellbeing of all human beings (not the individual wellbeing alone) is the essential feature of Buddhism which has influenced Rabindranath very much. Hence he has also advised others to take the path of sacrifice (*'Eso dnabir dāo tyāg kathin diksa'*). Moreover, the effect of sacrifice is found in the following piece of poem – “*He Bhārata, nṛpatire sikhāyecho tumi, tyajite mukutdanda siṁhasan bhūmi dharite daridrābese*”¹.

If an individual adopts the path of *śīla*, *Brahmavihāra* etc. he will achieve ‘peace’ in mind. The Sanskrit rendering of the term ‘peace’ is ‘*śānti*’ which is derived from the root ‘*sam*’ meaning ‘restrain of the sense-organs’. In fact, in Buddhism and Rabindranath the root cause of the absence of peace from our mind is ‘thirst’ or ‘*tanha*’ which cause cravings for getting more and more consumable objects. Such thirst can never be quenched with the fulfillment of the desire and hence it is an unending phenomenon. The more we get, the more we urge for it. In order to get rid of it we have to search for self-satisfaction, which ultimately leads us to the world of peace. In order to arrive at such stage it is essential to go through some rigorous meditative training so that we can control our sense-organs including the inner one (*antah-karana* or mind).

Objects generally generate in us sometimes pleasure and sometimes pain. In other words, the object which seems to be pleasant in certain time may seem to be painful in other situation. It is also true that an object which is pleasant to someone may be unpleasant to others. An object may create pleasure in one aspect and pain in another aspect depending on the attitude of the

enjoyer. Hence it is very difficult to get a clear criterion of describing something as pleasant and / or painful. In the same manner it is also very difficult to determine the criterion of peace. However, peace has got some connection with happiness and hence a painful situation cannot give an individual peace in the true sense (*śānti*) is often found. One of the functions of such enchanting the *mantra* of peace is to eradicate sufferings or miseries. Through the removal of such suffering we get pleasure as opposed to suffering.

Buddhism in general represents the way of compassion. The Buddha is an embodiment of compassion and hence he is regarded as the compassionate protector of all beings. As such thirst has been taken as the root cause of all worldly diseases (*bhava-roga*), the path as shown by Buddha is to be resorted to and hence he is called a physician of all worldly diseases (*bhava-roga-vaidya*). To him the individual following his path should practice loving kindness, which implies not to harm the life of all beings. It is advised always to protect mankind as well as animals and vegetations. It is his wisdom through which he can see all human beings in the universe as equal in nature. The well-being of human being and animals is inter-related and mutual.

The external environment is seriously polluted because of the pollution of the internal environment in the mind having lack of peace. The excessive greed is one of the reasons for the internal pollution, which is the impediment of peace. This disease may be eradicated if an individual finds some satisfaction and contentment through the Buddha's teaching. That the external pollution is related to our internal one is evidenced in the *Dhammapada*, which is translated by Rabindranath himself. It is said that just as the maker of an arrow makes the end of

it straight, so an individual should simplify his mind, which is wavering, fickle, uncontrolled and unprotected.

The contentment in the context of Buddhism does not mean the eradication of all desires but to live in harmony with all beings and nature. It is said in the *Dhammapada* that a pure and developed mind alone can understand others mind.² It is further emphasized that when the world is burning (*prajjalite*) there is no opportunity for adopting laughter (*hāsyo*) and joy (*ānanda*). In the like manner, if our mind is covered with darkness, would we not seek for light?³ Those who believe in the teaching of Buddha will control their desire and live in harmony with nature keeping the environment in healthy condition. It is rightly mentioned in the *Dhammapada* that one who sees only the apparent beauty, who is not self-restraint in enjoying consumable things, who is lazy and weak is always attacked by one's enemies just like a weak tree. On the other hand, an individual refraining from seeing apparent beauty becomes self-controlled and respectful and hence he is not overpowered by the enemies just like a firm and stony mountain.

In the *Dhammapada* it is stated that the house-holders may belong to professions like students, lecturers, labourers, executives etc, but they should not preclude themselves from following the path of truth, purity, listlessness, angerlessness etc. and should practice the virtues like love, compassion, affection etc. If these virtues are practiced in a balanced way, there would be less confrontation and conflict⁴. On proper analysis it is found that tensions and conflicts arise out of desire, cravings and attachment. We can shed desire, cravings and attachment if we understand the true nature of things and life. The control of body may be achieved by controlling the senses of sight, touch, smell etc. and organs like hand and feet. For regulation of mind right

thought and observance of ethical code of conduct is necessary. The *Dhammapada* gives us an insight into the mysteries and true nature of life and existence, and indicate how we can reduce the range of our attachment, cravings and desire⁵. It is clearly prescribed in the same text that he who seeks refuge in the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and *Sangha*, he who sees with right knowledge the Four Noble Truth, sorrow, the causes of sorrow, the transcending the sorrow and the Eight-fold path can get rid of sorrow⁶.

