

Chapter 1

Nation, Nationalism and Issues of Tagore's Poems

Nation and Nationalism

Nationalism could be understood as a sentiment that binds people of land together and compels them to act in the national interest. It is a sentiment that makes people to keep services to the nation over self. From a larger perspective, it could also be understood as the national sentiment that binds the people of different castes, creeds, religions, and cultures, together. They stay united to protect their nation from external threats as well as to contribute to its growth. It fosters in the citizens a responsibility to preserve their national heritage, culture and people. It encourages the preservation of national values and heritage. Nationalism is a very important idea that helps a nation stay secure and also make consistent progress. When the people of a nation are not united by healthy feeling of nationalism, it becomes vulnerable to several threats. It also fosters a sense of accountability among the citizens towards their national heritage and contributes to preserve their culture and values, keeping in mind a larger objective of preserving their national heritage. When people are united for the cause of securing their nation, no power can intrude into its boundary. It also helps to deal with internal conflicts, law and order situations. People who value nationalism have fewer instances of religious, cultural or other conflicts.

Nationalism helps in the economic and cultural development of a nation. A country where people value nationalism progresses steadily. People understand their responsibility towards the country and fellow citizens, by helping the nation to grow. It plays a crucial role in preserving democracy. Democracy is successful only when people are united despite several differences between them. Nationalism is also the greatest strength of the people living in a nation. There have been many revolutions in

the history that were fueled by nationalistic fervor. People who value nationalism speak about their own rights and privileges and as well as the rights privileges of others. It encourages national values and unites people from various backgrounds, for the growth of the nation as well as for its safety. Many countries including India have successfully toppled the colonial governments, only after nationalism was induced in the ideology of its people. India was able to gain complete independence from British Rule after so many years, only when nationalism fostered into its people by their movements.

Nationalism is an ideology, developed by the western world and now it has propagated throughout the world. Every nation has its own brand of nationalist concepts, which have caused constant unrest in the world. Our time is bearing this fact indeed. In the later part of eighteenth century and during nineteenth century it was originated as a political philosophy in Europe. Early twentieth century remains a period of turn- over of the human history. A change has been realized in the Western and the Eastern world due to the nationalist movements. . . . In the Western world the First World War came with a dystopian notice of the end of the world. On the other hand, the Eastern and colonized countries came up with the dream of freedom. Thus, nationalism became an important issue. Because of the emergence of this idea in the West, the world has faced so many incidents. Some are good, some are bad, some have stored a glorious chapter, and some are as horrible as damnation. Now we can see many of the Eastern countries which are free from the colonial rule and have established their strong position but still people of many places are struggling with the threat that the powerful forces can diminish them anytime; their existence can be dissolved. This situation indicates that the concept of nationalism is still an important point at issue.

Fundamentally, nationalism is defined as commonness and togetherness. “A nation is a community of people formed on the basis of a common language history, ethnicity, a common culture and in many cases, a shared territory” (Garner 1183). . The understanding of nationalism gives every nation a clue of particularity. So, the world became asunder into different nations and states. As we expected that modern age will be blessed with the aspects of life with hope and inspiration but we have seen that human beings have encountered with numerous crisis.

Great philosophers of nineteenth century are more connected with the echoes of that time of crisis, which is hope under despair. Rabindranath Tagore is one of the most important figures of that time. He saw the impact of imperial power during colonial period. He, being a literary icon, has become a protector of his nation and has presented a world vision of greater life. During the time when the very idea of nationalism was emerging with its variety of thoughts, many people did not understand him but he stated his own position about the upcoming crisis. He was sure about the “process” that it would cause harm to the history of mankind. So, his writings of that time are the representation of his thought of nationalism, which would help us to relocate the study of nationalism through his literature.

Tagore believes that whether the land or the mind, it must be free from the fear and narrowness and all this will be done by the courageous thinking and firmness of human mind, because this world is for human kinds and it is their duty to keep it a suitable place of living. Now, when we are standing at the point, where the wheel of this modern world running through the current tactics, comfortable lifestyle, scientific methods but will it be easy for us to answer the question how are we living? Are we living a harmonious life with all the new inventions we had in the last century or we are only imagining the good things of these new editions and making the place of

living a nightmare? All these self-awakening questions come to the mind with every line of Tagore's poems focused on the thoughts of extreme nationalism.

Tagore rejects violent part of nationalistic activity. Most importantly he addresses the idea of nationalism as the coming threat and advocates about it not on a political ground but on a philosophical and cultural ground. To talk about this matter, we need to understand what the term nationalism actually means. Tagore finds it as a trick and deceitful agency manufactured by the Western world.

In the attempt of giving a definition to the nationalism or nation, *Imagined communities* is the most read. In the study of nationalism, Benedict Anderson has rooted his name so deeply. He advocates his thought in this complex socio-political concept. It is not only important for defining nationalism but also for finding out the origin and the process of spreading this idea. Huge Seton-Walton defines it, "Nationalism is a policy of creating national consciousness within a politically unconscious population" (449). Anderson sees this term differently, where he finds some process and facts working behind it so strongly that the individual of a community cannot deny it, rather follow it (3). He considers that the term nationalism maintains a process and works as an unavoidable issue in the society. "Nation, Nationality, nationalism- all have proved notoriously difficult to define," (3). He is not intentional for giving any definition of nationalism but the fact is nationalists are trying to give their explanations, which remain a matter of long-standing dispute. Anderson's approach is not at all hypothetical; rather he remained very experimental and systematic towards his goal. He has presented his idea of the "anomaly of nationalism" with a proper proposal and with detail stretch of works in *Imagined Communities*.

At the very first point, Anderson makes it clear that nationality or any other preferable term “world’s multiple significations,” nation and nationalism remain the “cultural artifacts of a particular kind” (4). To knock on that exact point, Anderson starts working from a very initiative level and has raised three questions, “How they (cultural artifacts) have come into historical being, in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy?” (4). In the process of finding these issues and keeping the argument for, Anderson prefers to pinpoint the time. As he thinks towards the conclusion of the eighteenth centuries, the “artifacts” were regarded as a natural “distillation” of a “complex ‘crossing’ of discrete historical forces” (4). Through these many ‘crossing’, processes some sense and knowledge created at one point. Once something is created it becomes a “modular” (4). As it takes a structure or a “modular” it can be “transplanted” easily. The ability of transplantation also indicates the aspects of stability. The “modular” later is seen with variable degree of self-awareness including “great variety of social terrains” get itself amalgamate and be amalgamated with a “correspondingly wide variety of political and ideological constellations” (4). Till this point Anderson’s bold statement is notable that nationalism is not an abrupt notion but a chronic ideology with deep rooted alignment in a particular state or society. There the human being is present with his own culture and historical interest or a composed shared ideology of society. He makes one thing very clear that nationalism is a process of crafting for a common belief. Anderson accepts the difficulties of defining nation or nationalism and before giving his own interpretation. He has tried to cover the other thoughts by checking out the possible certainty and criticizes the narrow chance as well. He has acclaimed himself as an anthropologist before giving the definition. In his words, “In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following

definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community and imagined as both limited and sovereign” (6). In last few centuries, many small communities and glorious cultures are buried under the big aspirations of imperialism; is originated from the imagined capacity of mankind.

