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During 18th & 19th century, a new intellectual climate was evolved in Indian philosophical history. A group of intellectuals' thoughts and talents have given a new dimension to Indian philosophical thinking. These personalities have respect for traditional Indian philosophy and culture and they have persuaded a new comprehensive Indian thinking by assimilating scientific outlook and liberalism with traditional spiritualism. This new trend is called contemporary Indian philosophy as well as the philosophers are contemporary Indian philosophers. Rabindranath Tagore was a phrenic of this particular period. Basically Tagore was a poet, lyricist, novelist, short story writer, painter, playwright, musician, educator and social thinker. He was the author of some sixty collections of poetry and a large number of prose works including novels, short stories, essays, plays and a composer of almost two thousands songs. The peculiarity is that Tagore has a specific style of understanding the life and reality and this contributes an inherent melody to all his literary works which also enroots Indian philosophy.

Tagore was greatly influenced by Upanishads. In metaphysical point of view he is an abstract monist. He talks of formless reality i.e. the impersonal Absolute which is called 'Satyam', 'Anandam', 'Shivam' and 'Sundaram'. Here it appears that Tagore's view of absolute is similar with that of Samkara's Brahman. But the truth is that Tagore's position is fundamentally different from that of Samkara. Being a poet philosopher Tagore didn't laid out his understandings of reality in abstract and speculative way. He feels that man cannot be interested in anything with which he cannot have an inter-communion. He thinks that man cannot find an active and living interest in the abstract concept of Brahman since Brahman is unapproachable. So Tagore attempts to bring absolute nearer to man. For Tagore the declaration of 'That thou art' is not enough, the throb of 'That' must be felt within. Therefore under the influence of Vaishnavism and the teachings of Bhakti-Marga, Tagore reconciles the abstract and impersonal nature of the Upanishadic Brahman with the personal God of the devotees. This personal God is Tagore's 'Jivan Devata' (the deity of life). Tagore says that God can be realized only in a powerful experience i.e. in a positive concentration of our being. But absolute can be apprehended only negatively. The relationship of God and man is the relationship of intense love, which designates an all-comprehensive and all-powerful feeling of oneness. Such a relationship can be possible only if God and man are regarded as personal. Thus Tagore's God is God and man at the same time. In his own words, 'If this faith be blamed for being anthropocentric (anthropocentric = any view magnifying the importance of human beings in the cosmos, e.g. by seeing it as created for our benefit), then man has to be blamed for being man'. This implies that, for Tagore, 'personality' is the most important character of the 'Supreme man'. In case of man's sufferings he always feels the need of love, strength and consolation and for these he looks towards the supreme person. In this way God is man's last hope and this hope sustains man's life and gives human strength. Therefore Tagore lays great importance on the emotional bond between God i.e. the supreme person and man. This analysis shows that a religious synthesis of abstract monism and a particular type of theism is the basic ideology of Tagore's philosophy. From this point of view Tagore can be considered as an idealist or a spiritualist or he can be called a monist and a theist. In another way we may say that Tagore's philosophy is an attempt to revive the ancient ideals of life and they have been modified according to the needs of the people of human world. As Radhakrishnan says in 'The Philosophy of Rabindranath' that 'He (Tagore) gives us a human God, dismisses with contempt the concept of world illusion, praises action over much and promises fullness of life to the

Another significant facet of Tagore’s philosophy is his humanism. As a philosophy humanism underline the centrality of the value and agency of the human beings, their thoughts and actions, their freedom, needs and desires. Tagore’s views on the nature of man and his concern for the peace and happiness of mankind are the seed of his humanism. His humanistic attitude pervades all aspects of his thought, and yet, he doesn’t allow it to fall down to the status of narrow and anthropomorphism (anthropomorphism = the representation of Gods or nature, or non human animals, as having human form, or as having human thoughts and intensions).

Tagore was a humanist. His creations and activities have a common feeling that is his love for humanity by enforcing the values of humanity such as peace and harmony in the nation at large. He humanizes nature and objects and the universe. The humanism of Tagore is the application of the belief that feeling anything as human i.e. in the human way is the source of joy. It is the human mind that reveals the meaning and significance of things. This implies that Tagore was not interested in the sovereign individual but the individual in relationally, individual as a part of a collectivity and adjunct of a larger reality.

Tagore’s humanism is basically poetic which emerges from his emotional experiences, zones of feeling and artistic pursuits. The speculative and abstract concept formulated in the Upanishads are converted into images, poetry and lyrics. In his work Gitanjali he has written –

Where the mind is and the head is held high
Where the knowledge is free; where the world has not been broken up
Into fragments by narrow domestic walls
Where words come out from the depths of truth
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary
Desert stand of dead habit
Where the mind is lead forward be thee into ever-widening
Thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father let my country awake
(Gitanjali – XXXV, P – 36)

This poem expresses Tagore’s hope and deepest humanistic impulses. In this poem an ideal person is projected that carries within itself the humanism that Tagore longed for. From another direction of this poem, we realize that Tagore’s feelings grow out from his deep familiarity in Upanishads, Buddhist thought, the Indian poetic tradition as well as his acquaintance with western social thinking. This blending of the East and West was an integral part of Tagore’s poetic humanism. Let us consider another passage of his Gitanjali –

Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom does thou
Worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors still shut?
Open thy eyes and see thy God in not before thee
He is where the tiller is the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones
He is with them in sun and shower and the garment is covered with dust.