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Though the Buddhism talks about the protection of the mental pollution, it gives emphasis on the three-fold training of human mind and seven factors of the enlightenment, which are the basis ethical sensibility to the environment. The *Mahāparinibbānsutta* of the *Dighanikāya* discusses about the three-fold course of training like cultivation of ethical conduct (*śīla*) meditation (*Samādhi*) and wisdom (*pajñā*). These three are inter-connected in the sense that the first is left behind when the second is undertaken. Without the development of these it is possible for one to lead happy and peaceful life. Wisdom (*pajñā*) goes beyond knowledge attained through reading books or hearing the tales. The practice of morality (*śīla*) and mental development (*Samādhi*) develops a penetrative insight and realization into the nature of everything in its proper perspective. When the realization (wisdom) appears, the trained mind becomes an unshakable dynamic force that can handle any human problem without anxiety and thereby can remove the worldly problems. When the ethical conduct is firmly established, the

meditation becomes effective. Through effect of meditation the transformative power of wisdom becomes possible.

The above mentioned three-fold practice has a tremendous influence on the Buddha's doctrine of seven factors of enlightenment viz., mindfulness (*śānti*), and discrimination of principles (*dhamma-vicaya*), energy in pursuit of the food (*virya*), rapture (*piti*), tranquility (*pāssāddhi*), concentration (*Samādhi*) and equanimity (*upekhā*). It is mentioned in the *Saṃyutanikāya* that these seven are essential for any kind of social or moral development. When a monk remaining secluded recollects and reasons about the doctrine. He adheres to the mindfulness factor of enlightenment, which is followed by other steps. After mindful he can discriminate, can reflect on and can investigate the doctrine with understanding. In this way he can reach to the path of perfection, which includes rapture (*piti*), tranquility (*pāssāddhi*), concentration (*Samādhi*) and equanimity (*upekhā*). The later four are connected with the phenomenon of meditation, which is available through the cognitive and affective refinement.

An individual having such moral qualities would be able to have sensitivity towards our mental environment. It is rightly mentioned in the *Tanhavāgga* chapter of the *Dhammapada* that the thirst for enjoyable object makes a man blind of his own future and hence he can go to any extent for his enjoyment adopting injury to human and non-human beings including environment. This thirsty person is compared to a monkey desiring fruits (*sopravati hurahuram phalamiccha va vanasming vanaro*). It is so dangerous that it is metaphorised as poison (*viṣattika*). Hence it is advisable to eradicate the root of such thirst through the weapon of wisdom (*pajñā ccindatha*), which is dependent on the paths mentioned above.

To the Buddhists the Eight-fold path (*aṣṭāṅgika-mārga*) is the correct path to know the right knowledge of reality, which ultimately leads to the control of sense-organs. If it is realized that each and every object is transitory or momentary, essence less (*śūnya*), our mind, being controlled, can reduce the thirst for enjoyment. An individual, being free from mental pollution, can achieve peace. That is why; Buddha himself is called an embodiment of peace and an aesthetic pleasure called *śāntarasa*. By virtue of worthy of it he is called *śāntatmā* and *śānta-mānas*, which is admitted by Rabindranath in the following piece of poetry – “*Śānta he, mukta he, he anantapuṇya karuṇāghana-dharanitala kara kalankasunya*”⁸. Moreover Rabindranath has shared and substantiated the above thought of Buddhism in his essays – *Dhammapada* and *Buddha Prasaṅga*.

What attracts Rabindranath more is the theory of *Pratīyasamutpadavāda* of the Buddhist which entails that everything is causally connected. Though there is no permanent self, the law of *Karma* and rebirth is admitted in Buddhism. It is possible through the changing network of the five *Skandhas*. To Buddha life started with sorrow and lived in happiness. Everything is routed through change *orgativāda* as found in the *Upaniṣadic mantra-caraveti*, etc.

He was so impressed by the teachings of these poet-philosophers that he tried to popularize their cause. In each of his philosophical dramas Rabindranath introduces a character which is supposed to be his supreme creation. Needless to say, in its creation he is influenced by the plain living and high thinking of the *Bāuls*. Another trend of ideas that has influenced him creating such a character is the teaching of Buddhism. Buddhism and the *Bāul* cult have offered him the matter; and he created the ideal of humanity a man, fearless, out-spoken, God-

intoxicated, truth seeker, poet-philosopher, singer and friend of the poor. The *Bāuls* are baptized in the faith of *Ahiṃsa*. The *Ahiṃsatattva* is routed from Buddhist thought.

Peace and Love have been preached by Jesus Christ from a religious point of view, while Lord Buddha teaching the same from an ethical standpoint. Christianity as a religion requires God to be the object of worship but Buddhism has no need of God, for its ethical excellence lies in the elevation of character, in the culture of *Maitrī* (Brotherhood), *Muditā* (happiness in everything), *Upekṣā* (indifference) and *Karuṇa* (compassion). Salvation is the goal of all religious and philosophers but the paths differ from one another. Some are based on intellect while others on feeling.