However, Anderson is also concerned about that, so he does not deny explaining the definition how it can be imagined and if it is so, then how this tangibility can “arouse such deep attachments” (4) to the fellow members of the society. Anderson states, “It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow- members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communication” (6). Anderson is highly acknowledged because of his idea on nationalism which is very convincing that this nationalism project has formulated through the powerful impression of the inhabitants, whom maybe they have never met and will meet. People of every community have certain understanding with the belief that they have ideals, followed by everyone with great honor to uplift their country, culture and history. The whole process depends on thoughts and any individual just get into the process and builds up the sense of nationality through the ‘imagined’. Even no community is ready value an individual rather it is the totality, which really matters. Anderson explains, “In eighteenth century in Europe the religious modes started declining and the concept of secularism prevailed when the concept of nation gave a new sense with that imagination that the community had a very glorious past and have a very limitless future” (Anderson 11). He further argues: "Nor am I suggesting that somehow nationalism historically supersedes religion. What I am proposing is that nationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not with self- consciously held political

ideologies, but with the large cultural system that preceded it, out of which- as well as against which- it came into being" (12).

This cultural root prevailed through the consciousness of national origin. Religious community and dynastic realm are the two cultural systems, forwarded by Anderson. Here the religious community is directly linked with the language. In the language the superior text is written in the sacred language. In the time when the conversion starts encompassing human being the venularization comes up and gives a new assess to practice language. Then the dynastic realm comes to the point of discussion. Anderson has examined how that divine hierarchy's automatic legitimacy decreases away and the nationalistic features become popular among the common people (12). By these changes of a system the new era comes. As Anderson has suggested, after that the "national consciousness" comes and gives the idea of nation a new turning to be proceed on. And he has elaborated the idea by saying that it mainly was propagated by the "print -capitalism" (37).

Another scholar Partha Chatterjee has completely supported Anderson's "print capitalism" theory in his book *The Nation and Its Fragments*. He states, it offers the new official place which develops a new "national" dialect. Anderson considers that printing language is the most powerful factor in the nationalism thoughts. As he has said:

If the development of print-as-commodity is the key to the generation of wholly new ideas of simultaneity, still, we are simply at the point where communities of the type 'horizontal-secular, transverse-time became possible. Why, within that type, did the nation become so popular? The factors involved are obviously complex and various. But a strong case can be made for the primacy of capitalism. (37)

In the question of print capitalism, he explains that the first advantage to print Bengali books at the end of eighteenth century was taken by the European missionaries and the East India Company. At the beginning of the nineteenth century they also commissioned the first narrative prose compositions. Again, English completely displaced the native practice of writing at the first half of the nineteenth century. The Persian language of bureaucracy was removed from Bengal. English language became the “most powerful vehicle of intellectual influence on a new Bengali elite” (7). Midcentury is the essential time to develop the modern Bengali language. Then the bilingual elites make a cultural mission that is, to make mother tongue a compulsory linguistic tool to make an adequate language for “modern culture” (7). The European missionaries created complete institutional network of printing presses, newspapers, magazines, literary societies and publishing houses. State was unaware of it. So after that Bengal got the new modern language. Chatterjee explains that the inner domain was also colonized as he says:

The bilingual intelligentsia came to think of its own language as belonging, to that inner domain of cultural identity, from which the colonial intruder had to be kept out; language therefore became a zone over which the nation first had to declare its sovereignty and then had to transform in order to make it adequate for the modern world. (7)

The formation of nationalism indicates a different fact in Chatterjee’s view. He does not see it as politically based rather the social reformation is much more important here. Anti imperial nationalism generates its own empire of power within the colonial community before it starts political fight with the colonial rule. Chatterjee argues that it does happen like this because the “World of social institutions and practices” (6) is divided into “two domain- the material and spiritual” (6). According to his idea, the

material domain is the outside world .This outside realm is already proven as superior by the West. So the East had to surrender to the West in this material world and for accomplishment, they studied carefully this domain and replicated it (6). However, the spiritual realm is the inward factor area that is mainly the cultural distinctiveness. Preserving the cultural identity is the greatest success of the people rather following the material world.

Chatterjee has given this formula for anticolonial nationalism. And he considers it as the central feature of the Eastern and African countries. Every nation and every culture do not have the same problems and advantages so any common features are appropriate to know them. As the colonizer and the colonized people do not have any similarity so their indicators cannot be the equivalent ones. Chatterjee has made his ideas very explicit by taking examples of Bengal which was a colony of British Empire. The idea of nationalism is inter-related with many social, political and economic factors.

According to Anthony Smith, the nation is the virtually definite basis of world society which invades our outlook so much to question its legitimacy today. “We tend to regard nation like skin-color-a natural attribute of man” (2-3). Definitely, the abstract groups by the nationalists often appeal a common past or a traditional spirit which remains similar to spiritual or ethnic identity. That makes nations more natural and crucial for the world order to exist. A French scholar Ernest Renan in his essay “What is a Nation?” has stressed a similar view that “a nation is a soul, a spiritual principle” (19). All the people of a nation must share a common past. He denotes that a nation is a group of people, united by happiness, joy, grief, national losses, victories, and struggles in the past.

Anderson's understanding of nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time. He explains the nation as an "imagined community," (6). This definition is not easy for postcolonial critics meanwhile mentioning to manufactures of nationalism with regard to third world countries. Believing Anderson, it is broadly assumed that "Nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century" (qtd in Kedourie 9). When a nation's existence gets endangered by external power nationalism gradually evolved in an overreaction. Allan Lawson advocates "Nationalism is a reaction of peoples who feel culturally at a disadvantage" (169). In a colonial context, cultural identities become much tougher to maintain. In the context of India, it is hardly a homogenous country, became united as a country formally during British rule.

Tagore's perception on the European nationalism is that it does not lead people towards unification of mankind. He has vied that nationalism is a "harmful agent" (Nationalism, 7). It doesn't give liberty and focuses on political interest which results an annihilation of freedom. Societies such as India should adopt the principle of Upanishad dictum of *vassudhaiva kutumbakam* (the entire world as a family). That creates a peaceful co-existence among all nations and within national boundaries. Tagore envisions a world "which has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls (*Gitanjali* 27). This is the lesson; India may teach the world." If India can offer to the world her solution, it will be a contribution to humanity" (*Nationalism* 78). Tagore claims that India never had nationalism:

India has never had a real sense of nationalism. Even though from childhood I had been taught that idolatry of the Nation is almost better than reverence for God and humanity, I believe I have outgrown that teaching, and it is my conviction that my countrymen will truly gain

their India by fighting against the education which teaches them that a country is greater than the ideals of humanity. (*Nationalism* 83)

Tagore strongly rejects the nationalism manufactured in the Western world followed by Eastern world. He asks for resisting the rising tide of nationalism derived from Europe. He is afraid of it thinking that India's cultures, traditions might be in shadow of the West.

Issues of Tagore's Poems;

Social, Cultural and Religious

A true nationalist, liberal humanist and a social and cultural reformist Rabindranath Tagore has inspired a whole generation through his writing. He has composed thousands of poems on various themes. He was born in 1861. During that time the nationalist movement in India was developing and achieving strength. He got actively involved in several nationalist movements and composed many songs and poems which address various social, cultural, religious issues.