This poem also focused Tagore’s humanistic attitude. Here he equates divine awe with day to day life and calls attention to the need for deep empathy with ordinary people living ordinary lives. The poet, actually, wants to see India and the whole world to full of strength to uproot the slavery and bondages

And meanwhile I see secretive hatred murdering the helpless
Under cover of night;
And justice weeping silently and furtively at power misused,
No hope of redress
I see young men working themselves into a frenzy,
I agony dashing their head against stone to no avail
My voice is choked today; I have no music in my flute;
Black moonless night
Has imprisoned my world, plunged it into nightmare. And this is why.
With tears in my eyes, I ask;
Those who have poisoned your air, those who have extinguished your light,
Can it be that you have forgiven them? Can it be that you love them?

This poem exemplifies Tagore's deep commitment to social justice and his abhorrence of violence. The poet always identifies himself as one among his fellows and prays to Lord to give him strength to make a fruit full service towards the needy people. He writes –

This is my prayer to thee, my lord – strike, strike at the root of penury in my heart.

Give me the strength lightly to bear my joys and sorrows.

Give me the strength to make my love fruit full in service.

Give me high above daily trifles.

And give me the strength to surrender my strength to thy will with love.

(Gitanjali : XXXVI, P – 36-37)

The poet affected by the grief of the masses and cannot stand the injustice done to the down trodden needy people of the society.

Tagore's approach to nationalism is also reflective of his humanism. Tagore was intimately attached to Indian society and culture, its religious and intellectual traditions. Tagore loved India and it was this love that persuaded him to turn his back on nationalism. He is the author of national anthem of India 'Ja Na Gana Mana'. Besides this, he composed of the national anthem of Bangladesh (Amar Sonar Bangla) and Sri Lanka (Nama Nama Sri Lanka Mata). In his nationalism we may observe two models of social advancement. One is social-religious model and the other is national-state model. Tagore favoured the former over the latter as the former is more conducive to the creative growth of the people and is in conformity with the deeper cultured springs of the country. He feels that the latter model may promote territorialism and exclusivism which may be a harmful force to society. He believes that nationalism which encourages territorialism, exclusivism, aggression, mechanical uniformity etc. are antithetical to humanistic values. For him, the organize selfishness of nationalism is the path of suicide. The most important issue for Tagore was 'not how to unite by wiping out all differences but how to unite with all differences intact'. The socio religious model that Tagore believes, serves to promote this end.

Tagore was also a great educationist. His notion of education also focused his humanism. Tagore was critical of traditional style of education. While on a visit to Santa Barbara California on 11th October 1917, Tagore visualized a new type of education. Here he took the idea of a new university which he desire to be set up at Santiniketan. On 22nd December 1918, he started his work to build the new university. It started functioning from 22nd December 1921. And this is his 'Visva-Bharati University'. Tagore worked hard to raise funds for the university and toured many parts of Europe and visit for this

purpose. Even he gave all his Nobel Prize monies to his university. The basic ideal of his university is that it will give personal guidance to all students and it will give importance on students' aesthetic as well as intellectual development. Students must live closed to nature and teacher-student relationship must follow the pattern of gurukul system of ancient India. The educational experiment promoted by Tagore sought to empower students, arouse their natural curiosity, expose them to many world cultures, encourage respect for the well springs of traditional culture, introduced art, music, theatre and dance to all aspects of education. Tagore envisioned that the university much be the meeting ground of all cultures and it should be a learning center where conflicting interest are minimized, where individuals work together in a common pursuit of truth. This is the platform where anyone can realise 'that artists in all parts of the world have created forms of beauty, scientists discovered secrets of the universe, philosophers solved the problems of existence, saints made the truth of the spiritual world organic in their own lives, not merely for some particular race to which they belonged but for all mankind' (Tagore – 1922). Truly, Tagore wanted his university to become a world center for the study of humanity..... somewhere beyond the limits of nation and geography.

Tagore's vision of religion also reflects his humanism. He thinks that institutional religion is dogmatic and misleading. Religion cannot be compartmentalized. True religion is deep-rooted in the love for humanity. It consists of man's capacity of self-transcendence. Real religious life consists of love, sacrifice, sincerity and innocence. It is self-denial for self-realization. It consists in the synthesis and reconciliation of the contradictions in human nature.

Tagore writes, 'Religion consists in the endeavour of man to cultivate and express those qualities which are inherent in the nature of Man the eternal and to have faith in him' (The Religion Of Man, P – 89, 1961). It implies that religion is the inner experience of man by outward social concerns. It is free of territorial bounds, and is dynamic and communicative. Tagore's religions welcomes all irrespective of any race and creed. He says that if science is the liberation of our knowledge in the universal reason, which cannot be other than human reason, then religion is the liberation of our individual personality in the Universal Person who is human all the same. Thus, Tagore's humanism is spiritual and it is focused through different categories. But this spiritual humanism never accepts God as the Supreme Being in bringing perfection in man. On the other hand, it is human being who by his endeavor gets self-realization and implements it for the benefit of human society and in this way upgrades himself to the level of Supreme Personality.

At last, we may conclude with the lesson that Tagore not only humanizes nature and objects but also he humanizes God. He realized that the universe is not the universe of God but it is the humanism of beings. Infact, God is sum total of human truth. This explores another aspect of Tagore's philosophy that is, he is pragmatic in his outlook, though he never put emphasis on the hedonistic ethics of self-love. Actually Tagore's humanism is a philosophy of union which teaches us to exercise humanity so that we can experience the true peace and harmony in life by giving up evil and taking up good deeds.

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