Rabindranath Tagore, the humanistic philosopher, and the mystic poet was influenced a lot by the unsophisticated philosophical sects of Bengal i.e. *Bāul*. *Bāuls* donot 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 Manuṣ*’ 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 – ‘*Acin pākhi*’ or ‘self’. The *Bāul* cult has reduced from *Sahajiyā*, which is transform from the Buddhist *Sahajyān* version.

The *Bāuls* and the mediaeval Indian saints attracted the attention of the poet and left a permanent impression on his mind. He was so impressed by the teachings of these poet philosophers that he tried to popularize their cause. He translated one hundred poems of *Kabir*, the mystic saint of India and all though his writings paid glowing tributes to the memories of

Kabir, Nānak, Dādu, Rajjab and others of the Indian *Bhakti* school. The *Bāuls* are the wandering saints who sing in praise of the eternal One. They do not enter any temple, church, or mosque. Nor do they believe in image worship. “According to the cult of the *Bāul*, in order to gain real freedom, one has first to die to the life of the world whilst still in the flesh—for only then, can be rid of all extraneous claims”⁹. The *Bāuls* think of the body as the temple of God and urge to keep it clean. They fervently hope that one day true vision of the finite will flash forth and its union with the Man of the mind will be effected. The *Bāuls* are baptized in the faith *Ahiṃsā*. In each of his philosophical dramas Rabindranath introduces a character which is supposed to be his supreme creation. Needless to say, in its creation he is influenced by the plain living and high thinking of the *Bāuls*. Another trend of ideas that has influenced him in creating such a character is the teaching of Buddhism. Buddhism and the *Bāuls* cult have offered him the matter; and his own genius, the form of the character. He has created the ideal of humanity – a man, fearless, out-spoken, God-intoxicated, truth-speaker, poet-philosopher, singer and friend of the poor. He is the Dhananjaya Vairagi of the dramas *Prāyaścitta* and *Muktadhārā*, *Thākurdādā* or grandfather of *Śāradotsav*, *Dākghar* and *Rājā*, *Dādāthāḥur* of *Acalāyātan* and *Bāul* of *Phālgunī*.

Next to the *Bāuls*, the Indian mystic saints have endeared themselves to the philosophical mind of Rabindranath. Kabir, Dādu, Rabidas, Nānak and others have added the aroma to his thinking. The faith of love which he gets from the *Vaiṣṇavas* is strengthened by the songs of the *Bāuls* and teachings of Kabir and others. Rabindranath sings and he considers singing to the best art of human beings on earth. In this respect he simply maintains his lineal connection with the *Bāuls* and the Indian mystics.

Tagore was well acquainted with the *Bāul* sects in his childhood. Every year there has been a fair at Bolpur and Baul sects use to gather to sing the *Bāul Sangṭ* (one kind of song composed by Lalon Phakir). Those *Bāul* 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 its literary and cultural value.

Bāuls 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 *Ujāān-sādhanā* or *Ulto-sādhanā*. It eulogizes the philosophy of the reverse path and this is the fundamental tenet of all the *Sahajiyā* traditions in Bengal and elsewhere. They like to proceed to an opposite direction from that where is followed by the general people. They avoid all kinds of formal and 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 *Bāuls* and other *Sahajiyās* call their path *Ulto-sādhanā* (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. *Ujāān-sādhanā*. 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.¹⁰

The main purpose of the *Bāuls* for their *Ulto-Sādhanā* or reverse journey is to return to one's own self which is Sahaja or inborn in nature. It is one of the paths like other theistic

philosophy. (i.e. Sankarachariya, Ramanuja etc.) It is the path which is not so complicated and artificial but the easiest path or self-realization. This reverse journey of the *Bāuls* for self-realization is *Sahajiā* (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 *Bāuls* and the simple ways for self-realization of the *Bāul* had impressed Tagore very much. He was against the so called traditional institutional religion. Tagore had described how, he was attracted to one of the basic philosophical features of the *Bāul* songs. While he was stumbling upon the formal constraints of the monotheistic Brahma 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 felling that I was using a mask to hide the living face of truth. I gave up my connection without church. About this time one day I got a chance to hear a song from a beggar belonging to the *Bāul* 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 celeries and priests angrily crowd round me.¹¹*

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.*¹²

Man possesses all the quality and most important thing is that he is alive. Man amongst all the animal can raise his head and has the authority to say 'soham' i.e. I and my father are one. There is union between you and me. All the man in any case, region and sect possesses this quality to say 'soham'. Tagore recognized the same thing from the *Bāul's* song, which are represented in an unsophisticated way. Kshitimohan Sen collected most of the *Bāul's* songs and one of the songs which changed the mind and made more thoughtful is:-

*Jībe Jībe cāiyā dekhi
Sabi ye tār abatār
O tui nutan līlā ki dekhābi
Jār nitya līlā camatkār.*¹³

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.*¹⁴

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 '*prabhāt sangū*' and '*prabhāt utsab*'. One of those are given below:

My heart opens to day

*All the world come and meet on my heart and hug me.*¹⁵

All the human beings which reside on the earth come 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. *Bāuls* realize and express their feelings in easiest way which makes Tagore more curious.