Nationalism, Humanism, Freedom and Equality

He has discussed the recurrent issues of nationalism, humanism as well as the issue of independence in his writings. For Tagore people be able to live in freedom is the matter of the highest importance. So, he has advocated for the freedom of his country and countrymen from British rule and the deep rooted social boundaries; the racial conflict, cultural separatism, religious intolerance and the so called social hierarchy. His poems clearly show his perspective of politics, culture, nationalism and internationalism. As a humanist, nationalist and Universalist, he has accused the British Raj and has supported for independence. He embodies that cultural and national conscious is leading to universalism. His attempts to correct the social and inhuman conditions among his countrymen, caste system, religious, and political

strategy are vividly expressed in his poems. Tagore voices against injustice, inequality, war, terror, violence and conveys the message of love, peace, harmony, and non-violence. He focuses on social unity, solidarity and welfare of mankind by rejecting the inhumane social barriers like race, religion, culture, and narrow notion of nation and nationalism which have caused separation, fragmentation, exclusion, fighting among people leading to the destruction of humanity. To preserve the humanity and to uplift the society, people should have the feeling of love, co-operation, mutual respect and brotherhood. Tagore almost in his every writing urges for unity, freedom and non-violence across different languages, genders, religions, cultures or ethnicity and nations to create an ideal world to live in.

Equality and Unity of Mankind

Tagore, as a messenger of humanism, his understanding of nationalism is more inclusive and humanistic which helps in uniting people. He opines that nationalism is a combination of included ideals of humanity and human welfare. He disagrees with the Western concept of nationalism which is more exclusive, inhumane and political that encourages to fulfill personal benefit and to grab other nations and their resources, as well as to get political success. He says, “The political civilization which has sprung from the soil of Europe and is overrunning the whole world, like some prolific weed, is based on exclusiveness” (*Nationalism* 8). So India cannot practice exclusiveness as her people belong to different races, cultures, traditions, ideas, beliefs, and definitely their requirements are different from one another. That’s why Tagore asks his countrymen not to imitate the Western world. In this issue Rabindranath accuses India very harshly, by saying:

She has made grave errors in setting up the boundary walls too rigidly between races, in perpetuating in her classifications the results of

inferiority; often she has crippled her children's minds and narrowed their lives in order to fit them into her social form. But for centuries new experiments have been made and adjustments carried out. (34)

Tagore's opinion of nationalism relies on inclusive philosophy, which accepts the world as a single nest. He dissociates himself from the narrow idea of nationalism that destroys peace, harmony and welfare of mankind. The craze of blind nationalism is a cause of destruction, war and mutual hatred among people and nations. Every nation becomes inward-looking and considers another a threat for its existence. War is appropriate for national self-fulfillment and its existence. Nationalism develops intolerance, irrationality, prejudice and hatred. Instead of fraternity, a new hierarchy and hegemony are increased. That's why Tagore suggests leading the world towards friendship love, justice, honesty, equality and the unity of mankind. He envisions a world where people would live together in harmony with honor, accepting their distinct characteristics by the bond of love, respect and co-existence.

There is no doubt that Tagore is one of the pioneers of Indian nation who always inspire his people in the time of crisis. He has never accepted the regime of British government or the rule of the East India Company and has strongly got involved in the protest against it. He supported nationalist movement in the early years. During that time he has written many poems and composed songs which are basically patriotic and nationalistic and still regarded as the best tools in the struggle of Bengali nation.

Blind Nationalism and Western Civilization

He stands against authoritarian or aggressive form of nationalism focusing on humanity. He believes that blind nationalism only harms mankind. When a nation exercises its power at the price of higher social life, it is a bad day for mankind.

Tagore contrasts the material Western civilization and the nation developed in India. He requests and warns his people not to be attracted with this dazzling organization of nation. He states, “You who live under the delusion that you are free, are everyday sacrificing your freedom and humanity to this fetish of nationalism, living in the dense poisonous atmosphere of worldwide suspicion and panic” (Nationalism 32). He disagreed with India as a society because they joined the association of nation and movement of nationalism:

We, in India must make up our minds that we cannot borrow other people’s history and that if we stifle our own we are committing suicide. When you borrow things that do not belong to your life, they only serve to crush your life . . . I believe that it does India no good to compete with Western civilization in its own field . . . India is no beggar of the west. (*Nationalism* 84)

Tagore strongly criticizes the colonial egotism and its ability to impose despair and inequality in the world. The illogical notion of nationalism only grounds prejudice. He believes that the West has seen exclusive controls of politics on societal issues which is very wrongly imitated by India. The foundations of Western and the Indian civilization are completely different. They are challenged and supported by completely dissimilar factors. There is racial unity in Western civilization and scarce of natural resources. They are united with their common identity to secure resources for their living. They organize nation states to explore the whole world during imperial period.

Indian civilization has massive problem of caste system. Tagore believes that to copy the commercial nationalism would be inappropriate for India. He fears about the western nationalism that would destroy the Indian society which is already a

socially divided country. According to him, right education is needed in India to abolish the caste system and to established religious harmony. He asks for the deep association of the West and the East.

Chapter 2

Nationalism as Humanism in Tagore's Poems

Rabindranath Tagore is the most influential literary figure in Indian history. As a poet, he has expanded the border of Indian literature and dignified the culture and literature. He is one of the main pillars of modern poetry of India and the world. Being a poet his contribution for Bengali literature became unparalleled but his coherent sight even makes him more pivotal for the Bengali nation. He is always predisposed about the theme "freedom". His genuine aspiration for the sovereign land and an authoritative nation filled with will power and amity is always installed by his writing.

Tagore is one of the pioneers of Nationalist Movement in India. Later he becomes a noticeable critic of nationalist movements of India nationalism. Social upheavals, political situations and several unrests in his country, due to the colonial rule are the matters of discussions of his writing. Tagore is not a political activist but the formation of his political view is based on criticizing the British Empire. He firmly believes that unless and until the Indian subcontinent becomes free from the British Empire, the people of this land would not be able to do any ontogenesis trial for them. In the questions of independence of land, Tagore is positive and certain. That is the reason why he started the Nationalist Movement. The bare domination of British Empire and their exploitation project through the colonial rule downhearted Tagore and many of his contemporaries. He talks about Indian culture, tradition, people and works for them being a nationalist. Bangla modern literature chiefly stands on his wonderful creation. His writing has enhanced the Bengali renaissance and amended the mind of progressive Indians. Bengali nation chiefly depends on his ideas and the vast stretch of Tagore's work. He is the one who has shaped the present form

of Bangla language. He has gifted a variety of uncountable words in Bangla dictionary. As Anderson has suggested in his *Imagined Community*, the spread of vernacularizing of print language awakes “the origin of national consciousness” (44).

In his words:

In the process, they gradually became aware of the hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people in their particular language-field, and at the same time that only those hundreds of thousands, or millions, so belonged. These fellow-readers to whom they were connected through print formed, in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community. (44)

Tagore believes that only free land is not enough but the people, who own this, have to be strong and able to generate it properly. To do so they need education and knowledge. He worked for the poor farmers of Bengal, has established *Kaligram Krishi* Bank for providing financial support to them. He worked in the education sector, established *BishwaVarati*, *Shantiniketan*, *Sriniketan*. Tagore’s family has contributed in shaping Bengali culture. Tagore, throughout his life worked for his people and helped to design a nation. Being the most fervent nationalist, he has contributed his people and land. Being a liberal humanist, he advocates for the concept of one world, comradeship, and global alliance.

There is no doubt that Tagore is one of the pioneers of Indian nation who has always guided his people in the time of crisis. He has also appreciated the art, culture, literature, scientific and technological innovations of English people and the power of knowledge but has never accepted the regime of British government or the rule of Company and strongly got involved in the protest against it. His criticism of British administration consistently grows more intense and stronger. *Swedishi* Movement or

National Movement was very much connected with him. *Raakhi Bandhan* for the protest of dividing Bengal was one of the most important events of that time. This tradition was introduced by Tagore himself, which was initiated for the unity of Bengali people. It is known fact that, Tagore opposed British Imperialism and supported Indian nationalist's movement in the early years. During that time Tagore wrote many poems and composed many songs which are basically patriotic and still regarded as the best tools in the struggle of the Indian people. His writings have exposed the value of unity, love, friendship, self-respect, peace and harmony.

Tagore's few significant poems, "Where the Mind is Without Fear", "Freedom", "The Sunset of The Century", "The Indian Pilgrimage" and "If They Answer Not to Thy Call, Walk Alone", exemplify his nationalist view. He supported Indian nationalism just because he wanted the freedom of his country and his countrymen but he did not support Gandhi's Non-Co-Operation Movement which later turns into violence. In this movement Indians basically boycotted the British product and tried to establish and improve Indian productions. Because of this major part of India was in trouble. When this movement turned into violence, Tagore stayed away from it, though he was the person who raised voice for the freedom of his countrymen. It is because Tagore was the man for whole mankind. Killing innocent men was a crime for him, so he tried to stop it. But to convince the people, he moved aside in despair. Tagore wished peace and comfort for everyone by working silently. His concern was not only for land but to maintain it and to establish claim over it that people should work with amity and integrity.

Tagore is a true nationalist but his book *Nationalism* (1917) portrays him as an anti-nationalist person, to whom nationalism is "an applied science" (*Nationalism* 7) or an instrument of killing humanism. These words of Tagore announce the most

critical time of the world. In the name of doing well, the violence of colonial rule is always challenged by him. Tagore has clearly estimated that the concept of nation is transmitted by the West and he believes in it, “The political civilization which has sprung up from the soil of Europe and is overrunning the whole world, like some prolific weed, is based upon exclusiveness” (Tagore 8). For Tagore “nationalism is a greatest menace to Men” (*Nationalism* 20). This idea is not humane. Tagore has tried to warn the mankind that in the name of development people cannot risk everything; otherwise it will invite a great disaster which will divide them into many pieces. For him unity of mankind is very important. Unity of man must be the mission of India but if the Western world can also take the mission, ultimately it will be a blessing for the whole mankind. But Tagore’s agony is that instead of teaching the West, the East is copying the West and becoming the enemy of its own people and property. Western concept of owning power and ruling over the world is making them a giant. So, Tagore specifies it that not only the British government, but the rule of a nation can affect the whole mankind. Moreover, these lines express the same, “It is not the question of the British government, but of government by the Nation-the Nation which is the organized self- interest of a whole people, where it is least humane and least spiritual” (Tagore 41).

According to Tagore, Indian sub-continent is a salad bowl where different races with their diverse social, religious, cultural values live together with mutual respect, love, harmony and comradeship. This is the Eastern concept of nationalism. By saying so, Tagore never rejects Western world though he totally rejects the exclusiveness of Western nationalism. He hates the method of exclusion and has protested for all kinds of violence of all the people in the world. Imperialism invited conflict and curse for mankind. He always worked for human’s betterment of life.

When the East will be able to meet the West, then the sun of good day will rise in the world. People are ignoring the promise of humanity and welcoming the act of destruction. He wants his people to stand for their own right not with brutality but with love and affection. Tagore debates against violence, killing, destruction.

Freedom from the Hands of External Rulers (Spiritual Freedom) and Social Unity

Tagore is scared that the greed for power will destroy the natural instinct of human beings that has happened in many instances. The Western world starts a journey of power politics that ultimately ends the history of mankind. Tagore, without any selfish motif, supports his people not for any war but for regaining the culture of their own. Tagore expresses this idea mainly in the poem no 35 in Gitanjali. He asks for the awakening of the people of his country for that they need to be fearless or fear free and knowledge can be the best weapon for them:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth 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 sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake

(1-8).

Tagore prays for his nation where people would get spiritual freedom being fearless, open-minded, and truthful, God fearing, noble and generous. He demands freedom of his people and the world free of all division. Tagore envisions a place where the mind is open to allow knowledge to enter and be imbibed into their roots. He wishes for a land where people understand the power of unity and are not divided on petty issues such as caste, class and color. He dreams of a place where people do not think twice before speaking their mind. The poet speaks of what he dreams his homeland should be like - a place where freedom is the most precious asset, unity is the strength driving the country, a desire for perfection keeps all working harder, and where thought is the golden egg which will make richer and stronger country. Tagore registers his longing for a country in the poem, where people live respectful and dignified life without any discrimination. With the strong patriotic feeling he makes the picture of the world, free from suppression and oppression. In this regard, Wadikar says:

Outwardly, the poem is a prayer. It expresses Tagore's magnitude of thought which demands his country's redemption. The poet expects that his countrymen should be fearless persons. They have to move in society with self-respect and confidence. In this country, education should not be the monopoly of the rich and the affluent. (31- 39)

From the late nineteenth century few elements become very important and they are; independence from British rule, and a way of making a self- dependent society by refusing the cast differences, dormant ideology and narrowness to ingrain the intimate assimilation of individual and social bonding. The communal detachment and strife should be ignored by the political turmoil. He opposes the politics of compromises, he, time and again alerts people and political leaders that asking no great achievement can be attained only by asking. So independence will not be achieved so easily that

we will apply for it and will get it. From the intense national emotion, Tagore started *Swadeshi* Movement and tried to convince people that British rule is the cause of backwardness of the county and people:

Tagore's love for his nation was too great. Rabindranath Tagore was a great patriot who loved his country more than anything else

Rabindranath was a great dreamer who dreamt of an ideal society in which there is tireless action, real freedom of action, absolute equality of classes and castes. Tagore expresses his deep sentiments

(Pradhan 51)

He wants to give the people educated life, healthy life and open minded progressive thought that they could be capable enough to take the responsibility of their own culture and society and reform it for the betterment of their social and communal life. His dream is to build a nation which will start up by his own power and insight. People will be able to achieve their independence by protecting it with amplification Tagore fights for the freedom strictly for the matter of independence of Indian subcontinent. But his attempt turns badly and the fear becomes true that the indignation of the people blows up and the whole situation goes against his will. He believes that "East is the mother of spiritual Humanity" (*Nationalism* 49). This concept becomes utopian as the Western world always exploited Indians; they cannot be so privileged that the East gives the hand of friendship. But Tagore wants to see India in very different attire, where people will find the amalgamation of various races, customs, and rituals but there will be one common thing that is the unity of mankind. The Western ways of dividing concept of people is totally rejected by Tagore.