The chief philosophical theme in *Bāuls* is the man who are called '*Maner Mānuṣ*' or the Man of the heart. The same philosophy of life can be noticed in the other sects, like *Vaiṣṇava*, *Sufi* and *Kabir's* school. The *Bāul* conception of man of the heart brings in the question of its similarity or dissimilarity with *Vaiṣṇava* conception of love. The *Vaiṣṇava* formulation is based on a principle of duality, theological, but not metaphysical. Theologically the *Vaiṣṇavas* have conceived a kind of duality between God and the individual and this principle of duality invites the question of *Saguṇa-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 *Bāuls* have a non-dualistic approach between them.

The *Bāuls* have criticized the view of the *Vaiṣṇava* followers. They use to raise the question in the following manner;- had these *Vaiṣṇavas* proper understanding of the duality they would have known it in a better way than that Candidas, Vidyapati and others were good

Vaiṣṇava 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 realization 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 and 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 *Bāuls* were asked by the *Vaiṣṇavas* as to whether they are aware of the different kinds of love as classified in the *Vaiṣṇava* scriptures. *Bāul* 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’.*¹⁶

But *Bāuls* 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 *Bāul*’s mind and they song out.

Listen, O brother man,

The truth of man is the highest truths

*There is no other truth above it.*¹⁷

The *Bāul's* 'Maner Mānuṣ' or 'the man of the heart' gets transformed into '*Jīvan-devatā*' of Tagore. God in his philosophy has been humanized. Tagore did this without being anthropomorphic in the undesirable sense. He does not mean humanization 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."¹⁸

'*Jīvan-devatā*', to Tagore is the God as immanent in man. That can be compared with the *Vedāntic* doctrine of '*Tat Tvam Asi*' (i.e. I and you are identical). Thou as '*Jīvan-devatā*' is identical with '*Tat*' as God. It is not a complete and unqualified identify, because '*Jīvan-devatā*' is 'God in man'. It is like the pantheism in Greek philosophy. But in Greek theism everything 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"¹⁹. Without this ego what is love? And again with only this ego, how can love possible? 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"²⁰.

So, it is better to say that '*Jīvan-devatā*' is God in man. The *Devātas* 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"²¹.

Prof. D.S. Sarma remarks that, "This being (*Jīvan-devatā*) is not exactly God, but rather his own higher self not the universal consciousness, but a special centre of that consciousness"²².

In this context Prof. B.G. Ray regards '*Jīvan-devatā*' as a *Viśva-devatā* the universal deity"²³.

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

Atha yonyam devatām upaste

Anyosan anyoham asii

*Na Sa Veda, yatho pasurevomsa devanam.*²⁴

In *Racanāvali* (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 *Bāul* expresses the *Upaniṣadic* thoughts in a very easy and natural way by the songs – *Moner Mānuṣmonermājhe koro anweṣan* (Find out your own God with-in yourself).

Sufi and Kabir's influence:

Besides the *Bāuls* the poet was influenced by the mystic Sufi and Kabir's song also. Tagore perhaps heard the songs of Sufi from 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 *Śimla*. 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 propagators of Sufism gathered knowledge of simple supreme authority. So, it is a kind of monism 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-Sāgar*'. There it is said that God in his absoluteness could relies his love and a second or dual out of its ownself. The '*Jñāna-Sāgar*' upholds that the universe had its origin in love, and the chaos was systematized 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 *Upaniṣad* the something is ascribed as the ‘*Jīvatman*’, the human soul and the ‘*Parama Uman*’ the Divine soul. But while the *Upaniṣads* 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 *Bāul*’s conception of the man of the heart. So, the Sufis and *Bāuls* find a happy blending of the finite and infinite being. The *Bāuls* express their view rightly with the help of their famous song.

‘*Khānchār bhitar acin pākhi kemne āshe jāi*’

How does this unknown bird or *Acin Pāhki* 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.*²⁵

How Tagore was influenced by the Sufism can be evidenced from a letter which he had written to a devoted Hindu lady on 20th Āsār (Bengali 3rd 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’²⁶.

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 ‘*Allāh* and of *Rām*’ 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 21st 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 other worldly passion for the finite to the most infinite and personal realization of God, expressed in homely metaphors and religions 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, *Vedāntin* or *Vaiṣṇava*. 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 not in yoga and renunciation.

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

Thou shalt me in a moment of time. ”²⁷

Kabir said, ‘O sadhu! God is the breath of all breaths.’

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. ”²⁸

In his *Gūāñjali* 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! ”²⁹

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 impediment to our unity and making love with each other.

Kabir said – ‘*Tirath men to sab pani hai*’³⁰ 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 *Purāṇa* and the *Korāṇa* 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 *Bāuls* 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. Beside the *Bāuls Kabir* and *Sufist* the other mystic saints like Dadu, Rabidas, Nanak etc. always had similar thinking. Under influence of those mystic saints, Tagore introduced his own conception of religion, the elements of mysticism and simplicity.

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Chapter - V

Some critical and evaluative remarks

So, we have come to the end of our study. The last chapter we shall devote to determining the some critical and evaluative remarks. We have prefaced our study by saying that Rabindranath is principally a poet but his poetry is imbued with high philosophy. The question assails us; Can poetry be philosophy?

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 its 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 pata 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”¹.

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 there are *nāstika* and six are *āstika*. They accept *pramāṇa* 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 on a subject.

In our tradition we have got a single word ‘*kavi*’ denoting poet and philosopher; which signifies that without philosophical thought poetry is not possible. In other words, there is no watertight compartment between the word of poetry and philosophy – both are intermingled. If the Tagore’s songs, poems etc. are properly looked into, we always get such an idea.

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.

So, what is the path for them to realize the reality? Tagore did not give any process to the common people. From this writings it is evident that sometimes knowledge, sometimes love and sometimes *śruti*-texts lead us to the word of realization.

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 preciously. 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 delight”².

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.*³

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.*⁴

So, 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.

Rabindranath's philosophy can be described as philosophy of harmony in the sense that he has established harmony in different levels – between man and man and the whole cosmos as evidenced in his song –“*Ākāśa bharā sūryatārā viśvabharā prāṇ etc*”. Rabindranath has given an extended definition of the term ‘*sāhitya*’ in his ‘*Sāhityer pathe*’, which testifies the above thesis. To him ‘*sāhitya*’ is to be taken not in the sense of combination between a word and its meaning, but harmony among human beings, nature and whole world (*bhūma*). To him a literary form of art or any other form of art can help us to expand ourselves due to the effect of ‘surplus’ written us.

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.

He was very much influenced by Buddhist's philosophy. Buddha was the first emancipator of mankind. He became the age old symbol of non-violence, compassion and amity. Buddhism is an eternal religion-philosophical way of life in Asian continent. Whether a Buddhist or not, a common individual is obviously ought to be influenced by this thought in the core of his consciousness. Because it is not only a great ancient religion with a profound philosophy but also an universal science dealing with all the details of human life, physical and mental, material and spiritual, individual and collective, private and social, ethical and moral, so to say the whole of human existence. Tagore, being a great poet, philosopher and humanist of the modern world was sincerely attracted by Buddha and Buddhism. Throughout his life he admired Buddhadeva in many ways and practiced the Buddhist attitude in life, epitomized the Buddhist legends in literature and trans created the Buddhist philosophy in his own concept of 'Religion of Man' and so on.

'Buddha' is the most significant word with a deeper meaning. In Pali it means one who has attained enlightenment, a man super or to all other beings, human and divine, by his knowledge of the truth⁵. In Sanskrit it means a fully enlightened man who has achieved perfect knowledge of the truth and there by liberated from all existence⁶. According to Mahayana Buddhists, Buddha is "*Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi*" which means a symbol and embodiment of the highest, the most comprehensive and universal wisdom⁷. Tagore pays his homage to Lord Buddha. "I feel him as the super most and highest human being in the core of my heart" and philosophically described is true appearance in the integral realization of the human mind in the

perennial time where the illuminating past is surpassing the present. He discovered Lord Buddha in his right place, the sacred throne of the human heart⁸.

The poet described the enlightenment of Buddha as the complete identification of man, the glittering exposition of India by the light of truth which called the whole of human race to see and be part of this great event. Then the message spread over China, Japan, Burma, Tibet and other countries. In the far of the east people looked with wonder and evoked “we saw the revelation of a grand great man as once said in the *Bhāgavat Gītā*.

What is the essence of Buddhism? What are the main teaching of Lord Buddha? We have been learning these from *Pūak Śāstras* and from Pali edicts. But in the eyes of Tagore it has an eternal value for human life. In *Majjhima Nikāya*, one of the important text of Buddhism the eternal force ‘*Triad*’ consists of Buddha (the man, the master, the personality), *Dhamma* (the message, the system, the doctrine) and the *Sangha* (the order, the organization, the institution) symbolically express their significance. *Dhamma* is the epitome of knowledge, *Sangha* is for duty and Buddha is for devotion as told by the poet in his writing ‘Devotion in Buddhism’⁹. He gives importance to the words ‘*Akodhena Jine Kodham*’ conquer the anger by non-violence. It has a vital relevance in the war-mongering, brutal-infesting world of today.