Tagore could perhaps have a drawback in this thought that it was impractical. His prophecy for India was too imperfect in today's world. His expectation of help from the West is also unrealistic because West came to India, as he recounts in his essay "East and West", "not with the imagination and sympathy to create and unite, but with a shock of passion for power and wealth" (Datta and Robinson 206). West had its own mechanism to grind; not in their "superior force of character but in money, machine and matter" (214). His superior idea offers a proof to his noble and beautiful mind. It strikes a harmony in the moral person in each of us. The constant violence in the subcontinent justifies his position. India has since been broken up into three countries: India, Pakistan and Bangladesh ; ten million people were made homeless as the aftermath of the independence of India and Pakistan in 1947, one million of whom also lost their lives in inter-religious riots (Wolpert 348). Wars have been fought in the subcontinent, at the borders including a nuclear war, casting a shadow of fear on the people; several riots have also broken out between the Hindu and the Muslims, claiming so many of lives.

**Urgent Call for Indian Freedom from Brutality, Injustice and Oppression,
Patriotism and Imperialism**

Tagore dreams a free India which is far from materialism, nationalism as well as the religious and racial conflict. His vision seeks the common destiny with the rest of mankind. It is constantly evolving towards a global society, is most enthusiastically expressed in his another poem "Freedom", composed around 1900s in which Tagore has emphasized the situation that the Indians faced during colonial period and the need for independence. A vehement cry for the country's freedom which, he believes can be accomplished through an intellectual awakening. Tagore at

the very outset identifies the country as his motherland, then he goes on to enumerate the manifestations of freedom that he yearns for his country. The lines:

Freedom from fear is the freedom
 I claim for you my motherland!
 Freedom from the burden of the ages, bending your head,
 breaking your back, blinding your eyes to the beckoning
 call of the future;
 Freedom from the shackles of slumber wherewith
 you fasten yourself in night's stillness,
 mistrusting the star that speaks of truth's adventurous paths;
 freedom from the anarchy of destiny
 whose sails are weakly yielded to the blind uncertain winds,
 and the helm to a hand ever rigid and cold as death.
 Freedom from the insult of dwelling in a puppet's world,
 where movements are started through brainless wires,
 repeated through mindless habits,
 where figures wait with patience and obedience for the
 master of show,
 to be stirred into a mimicry of life. (16)

Tagore is an outspoken supporter of Indian independence from British Raj. Firstly he wishes freedom of India from fear saying that his countrymen's fear is the main reason for her trouble as a slave. He emphasizes on the independence of his motherland urgently. The word "freedom" appears several times in the poem to show his deep desire for his country to be independent.

Secondly Tagore wishes his motherland to be free of the weight of senseless, illogical, and orthodox beliefs and traditions that prevent her from seeing the future. His wishing for India is to be free of the “burden of the ages,” stating to the oppression of British control over India. During colonialism, the elderly woman who represents India bends her head, bends her back, and closes her eyes. Tagore describes how blinding her eyes prevents India from seeing the future or imagining a bright future for herself. Instead of thinking about the future, India sleeps with “shackles of slumber,” or time spent not thinking about her. India is fastening herself “in night’s stillness,” implying that the country is devoted to its colonial past and present condition. The country “distrusts the star that speaks of truth’s adventurous paths,” which does not look about in its dark time and imagine a bright future for an independent country.

His third wish for India is for her to overcome her fear of taking risks; he wants her motherland to dare to walk on the adventurous path; he also wants her not to place too much faith in an uncertain destiny and not to place control of her forward movement in the hands of narrow-minded and heartless people. His final wish for his motherland is to be free of the humiliation of living as a slave in the hands of foreign invaders. When Tagore asks for “liberation from the anarchy of destiny,” He does not want his country to carelessly and passively follow the fate that is supposed to have been assigned to it. He compares this fate, or destiny, to a sailboat that must follow winds blowing in every direction and that is led by an uncaring hand. His country is compared to a sailboat following uncertain winds with a heartless person at the wheel.

He wants India to stop acting like a puppet, whose every move is dictated and controlled by the show’s master. He wishes for her motherland to be able to live freely, making her own decisions and shaping her own destiny. Tagore wants Indian

freedom because he lives in a “puppet’s world,” in which India is controlled by British Raj. A puppet is controlled by a puppeteer. The activities are done by “brainless wires,” suggesting that England controls India and by obeying to “mindless habits” or customs followed blindly. Indians wait obediently just to follow the master of the show, English rulers. So, the Indians live “mimicry of life,” or a fake life ruled by English ruler.

The word “freedom” is repeated throughout the poem that expresses the Tagore’s profound desire for independence from the oppression of imperial powers. He represents his motherland as aged mother, breaking her back, blinding her eyes. India doesn’t foresee a bright future because she is kept submissive by colonial powers. India is stagnant from the shackles that bind her. Tagore insists her to break free from oppression. India should awaken from the long slumber of inertness and seek future promises. She should abide by truth alone and her victory is not far. One must not succumb to such adverse destiny but sail away from “blind uncertain winds”. Here India is compared to a sail boat which floats in response to thoughtless commands of the whites, repeating the same mistakes. A picture of slave is given by comparing India to a puppet in imperial hands, whose moves are determined by the master. India must seek freedom from the insult of being a puppet under the brainless master’s control. Thus true life is not lived here when movements and habits are watched and controlled by the foreigners. Unless there is freedom, the country can never progress.

Tagore’s “Freedom” is set in the political scenario of India under British rule. The call for urgency of freedom is evident throughout the poem, and this call for freedom is demanded through various images of colonized India. India is compared to an Old woman, the motherland, who has bent due to the burden of age-old customs

and social evils she is carrying. Due to the continuous overpowering of foreign powers, her back is breaking. In the following lines, India is even compared to a sailboat aimlessly floating and also to a puppet dancing to the instructions of a thoughtless master. Tagore's patriotism is clear in the opening lines. The poem is concerned with India's struggle for freedom. Tagore calls out to the motherland to free from fear, from the shackles of oppression, from fear of the outsiders. Tagore seeks to save his beloved country from the weight of colonial powers.

Tagore favors the decolonization of the nation. His main concern is the revival of the originality of the Indians. He believes that the native people will get the boldness to stand with their own power only by rejecting colonial structure. "Decolonization seeks freedom from colonial forms of thinking, a freedom to revive and rejuvenate native forms of knowledge" (Nayar 6). The decolonizing idea is the main factor in the concept of Tagore's nationalism. He believes that the Western system is not applicable for the East.

He longs for the country to rise and free itself from shackles of slumber engendered by the Raj. In praying for a good time, he demands a freedom from the clutches of the still night that hunts the mental outlook of the people. He wishes for the country to seek hope in the star and follows its path of truth. Tagore describes the brutality and injustice. He craves for the freedom from blind faith in fate and helpless certitude in providence that obstructs the country from achieving its independence. He has used metaphor of boat for the country, stating that this boat blindly sails with the wind and its helm is in incapable hands. His aspiration is to attain independence from such vulnerability. Tagore seeks freedom from the puppet's world created by British Raj. He considers shameful to be controlled like mindless figures by the master of the show and to be orchestrated by brainless wires. He covets a freedom from mimicry of

life. The unjust system, senseless, illogical orthodox beliefs and traditions followed by the helpless Indians don't let them to see their future. He wishes her motherland to live happily and freely, taking her own decisions for better future.