In the life and teaching of the Buddha, ordinarily regarded as a non-believer, Tagore found nothing but an affirmation of the *Upaniṣadic* truth, a supreme effort for the realization of Brahman through the good conduct, good will and love towards all beings, unbounded love like the mother gives to her only child, the way of life which Buddha himself calls ‘*living in Brahma*’, “*Bramhavihara*”¹⁰.

Buddhist impact on Tagore:

Tagore's life was a multitude manifestation of magnificent experiences through the innumerable stages of existence. It was said once and again that he was an 'eclectic' throughout his life. He used to derive the good from everything as a honeybee and create his own world of ideas with his intellect and intuition. A. N. Whitehead, a great philosopher of the past century who was born in the year of Tagore's birth, once told "Religion is what a man does with his solitariness". It is quite appropriate in Tagore's life and thought. Poet's first teacher was his illustrious father Maharshi Devendranath, who could be a great sage from a landlord by the realization of truth. The *Upaniṣadic* verse which the father and the son recited life long contained the key to the understanding of Tagore's philosophy of life and his ideal of human fellowship. The first mantra of *Īśa-Upaniṣad* was translated by himself that says- "Thou must know that whatever moves in this moving world is enveloped by God and therefore, find thy enjoyment in renunciation, never coveting what belongs to other"¹¹. This was also told by Buddha in a different way. 'The middle path' of Buddha was really followed by Tagore throughout his life. Neither the emotional indulgence nor the total renouncement should be the practical way of life. Buddha suggested the basis of good life is a middle path between the extreme asceticism and love of luxury, between the extreme self deprivation and self indulgence. In his own life he gave up pleasure seeking when he walked out of his life as a prince and he also rejected later the life of complete self denial as an ascetic¹². In one of his poems Tagore

expresses his love for life and rejected the aspirations for deliverance through complete renunciation.

Tagore was an iconoclast, did not worship any image or allow others to worship his own image. This is not only a *Brahmic* character but also a real Buddhist attitude. It is an unfortunate paradox in Buddhism that the founder fought for which throughout his life, the followers made him that only and worship with him grandeur. But Gurudev could understand perfectly the underlying principle of the cosmic process. It is beyond all- silent and tranquil- formless (*Nirākāra*) and Quality less (*Nirguṇa*) *Brahman* of the *Upaniṣads* is viewed in this transcendental aspect. It is not from the above, it is within, as Buddha says ‘look within for the light that will lead you’. Tagore explains, “ knowledge is its devotion and duty builds the temple, but the temple is empty, only the darkness of extinction is there, devotion vanished”¹³. Apart from the concept of God Tagore has his own concept of man, it is the universal man, whose selflessness and goodness (*Mangala*) unifies man with the rest of creation. Goodness is like Buddha’s amity (*Maitrī*). “When Buddha preached *Maitrī*- the relationship of harmony- not only with human beings but with all creation, did he not have this truth in his mind, that our treatment of the world is wrong when we solely treat it as a fact which can be known and used? Did he not feel that its meaning can be attained only through love, because it is an expression of love which waits for its answer from our soul emancipated from the bondage of self? This emancipation cannot be negative in character for love can never lead to negation”¹⁴. The poet feels that ordinarily man lives in his larger self or ego. But this is not his real self. When man realizes that he is much more than at present he seems to be, he become conscious of his greater self. Good is that which is desirable not for our lesser self but for our greater self. “To live the life of goodness

is to live the life of all” (*Sāadhanā*). The poet did never deal with the obstinate questions of life like evil, sufferings and salvation, but being an aristocrats always feeling to be associated with poorest of the poor, with untouchables like the wandering minstrels of Bengal countryside *Bāuls*, he confesses, I am an outcaste , an uninvited (*Āmi Vrātya āmi antyaja*). This is how Buddhist compassion reflected in poet’s life and philosophy of life.

Harmony with nature, the important teachings of Buddha, was followed by the poet by establishing an educational institution in a natural surrounding introducing. Tree plantation ceremony as an annual regular programme. In one of his lectures named ‘*A Poet’s school*’ Gurudev explained, “I have tried to develop in the children of my school the freshness of their feeling for nature, a sensitiveness of soul in their relationship with their human surroundings”¹⁵.

Poet was also in favour of opening a department for learning and research in Buddhism through the language like Pali, Chinese and Tibetan. Poet’s school become University for higher studies. *Viśva-Bhāratī* was formally inaugurated in early July 1919 with the motto “*Yatra Viśvam Bhavatyeka nīḍam*” (Where the world meets in a single nest). Departments opened in December 1921. Prof. Sylvain Levi, the renowned Orientalist, whom poet first met in Paris, came as a visiting Professor in 1921. He used to teach Chinese and Tibetan languages apart from his regular speeches on Indology. Poet himself was attending his classes. Probodh Chandra Bagchi, later a famous scholar and Vice-Chancellor of *Viśva-Bhāratī* was his first student. After that the Buddhist Studies formed a strong nucleus at *Viśva-Bhāratī*. Then many others Professors, Teachers and Personalities have studies Buddhism and published a number of

valuable research works and edited some Buddhist texts. This could be possible only because of Gurudeva's interest in Buddha and Buddhism in the beginning.