Blind Nationalism; Cause of Destruction, Enemy of Humanity and Tagore's Desire for Religious Harmony and International Solidarity

The poem "The Sunset of the Century," was written on the last days of nineteenth century by Tagore. He presents a ferocious attack on nationalism. In a mood of violence and dissatisfaction, strengthened with broken hope, he writes:

1

The last sun of the century sets amidst the blood-red clouds of the West and the whirlwind of hatred.

The naked passion of self-love of Nations, in its drunken delirium of greed, is dancing to the clash of steel and the howling verses of vengeance.

2

The hungry self of the Nation shall burst in a violence of fury from its own shameless

Feeding.

For it has made the world its food,

And licking it, crunching it and swallowing it in big morsels,

It swells and swells

Till in the midst of its unholy feast descends the sudden shaft of heaven piercing its

heart of grossness.

3

The crimson glow of light on the horizon is not the light of thy dawn
of peace, my

Motherland.

It is the glimmer of the funeral pyre burning to ashes the vast flesh,—
the self-love of the

Nation—dead under its own excess.

Thy morning waits behind the patient dark of the East,

Meek and silent

4

Keep watch, India.

Bring your offerings of worship for that sacred sunrise.

Let the first hymn of its welcome sound in your voice and sing

"Come, Peace, thou daughter of God's own great suffering.

Come with thy treasure of contentment, the sword of fortitude,

And meekness crowning thy forehead."

5

Be not ashamed, my brothers, to stand before the proud and the
powerful

With your white robe of simpleness.

Let your crown be of humility, your freedom the freedom of the soul.

Build God's throne daily upon the ample bareness of your poverty

And know that what is huge is not great and pride is not everlasting.

(117-119)

Blind nationalism is a source of war and battle, death, destruction and disunity. It creates boundary for international solidarity. Tagore has always opposed jingoism that breathed meaning into Thucydides' ancient maxim that "large nations do what they wish, while small nations accept what they must" (qtd. in Chomsky 16). Which, as Radhakrishnan has said, "Self-interest is the end; brute force, the means; conscience is taboo" (163). Nationalism functioned as drug for the people by making them crazy and zealous. It encourages killing and dying. It spreads insanity and war instead of freedom and peace therefore it is a curse for Tagore. Tagore says it as "a cruel epidemic of evil . . . sweeping over the human world of the present age and eating into its moral fiber" (*Nationalism* 9). It is a terrible craziness that is looking for submerging humanity in a dangerous fire.

The nation is "the creature of science and selfishness" (*Nationalism* 52).

Tagore's criticism of the nation is habitually connected with his analysis of science. It is his conviction that the nation is 'scientific' but not 'human', because science is not man's nature, and life based upon mere science is superficial. Science does not have any value system; it is objective and impersonal in its application and accuracy. He does not fail to understand that the mastery over science and technology has given the west not only power over the weak nations of the world, it has transformed the West into a real culture of consumerism and pure greed. However, there is never a blind rejection of the West in Tagore. Even while rejecting the West, he believes that the West is needed for the East: ". . . the West is necessary to the East. We are complementary to each other because of our different outlooks upon life which has given us different aspects of truth" (41). Reconciliation of the opposite views is necessary for what Tagore calls 'Truth'. An internationalist or a cosmopolitan, his vision was never restricted by the narrow provincialism or prejudice. The

observations made by Irfan Habib, the eminent historian, demand distinct care in this context. Habib thinks that Tagore,

. . . saw the darker side of nationalism that stifled the innate, instinctive qualities of the human individual and its overemphasis on the commercial and political aspects, at the expense of man's moral and spiritual qualities. Tagore emphasized humanitarian intervention into the self-seeking and belligerent nationalism, through the introduction of a moral and spiritual dimension. His internationalist and cosmopolitan vision was contrary to the narrow sectarian nationalism being espoused by nations across Europe and Asia. (118)

While opposing the Western nation for its exclusive, aggressive, commercial, political, mechanical, and scientific nature, Tagore advocates the idea of love, harmony, brotherhood, and cooperation. He does not see any insurmountable walls of discrimination among people, communities, and nations. He envisages a seamless world, a spiritual 'commonwealth', where the boundaries of race, nationality, religion, class, caste, and creed would collapse completely to build the network of the union of mankind. Tagore believes in collaborative world to give a sense of mutuality, sympathy and generosity. So that nations would not be guided by selfish motifs and head towards moral and enlightened society.

Tagore imagines about democracy of nations in which no nation or race would deprive another ". . . of its rightful place in the world festival and every nation would keep alight its own lamp of mind as its part of the illumination of the world" (qtd. in Kripalini 268). Tagore is devoted in inter- civilizational union. His vision is given to an interdependence of the East and the West. British cruelty and oppression made him furious about India and his countrymen during the colonial period. He feels that the

West is frequently dipped in commercialism, “moral cannibalism” (Dutta and Robinson 192), “political expediency” (164), militarism and “war madness” (193), and is excessively full of hatred for the East. He never becomes hopeless for a probable union of the East and West. If it happens the East and the West would meet as equal companion in a creative appointment.

Tagore writes a letter to Foss Westcott saying that, “Believe me, nothing would give me greater happiness than to see the people of the East and the West march in a common crusade against all that robs the human spirit of its significance” (Dutta and Robinson 197). Furthermore, he took exception to Kipling’s comment that the East and the West are too opposite and “Never the twain shall meet” by confirming much in Emerson’s essence in his essay “Compensation,” where the realization of a unitary and unchanging world was reliant upon the meeting of these two opposing halves, which rewarded one another:

Earnestly I ask the poet of the Western world to realize and sing . . . with all the great power of music which he has, that the East and West are ever in search of each other, and that they must meet not merely in the fullness of physical strength, but in fullness of truth; that the right hand, which wields the sword, has the need of the left, which holds the shield of safety. (Dutta and Robinson 213)

Social Unity and Equality among Diverse Race, Religion and Universal

Brotherhood

Tagore tirelessly stresses on racial and religious unity. In the poem “Bharat Tithe” (The Indian Pilgrimage) he desires all Indians to be united across diverse race, religion, cultural etc. by detaching their dissimilarity away and standing above the swift of dirty politics to accomplish the noble fortune of their motherland.

O my consciousness, awake gently in pilgrim-purity
 On this seashore of India's great humanity.
 Standing here, I bow to man's gods, both arms outstretched –
 In noble rhythms, supreme joy I hymn their praise.
 These mountains dhyana-deep,
 Wildernesses holding river-rosaries,
 Here the sacred earth forever see –
 On this seashore of India's great humanity.
 No one knows whose call made streams of so many populations
 Come from where on turbulent currents, lose themselves in an ocean.
 Here Aryans, here non-Aryans, here Dravidians, Chinese –
 Sakas, Huns, Pathans, Mughals dissolved in one body.
 The doors open to the West today,
 All bring gifts from there,
 Give and take, meet and merge, no one turns to leave –
 On this seashore of India's great humanity.
 Come O Aryans, come non-Aryans, Hindus, Muslims.
 Come today, come you English, come, come Christians.
 Come Brahmins, cleanse the mind, hold the hands of everyone.
 Come O fallen, may the load of all insult be undone.
 Come, come to Ma's consecration quick,
 The auspicious pitcher hasn't yet filled
 With pilgrim-water sanctified by the touch of everybody –
 Today on the seashore of India's great humanity. (106)

According to Tagore India's immediate problems are social and cultural. India is the heterogeneous country where diverse races and religions meet together. Therefore she must persistently try to resolve her problem of heterogeneity by growing out of this threatening conflicts and great amalgamation should be achieved. India must address the caste issue. It has become too rigid on the minds of Indian people which cause war among different racial group in India. India gets its strength and energy as a society and finds a true freedom by providing education to all the people who are poor, backward and helpless. Political freedom is useless because it permits the leaders to exploit the lower class people so mercilessly. In his own words:

She has made errors in setting up the boundary walls too rigidly between races, in perpetuating in her classifications the results of inferiority; often she has crippled her children's minds and narrowed their lives in order to fit them into her social form, but for centuries new experiments have been made and adjustments carried out.