Tagore has written some dance-dramas based on the Buddhistic lore. *Naṭūr Pūja* (1926) was written on the same theme which was depicted in the poem 'Pūjāriṇi' (The worshipping women). The courageous devotion of the court-dancer makes her a martyr. The second one is *Chandālika* (1933) is based on the legend *Sardula Karnavadana*¹⁶ (The text was edited and published by Sujit Kumar Mukhopadhyaya). This shows an outcaste girl's love for Ānanda, the Buddha's dispel. The third one is *Śyāmā* (1938) based on the theme of his earlier poem 'Pariśodha'. In these lyric plays the Buddhist legends become more humanistic by the touch of poet's magic fingers.

In 'Charitra Puja' collection there are three prose writings and five poems on Buddha and Buddhism. The transcendental identity of Buddha, his law of living in *Brahman* (*Brahmahāvihāra*) and the nature of devotion in Buddhism has been discussed in a very creative and metaphysical way. Writing on 'Bhakti Udbodhan', a discourse of Asvaghosha on the awakening of faith in *Mahāyāna*, the poet explains, "Truth and devotion have incarnated in human form. There is necessity of a representative of the universal man for the realization of truth adding with love". Again he asks, "do not you agree that before the Buddha's age our Vedic God are all immortal, inhabitants of imaginary heaven and to save this perishable mankind from sufferings the compassion has taken a human form in Buddha, do not you admit that it is first discovered by Buddhism in the human history?"¹⁷. Within these ten pages of prose writing

on Buddha and Buddhism Tagore could identify the essence of eternal values of the religion ever told.

In two poems Borobudur and Bangkok, the poet portrays the pictures of the Buddhist monuments bears the aesthetic testimony of '*Buddham Śaraṇam Gachhāmi*'.

'A poet is nothing if he is not a philosopher' says Prof. S. Radhakrishnan, who requested Gurudev to be the first president of the Indian philosophical congress in 1925. Tagore has identified himself only as 'a poet (*Āmi kavi*) nothing else. He said, "Some have described me as a metaphysician, others have thrust upon me the doubtful role of a school master. But only love of play has made me an eternal truant"¹⁸. But this truant is a versatile genius having his rare foot prints in the various walks of human knowledge.

Tagore's philosophy can be ascertained in three ways. First of all philosophy in his poetry and songs, secondly philosophy of his art and aesthetics what he calls the 'Religion of an Artist, and thirdly the philosophy of his concept of human nature what he calls '*The Religion of Man*'.

Tagore's entire poetical life is a testimony. For longing of what William James called 'the more' and Carla Sandborg, "between the finite limitations of the five sense and the endless yearning of man for the beyond". The philosophy of his magnum-opus '*Gūṅjālī*' is based on the great pageant of thee and me. Who are these thee and me? As the poet puts it, "me is my own little self and thee is the Lord of my life". He always feels the existence of thee in "me" and the

song- offerings are his beautiful garlands of devotion. The poet keenly felt the deeper unity underlying the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the transitory. The fundamental realization kept his inner being constantly vibrating with an ecstasy of cosmic joy of existence which runs through the veins of creations weaving endless patterns of rhythmic forms in time and space. In explaining the relation between the infinite and the finite the poet refers to the *Upaniṣad*, “*Ānanda-Rūpam Amṛtam Yad Vibhāti*” and says the “Immortal being manifests himself in joy form”¹⁹. In one of his songs he sings, “Through the finite thou plays thy tune oh I infinity, hence is thy manifestation in me so sweet”. This feeling of divinity from the above and within is not only influenced by the *Vedāntic* monism but also deeply moved by the Buddhism illumination of the inner-self.

Tagore earnestly says, “My religion essentially is a poet’s religion”²⁰. But what is poet’s religion? To whom he was worshipping? Only answer is *Satya Śiva, Sundara*- the truth, the beauty and the goodness. “Beauty is Truth, Truth is Beauty” this famous assertion of Keats has come to a state of creative reality in Tagore’s life, thought and literature. This is also he inherited from the *Upaniṣadic* seers. But according to him the intellectual truth is a partial truth, real truth is achieved not by intellect, but by intuition. This beauty and truth is intimately connected with goodness which can be compared with Buddha’s ‘amity’. In our ordinary life we find that goodness is set against badness and there is a conflict between two. This may be true of our pragmatic life where we are guided by the standard of the utility. But in the eyes of the poet the real goodness transcends all considerations of utility and necessity. Similarity in the Buddhist philosophy this goodness in amity establishes an intimate relation between man and man and man and nature.