(Nationalism 34)

He tries to explain the term "unity" in many ways. As Indian history is the history of different races, India cannot practice the exclusiveness as her people belong to many different ideas, beliefs and traditions. Tagore views that proper education is the best tool for unity and variety of awareness. Abolition of poverty and cultivation of freedom of thought and imagination is possible through right education. "Freedom of mind is needed for the reception of truth" (qtd. in Sen 95). He has said it was education, and not adoration on for the Charkha (the spinning wheel) suggested by Gandhi which can release India from the domination of the past and the gigantic misery of unreasoned, uncontrolled custom.

Tagore neglects the Charkha as well as *Swaraj* so that Gandhi criticizes him saying, “Everyone must spin. Let Tagore spin like the others. Let him burn his foreign clothes; that is his duty today. God will take care of the morrow” (qtd. in Kripalani 72), Tagore listened it and respectfully replied, “The charkha does not require anyone to think; one simply turns the wheel of the antiquated invention endlessly, using the minimum of judgment and stamina” (qtd. in Sen 74). To breakdown the influence of immobility through intellectual and cultural revival and find freedom, India ought to keep itself open to the West and not become narrow from the rest of the world through the assumption of a limited nationalism, “We of the Orient should learn from the Occident . . . to say that it is wrong to cooperate with the West is to encourage the worst form of provincialism and can produce nothing but intellectual indigence” (qtd. in Kripalani 294). The West could help to free India from its “mind-forged manacles” (294) and uplift the lifeless load of practice from its depth through a constructive commitment and persuasion of energy, strength, elasticity, tolerance, resolve and courage among its people-qualities that the West possessed but India lacked.

Tagore foresees a society which develops one’s traditions through inclusion and integration of her tradition and cultures. He states:

If in the spirit of national vain gloriousness we shout from our house-tops that the West has produced nothing that has infinite value for man, then we but create a serious cause of doubt about the worth of any product of the Eastern mind. For it is the mind of man in the East and the West which is ever approaching truth in her different aspects from different angles of vision; and if it can be true that the standpoint of the west has betrayed it into an utter misdirection, then we can never be sure of the standpoint of the East. Let us be rid of all false pride and

rejoice at any lamp being lit at any corner of the common illumination
of our house. (qtd. in Bhattacharya 61)

People need to free themselves from the oppression of nationalist belief so that they can express themselves freely to become complete spiritual being. The history of India shows that from the time immemorial that diverse human races have merged into the mainstream social custom. The spirit of harmony and cooperation is the ideal feature of Indian history and culture. He has expressed similar views in Nationalism:

We have to recognize that the history does not belong to one particular race but to a process of creation to which various races of the world contributed—the Dravidians and the Aryans, the ancient Greeks and the Persians, the Mohammedans of the West and those of central Asia. Now at last has come the turn of the English to become true to this history and bring to it the tribute of their life, and we neither has neither right nor the power to exclude this people from the building of the destiny of India. (*Nationalism* 42)

It is for this reason he says that “India has never had a real sense of nationalism” (*Nationalism* 70). Nationalism creates a sense of conflict and competitiveness, disharmony; it is based on divisiveness and intolerance. The place of Indian culture is its society where people live in harmony and amity; it is an alternative space beyond the intervention of the power.

Tagore’s Courage and Struggle for Political and Social Change through Education and Constructive Work

If they answer not to thy call walk alone,
If they are afraid and cower mutely facing the wall,
O thou of evil luck,

Open thy mind and speak out alone.
 If they turn away, and desert you when crossing the wilderness,
 O thou of evil luck,
 Trample the thorns under thy tread,
 And along the blood-lined track travel alone.
 If they do not hold up the light
 When the night is troubled with storm,
 O thou of evil luck,
 With the thunder flame of pain ignite thine own heart
 And let it burn alone. (40)

This poem is written in September 1905 at a time when Tagore feels isolated and supported less. He is in confusion not only because of the partition of Bengal but also by his failure to gain the attention and support of the mainstream nationalist leaders in the anti-partition campaigning. The latter's decision to fight British rule with the boycott of British commodities is, in Tagore's opinion, merely negative and inadequate. Tagore advocates a program of self-empowerment through constructive activities to build a base in popular mind and an alternative to British administration. Among his peers, he finds no response to his call for his constructive program. Despite this Tagore does not, at that time, withdraw himself from the movement. There was, he says, a weakness in the nationalists' mendicancy in the past, but the new agitation to gain the ears of the government is not the path to true national strength for that too is in expectation of a favorable decision from the same government. The then leaders dislike this advice and Tagore is disappointed enough to say that he would walk alone on the path he perceived as right. This is the background of this poem, which has demonstrated incidentally, the amount of

Tagore's writings, the inter-connectedness between his socio-political thoughts and his creative writings. This poem effectively encapsulates his idea of the courage with which he struggles alone in order to defend his ideals. The life he lives can help us comprehend the meaning of this song.

Tagore clearly realizes what the country and the country's welfare mean and he has warned his people in proper time. This is explained by the fact that they have not yet come to have full faith in that principle of self-reliance on their own strength of which Tagore is the true prophet, for this is the central point of his political doctrine. His words ring true in the well-known song. Such self-reliant hearts alone can create unity in diversity. Though an artist of the most delicate sensitiveness, he is not quiet. He never hesitates to speak out his mind when necessary. He boldly opposes the partition of Bengal. Refusing personal honor, while his countrymen are repressed and insulted, he returns his knighthood mutely facing the wall, to Lord Chelmsford as a protest against the firing in the Jallianwalla Bagh at Amritsar. As he is the man of humanity, the spirit of love is taken as a gift but when they fail to do so, Tagore is the only person to raise voice against it. When everyone along with the enlightened Western people is tongue-tied, Tagore is the only person to protest against Jallianwala Bagh massacre. When he gets the news, he rushes to Kolkata. The whole incident fills his heart with grief and pain. He has uttered:

The accounts of the insults and sufferings by our brothers in Punjab have trickled through the gagged silence, reaching every corner of India, and the universal agony of indignation roused in the hearts of our people has been ignored by our rulers- possibly congratulating themselves for imparting what they imagine as salutary lessons. (Letter to a Friend 751)

The time when whole city come to standstill, no one dare say anything, Rabindranath tries to arrange a protest meeting, but no one supports him. As a symbolic act of protest he returns his knighthood. By addressing viceroy Lord Chelmsford on 30 may 1919 Tagore writes a historic letter where he declares his decision firmly by stating:

Knowing that our appeals have been in vain and that the passion of vengeance is blinding the nobler vision of statesmanship in our government, which could so easily afford to be magnanimous as befitting its physical strength and moral tradition, the very least that I can do for my country is to take all consequences upon myself in giving voice to the protest of the millions of my countrymen, surprised into a dumb anguish of terror. The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in the incongruous context of humiliation, and I for my part wish to stand, shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of those of my countrymen, who for their so called insignificance, are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings. (Letter to a Friend 751)

In the letter Tagore mentions that this humiliation of humanity compels him to ask to relieve of the title of knighthood. There is no doubt that Tagore is one of the pioneers of Indian nation who always guided his people in the time of crisis. He appreciates the art and culture of the English people and the power of knowledge but never accepts the regime of British government or the company rule and strongly gets involved in the protest against it. Tagore's blame of the British organization commonly grows more intense and stronger. *Swadeshi* Movement or Nationalist Movement- these names are very much related to him. *Rakhi Bandhan* for the protest of dividing Bengal is one of the most important events of that time. This is introduced by himself,

that event is done for the unity of Bengal. Tagore does not support Gandhi's Non Co-operation Movement or the violent part of Swadeshi Movement. In this movement, the Indians basically boycott the British product and tried to establish and improve Indian product.

Tagore wants to propagate the idea of social harmony where nothing separate man to man. People live in harmony and develop the fellow- feeling in them. Solidarity is the main thing, Tagore wants to popularize among all the human society in the world. His idea of oneness crosses the social boundaries and domestic walls. His idea brings people together in terms of universal unity of mankind rejecting caste, culture, religion and any other identity. Nationalism should inspire humanity in a broad sense.

Chapter 3

Need of Humanity for Better world

Humanity; the Only One Religion of Men

Rabindranath Tagore, the great myriad-minded creator of art, culture and literature, with a deep of philosophy life has glorified the lives of the Bengalis in its entirety. This multifaceted, gifted man has embraced and assimilated the entire world culture at ease. We find the essence of humanity in him. He breaks through the barrier of his own country and standing on its soil he spreads out his two hands and cups handful of elixir from the entire human races of the world. In return, he pays back the universe a deep rooted philosophy embracing international peace, friendship, brotherhood and above all the spirit of mutual co-existence and forgiveness. As a great ambassador of humanity, he sends out to the West, the simplicity, soil-bound life and its philosophy which is clear, simple, and life-oriented.

Tagore, being a prolific composer of poems and songs and creator of great novels, plays, essays, travelogues, thought provoking books on agriculture, science and education, has emitted sparks and rays of a humanistic philosophy in all his creative ventures. He is politically and socially conscious creative man with sharp broad- mind. Any socially or politically wrong doings within his own country or in the outside world never escape his attention. His pen is ever alive against any misdoing anywhere in the world which gets an outlet in this innumerable writings of varied genre. Tagore is a tireless messenger of truth relating to human dignity and rights, despite his being a great creator of art, culture and literature. He has glorified human life in its entirety. Therefore, his belief, “Only those peoples have survived and achieved civilization that has this spirit of co-operation strong in them”, *receives a cardinal significance*” (*Nationalism* 24). Human beings all over the world should be

looked only through the mirror of co-operation and humanity. He warns people about the danger of nationalism and the crisis of humanity through his writings and lectures.

Tagore wants to propagate social integrity which brings harmony in human society. People should be united to promote social conditions to create a joyous world.

Orthodoxy is the enemy of good society. Tagore says:

For the good and well-being of society, there is a need of “social mutualistic cooperation.” Extension of love and sympathy is also necessary for human welfare. People should not be blind to the sorrows and sufferings of the neighbors. And to perpetuate social tyranny, mass ignorance and untouchability, in his view, is to lose moral claims to be superior and humane. (qtd in Jatava 108)

Tagore has a strong faith on spiritualism which binds the various experience of man where all sections of the society are respectful and dignified. He points out that caste system only generates opposition and intolerant force. His humanism is based on spiritual foundations. It is mainly expressed through his concept of social connection. He favors the idea of oneness of humankind and society without any walls. He criticizes nationalism, supposing it as humanity’s greatest problems.

Universal Brotherhood and Peaceful World

Tagore supports universalism and internationalism to create global peace and harmony in a world of different peoples and cultures united by friendship and humanity. This vision of a world is worthy. It plays a significant role in enhancing and enriching culture and civilization of the world. His view of an ideal human society is uplifting. Tagore emphasizes on the importance of man above all types of orthodoxy, religion, parochialism and violence in the world. By understanding the global problem peace can be achieved. Universal brotherhood denotes oneness of

mankind. It is possible only when people stop war, fighting, hatred on the basis of their race, religion culture and other identity.

Humanism focuses on freedom, justice, equality and fraternity asking for the unity of mankind in the world. In today's world people are guided by selfish motifs and corrupt ideals for personal benefits. They have forgotten their morality, spirituality, human values and have become materialistic. With the advancement of science and technology people are doing progress rapidly but becoming selfish and self-centered. To become more successful and superior they harm other human beings and take them inferior. Today's society doesn't have harmony with real human necessities. Because of caste discrimination, class distinction, religious division, blind nationalism, cultural separatism people develop the mutual hatred, jealousy and suspicion, which cause misunderstanding, disbelief, war, terror, violence in the world. Humanity has suffered a lot due to this social division. There is lack of mutual love, respect and care that's why humanism urges to pursue the path of social equality forgetting the selfish motifs. Social discrimination blocks human and social progress. To serve the mankind we must liberate our mind from all kinds of boundaries, dogmas and social evils. Humanism is the precious gift of the world which widens the path of peaceful and harmonious world.

To save the world and to make it better place to live in, people should forget all kinds of social taboos and should have the feeling of equality. Unless people come out of these social bondages, we cannot even imagine the peace and prosperity in the world. People should give up narrowness and be more comprehensive. Social hierarchy generates intolerance, irrationality, prejudice and hatred. Thus instead of a fraternity, it increases a new division and power. The need of today's world is to head the world to the route of peace, harmony, love, justice, honesty, equality and the

unity of mankind where the races of the world would live together in amity keeping their distinct characteristics, all attached to the stem of humanity by the bond of love. People should rise above caste, creed, and religion to create social unity, solidarity, brotherhood and welfare of mankind.

Blind Nationalism; threat to Mankind

Humanism of Tagore highlighted his concept of nationalism. His global vision included people of all races. He rejects aggressive nationalism prevalent in the West. He turns his face against self-destructive nationalism. He advocates for the unity and harmony. Blind nationalism brings moral exploitation, moral erosions and destruction. It perpetuates violence and tension among mankind. It is a danger to humankind because it only focuses on power, authority and materials but not on human soul and human feeling and human rights and needs.

Nationalism for Universal Humanism

Tagore wants to establish solidarity of mankind of different identities and status in the world. His idea if nationalism crosses the narrow national or social boundaries and invite togetherness in terms of global solidarity of all men. The world should not be fragmented on the basis of caste, culture, religion and narrowly defined nationalism. Tagore has deep faith in universal humanism. The poet indirectly implies the entire universe in general. Tagore considers that healthy nationalism in place of blind nationalism lead the nation to an honest internationalism.

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