The fundamental idea of Rabindranath's concept of religion is humanism. He wanted to establish it in all religions. He also wanted to establish man's supremacy over everything. In his famous poem 'Bhārt-Tīrtha' he says—

*“Hethāy dāndāye du-bāhu bādāye nami Nara devatāre
Udār chande paromānande bandhan kari tānre.”*

To him 'Nara' is 'Nārāyana', or man is Śīva. A man, whom he wanted to establish as Supreme God, may not belong to any particular religion, caste, community etc. For this reason he described man as 'Cīramānab', 'Parammānab' or 'Mahāmānab'. He considers this 'Mahāmānab' as 'Mānab-Braman'. Thus it may be said that Tagore's concept of religion is not the property of a particular period or of a particular community. Tagore's religion is not confined to rituals of a particular religious book, rather his religious thought has no concurrence with Man's independent judgement or rational faculty or free thinking. Rabindranath's humanistic religion is a kind of moving power of knowledge that will inspire man to go forward. Tagore firmly believed that there must be a perfect harmony among thought, work and heart-felt feelings. Religion should be based on honest labour. Religion without proper knowledge cannot show the right path of life. But it is also true that knowledge without love is meaningless. Knowledge without love cannot inspire man into good action. Loveless work leads man to violence and knowledge-less work sometimes takes man to the level of animal. So Rabindranath tries to make friendship (*Maitrī*) among wisdom, work and love and this chemistry is the key to Tagore's concept of religion which is universal.

Tagore's philosophy of religion and concept of man have a close affinity with the Buddhist idea of holy man (*Arhat*). He, who is always in worldly ties but free from all illusions, is the real holy man. In 1930 at the age of seventy the poet delivered the Hebert lectures invited by the Oxford University and the subject was the 'Religion of man'. In this philosophical address Tagore explores the problems of the inner self and its corroboration with the outer side. He says, "The real tragedy, however, does not lie in the risk of our material security but in the obscuration of man himself in the human world"²¹. So, the real greatness of his realization is appropriately revealed by philosopher Radhakrishnan, "the infinite is not other than the finite, but is the finite transfigured?"²². The ultimate realization again expressed like this, "perpetual giving up is the truth of life, the consciousness of the infinite in us proves itself by our joy in giving ourselves. Out of our renunciation it is one with our life"²³. This is the real Buddhist philosophy reflected in Poet's mind.

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

Rectifies, 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 someone is
Rectified as Gold is rectified through fire.*

A man is the aboard of the Infinite as observed by Tagore. In our Sruti also men are described as the sons of the Immortal (*Amṛter putra*). Hence a Individual has got the potentialities of Infinite power. For the manifestation of his 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 provided him with infinite power. To be victorious over suffering should be the main object 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 bhālo nithuro he, emni kare hṛdaye more tivpa dahana jvalo*). The suffering in a man can open the door of Infinite.

A question may be raised how is the problem of evil interpreted by Tagore. Tagore has shown a novel way in interpreting evils like death, sorrow, sufferings etc in one's life. To him any type of evil is not to be taken as evil, but as the *līlā* (sports) of Rudra, another form of *Śiva*. He thinks that through suffering we rectify ourselves and can realize the existence of Rudra.

Though our rectification by the fire of sufferings we become purified and our mind is ready to receive the Lord. Rabindranath has taken pain (*duḥkha*) as a form of *ānanda* (bliss), and opposite to *sukha*. There is a general experience that *duḥkha* or suffering is opposite to *ānanda*, but actually it is not so. In suffering there is bliss or *ānanda* on account of which pathos (*karuṇarasa*) in literature is possible. Suffering is something which is relish able also.

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 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 learn towards a negative side after being over burdened. This limitation has got a prominent role in beautification. Ugliness lies their 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"²⁴.

Thus he feels the existence of Lord Buddha in the perennial sense of devotion, compassion, non-violence and amity among the general human being. In his word, “Lord Buddha is manifested in the activities of general human being gradually through the ages. The eternal conflict between the good and the evil exists in the animal world. The latest ideals of the religion of man has been expressed through this conflicts in Lord Buddha. Man can manifest the eternal truth of his inner being only through the endless love and compassion”²⁵.

Though Tagore was highly influenced by the Buddhistic thought and philosophy, it is found that he has not taken all theories into consideration. He was deeply moved by the moral aspect of Buddhism like honour to humanity, friendliness (*maitrī*), compassion (*karuṇa*), non-violence etc which are embedded mostly in Pali literature by *Hīnayāna* school of Buddhism. In fact, he was deeply interested in the wellbeing of human being by eradicating non-violence, hatred and malice among human beings in general. His agony for human beings is expressed in *Naṭīr pūjā* in the following line:

“*Sānta he mukta he he anantapuṇya,*
Karuṇaghana dharanitala kara kalankasūṇya.”

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